The BIBLE for Everyone

A new translation by

John Goldingay and Tom Wright

THE BIBLE
FOR EVERYONE

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John Goldingay
and
Tom Wright

spck

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THE OLD TESTAMENT FOR EVERYONE

JOHN GOLDINGAY

Preface to the Old Testament for Everyone

The idea of an 'Old Testament for Everyone' in English goes back at least to William Tyndale, the first great figure of the English Reformation, who was executed in 1536. A few decades after the printing press came into use in Europe, Tyndale made it his ambition to produce an English translation of the Bible that could be printed and made available to the 'boy that driveth the plough' (so John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, published a few decades after Tyndale's death). In other words, it could be made available to 'everyone'. Tyndale completed the New Testament and started on the Old, which Miles Coverdale later completed. The 'Old Testament for Everyone' is thus a long-running project.

The present translation brings together the translation sections from the series of little commentaries called the Old Testament for Everyone, and fills in the gaps in those volumes. I have substantially revised the translation in those commentaries, partly because I hadn't worried about consistency of style and approach between them as I produced them, whereas it seemed necessary to aim at consistency in this complete translation.

There are many ways of going about translation, and sometimes people try to argue that such-and-such an approach is right and others wrong. I don't think that one approach is necessarily better than all others, and there's no such thing as the best translation of the Old Testament. All translations are more or less accurate, but producing a faithful equivalent of any piece of writing in another language is an impossible undertaking; all approaches involve compromise. Translations thus have varying strengths and weaknesses according to the way they choose to prioritize the principles of translation.

I had three or four principles in mind when I began this work, and I formulated three or four more in the course of completing it. There is some tension between these principles, and where my translation is jerky, the jerkiness probably reflects one or other of them. I have finally aimed to produce a translation that as far as possible has the following characteristics.

- It sticks close to the way the Hebrew (and Aramaic) works rather than paraphrasing it, so that readers can get as close as possible to the details of the original text. Sometimes when I've added words to make the meaning clearer, I've put these words in square brackets. Nowadays translations are more inclined to aim at translating sentence by sentence, which has opposite advantages and disadvantages to translating word by word. My translation moves in that older direction, in rendering more word by word. It's consequently more suitable for a slow read than for a quick read, and more suitable for reading on one's own than for reading out loud. And where a sentence may make sense but you're not sure what it refers to or how it fits into the context, it's probably because the text itself doesn't make it clear, and I've left it that way. As a further consequence, although I myself prefer to use gender-inclusive language, I've let the translation stay gendered where inclusivizing it obscures whether the text is using singular or plural – in other words, the translation often uses 'he' when the text refers to a man or a woman and where in my own writing I would thus say 'they' or 'he or she'.

- It stays with the traditional Hebrew text (like the New Jewish Publication Society Version) rather than emending it. When I was making the translation I thus started from that traditional text itself, but I did refer to some existent translations, and sometimes adopted expressions from them. These other translations also occasionally made me see where I had slipped up, by missing out some words or misreading a word, just like an ancient scribe. I noticed, too, that sometimes they had slipped up in similar ways. I expect I have not eliminated all my mistakes, and you are welcome to let me know at johngold@fuller.edu where you notice one. At johngoldingay.com, under OT Introduction – OT for Everyone, I will post any corrections that come to my notice and any other comments I think of regarding my reason for translating particular verses the way I have.

- It uses everyday English in the sense that it often employs abbreviations such as 'I'll' and 'we'll' for 'I will and 'we will'. In addition, for some common Hebrew words it generally avoids traditional English translations such as salvation, holiness, eternity, covenant, justice and righteousness, where these translations don't correspond well to the Hebrew words and/or where the English words are misleading when used to translate Hebrew words that have different connotations.

- In the poetic sections, I've laid out the lines so that they correspond to the way I think the poetry works. Poetic lines commonly comprise two parts (sometimes three) that link with each other to form a complete sentence. In the translation, the second part (and the third, if there is one) appears indented as a second (or third) line.

- It tries to use the same English word to translate any one Hebrew word, so that one can see points of connection between texts. Translations of Exodus, for instance, commonly use the words slavery, bondage, servant and worship to render forms of the same Hebrew word, and part of the point of the story depends on our being able to see the links between the occurrences of this word. So in this example I try to use 'serve' and related words for all occurrences of the related Hebrew words. This principle is also different from the one taken by modern translations that focus on the meaning of words in individual sentences.

- It uses the name for God that God invited Israel to use, the name Yahweh, rather than replacing it with the expressions 'the Lord' or 'God'. 'Yahweh' is the name God gave Moses to share with the Israelites. It's God's personal name. For many centuries within Old Testament times Israelites thus used this name, and it comes very frequently in the Old Testament. But late on in Old Testament times, people were less inclined to use the name, perhaps for two reasons. On one hand, if it's important not to take Yahweh's name in vain, it might be safer not to take it at all. On the other, using this name could give the impression that Israel's God was just a little local god, whereas in reality he's the Creator and Lord of the whole world. So Jews started replacing the name Yahweh by the word for 'Lord' or 'God', and they added marks to the text of the Scriptures to remind people to read out one of those other words in place of the name. When the Bible got translated into other languages, the name was then replaced by the equivalents of those words. The snag is that

the alteration often spoils the sense of passages. So I have accepted Yahweh's invitation to call him by his personal name. (People sometimes ask me whether this practice is offensive to Jews. The general answer is that they are not offended by other people using the name. As with prescriptions in the Torah, not to do so is simply their vocation or discipline.)

- It translates some other names rather than just transliterating them, or it provides an equivalent English expression for them. English forenames and place names such as Hope or Grace or Wells or Orange County are ordinary words as well as names, and English-speakers are sometimes aware of the resonance about such a name. Other names such as John and Sheffield also have ordinary words behind them, but English-speakers are less likely to be aware of these. Something similar applies to Hebrew names. So I occasionally translate such names when it seems likely that an Israelite would have been aware of their meaning (e.g. 'The Height' for the place transliterated as Ramah, which has 'the' on the front of it in Hebrew). In some other cases I provide the English meaning of the name in square brackets after the name, especially where the context implies an awareness of the name's meaning (e.g. Adam means 'human being').

- Another consequence of the translation of the Old Testament into Greek, then of the Greek into Latin, then of the Latin into English, was that Mosheh became Moses, Yesha'yahu became Isaiah, Yerushalaim became Jerusalem, and so on (and Yohanan became John). I have left such names in their original form, but sometimes added in square brackets the familiar English form of a name – especially the first time it occurs. By using more precise transliterations (without being too technical) I hope also to make it a bit easier to work out the pronunciation of names (e.g. 'Jehoiachin' gives the impression that the name includes a 'j' sound and a 'ch' sound, neither of which is true: 'Yehoyakin' is less misleading). I have represented Hebrew letters as follows:
  – zayin becomes z (rather than s);
  – kaph becomes k (rather than ch);
  – qoph becomes q (rather than k);
  – tsade becomes ts (rather than z; except that I spell Misrayim rather than Mitsrayim);
  – he and het both become h (sorry not to distinguish these);
  – sameq and sin both become s (sorry not to distinguish these);
  – when aleph or ayin comes in the middle of names, both become' (sorry not to distinguish these), like an apostrophe in English, so as to help with pronouncing them. But when they come at the beginning or end of names, I ignore them.

- There is one further aspect of the appearance of names that may seem surprising to Western readers. As William Shakespeare had a number of ways of spelling his name, so the Old Testament uses several forms of some names. For instance, Hizqiyyahu, Hizqiyyah and Yehizqiyyahu are all ways of referring to the king who usually appears in English translations as Hezekiah. The place we know as Bethel can be called Bet-el or Bet El. I have preserved these differences rather than smoothed them out, so where such differences appear in the translation, it probably means they are examples of this inherent diversity rather than mistakes.

The Old Testament for Everyone series and this translation were the brainchild of Philip Law, with whom I've worked both at SPCK and at Westminster John Knox. I'm grateful to him for our long-standing and relaxed partnership; as I am to my agent Pieter Kwant, whom I ask for advice about possible projects, and whose enthusiasm for the Old Testament for Everyone commentary series was important to my agreeing to embark on that undertaking. I am also grateful to Mollie Barker for her exceedingly careful editing work, which saved me from many slips.

I've tried to work out how long the translation took, and the nearest I have to an answer is an hour or two a day for about five years, plus the revision time which took me the best part of a year. The commentary took another hour or two a day for about five years.

Introduction to the Old Testament for Everyone

'The Old Testament' is the usual Christian name for the collection of Scriptures dating from before the time of Jesus that Jews and Christians have in common. The actual title 'The Old Testament' comes from two or three centuries after Jesus and links with the fact that by then the Church had acquired some further Scriptures which it came to call 'The New Testament'. As well as pairing the Old Testament Scriptures with the New Testament Scriptures, Christian Bibles have the Old Testament Scriptures in a different order, and that order is the one *The Old Testament for Everyone* follows.

In this order, the Old Testament unfolds as follows:

1. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
   – the 'Pentateuch' or the 'Torah', traditionally 'The Five Books of Moses', telling the story of the world's beginnings and of the beginnings of Israel;
2. Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings
   – the continuation of Genesis to Deuteronomy, relating Israel's story from its arrival in Canaan to the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians;
3. Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
   – a retelling of the entire story in Genesis to Kings followed by a continuation that relates the restoration of Jerusalem, and by a story about Jewish experience in Persia itself;
4. Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs
   – books that are nearly all poetry and that relate more directly to everyday life, worship and prayer, sometimes in confident affirmations, sometimes in questions;
5. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, the Twelve Shorter Prophets
   – mostly collections of short messages that challenge and encourage Israel about its present life and circumstances and about the future that lies ahead of it.

What was the Old Testament for?

Why is the Old Testament this kind of collection of works? What were they supposed to do for the Israelites for whom they were written and for the Jewish community that first came to recognize them as their Scriptures? And what are they supposed to do for the Christian Church?

Their very nature suggests what they were designed to be for Israel and for the Jewish people. First they tell them the beginning of their story, and they thus help them understand who they are. Then they continue that story into subsequent centuries, which adds to this effect. They collect the expectations regarding their lives that God enabled them to formulate over the centuries, which are also therefore expected to shape their life on an ongoing basis. They speak in the present about how life works, how praise and prayer are designed to be, and how to wrestle with some of life's key problems. And they record some of God's nightmares and dreams about the people's future.

When some Jews came to believe in Jesus and to see his coming as the climax of Israel's own story, they naturally used these resources to help them understand Jesus. The 'New Testament' did not regard the 'Old Testament' as 'old' in the sense of antiquated or out of date; to make that point, I sometimes like to refer to it as the First Testament rather than the Old Testament. For Jesus and the New Testament writers, these Scriptures were a living resource for understanding God, God's ways in the world and God's ways with us. Every part of them was useful 'for teaching, reproving, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that anyone who belongs to God can be proficient, equipped for every good work' (2 Timothy 3.16–17). They were for everyone, in fact. So it's strange that Christians don't read them very much.

1. The first three sequences as the Old Testament unfolds are stories or histories. Calling them histories implies that they are talking about things that happened. They helped Israel understand itself by talking about where it came from. Calling them stories points to the fact that they are not just talking about things that happened; they have lessons written into them. Sometimes they pass on traditional stories that are simply good stories to illustrate a point, but more often they are stories with a basis in things that happened.

   That fact points us to a significant aspect of the significance of these stories for Israel. Christians sometimes assume that the basic thing about their faith is that it is a challenge to live the right kind of life and pursue peace and justice, and that the stories in the Old Testament are there to give us good examples (or warning examples). But the stories themselves rarely have moral evaluations built into them, and people reading the stories may disagree about the moral evaluation we should come to. This points us to the fact that the stories are more about what God has been doing than about what human beings have been doing. God is pursuing a project – to bring into being a world that fulfils his creation purpose. He can sometimes achieve things by means of the human beings he gets involved with; he sometimes has to pursue his objectives despite the actions of the people he gets involved with. But the propriety of their actions is not the main point. The main point is that God is at work.

2. God's expectations of human beings do come into focus within the first sequence, the Torah, which incorporates considerable material telling Israel about how its life is to be lived. It mixes up moral challenges, social policy and instructions for worship. It connects the teaching on these topics to the story by describing the kind of lifestyle that God has a right to expect in light of what he's done for Israel. It also warns Israel of trouble to follow if people take no notice of the teaching.

   Jesus suggests several clues for interpreting this material. One is that the entirety of the Torah and the Prophets depends on the two commands to love God and love one's neighbour. So of any of the commands (especially the puzzling ones)

one may ask how it is an outworking of either of these basic commands. Another clue is that sometimes the Torah is expounding God's creation vision, while sometimes it is making allowance for the human stubbornness that resists this creation vision. Paradoxically, even when it is making allowance in this way, it is an expression of love; the particular circumstance that Jesus mentions is the requirement that a man who divorces a wife must provide her with papers that lay out her legal position.

3. The books from Joshua to Kings relate how Israel put the teaching into practice – or more often failed to do so. So by the time you get to the end of Joshua to Kings, what the books are doing is explaining how things went wrong in Israel's life and why Israel ended up being put down by two successive superpowers, Assyria and Babylon. So they draw Israel to face facts and turn back to God.
   The books from Chronicles to Esther then do two things. They retell the story from Genesis to Kings, in a bit the way that (say) Matthew retells the story in Mark. In both cases, the assumption is that a story needs to be told in a way that will help its readers see what it has to say to them. The people for whom Chronicles is written are not under God's judgement like the people for whom Joshua to Kings are written. They need encouragement more than rebuke. So the story is told in a way designed to encourage them.
   Ezra–Nehemiah and Esther then take the story on into the time of people living later, whether in Jerusalem or in the Dispersion. They make explicit some of the reasons why people in their day needed encouragement, and they also thereby indicate something of the ongoing significance of the books from Chronicles to Esther. The Church in the West, at least, lives in discouraging times. And the Church in other parts of the world often lives in dangerous times, the kind of times about which Esther speaks.

4. The books from Job to Song of Songs more explicitly focus on the present. Psalms provides us with 150 examples of things you can say to God in praise, in prayer and in thanksgiving. It's been said that the book of Psalms used to be where Christians learned to pray, but if it was so in the past, it's isn't so now. We could try reverting to it. Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs all start from everyday life outside the context of worship and share with their readers insights that the writers have gained from their experience of life or through considering the wisdom of other people who have reflected on life. On the whole, Proverbs does so in a positive way, telling people how life works and how to make it work. Job and Ecclesiastes do so in a more questioning way. Job starts from the fact that bad things happen to good people and wrestles with various ways of living with that reality. Ecclesiastes starts from the more general fact that it's hard to make sense of life in the world (especially given that we all die), and seeks to help readers live with that fact. The Song of Songs takes an enthusiastic but realistic look at the wonder of relationships between the sexes and at the pressures that come on those relationships.

5. The background of the Prophets is the time when the great powers start to dominate Israel's life, the time of Assyria and Babylon, then of Persia and Greece. The Prophets seek to get Israel to see how God is involved in this development, initially to bring God's chastisement because of Israel's rebellion and unfaithfulness (in the time of Assyria and Babylon), then to bring God's restoration (by means of Persia), then to bring agents of persecution from which God needs to rescue his people (in the Greek period). They challenge Israel to turn back to God and to live by trust rather than by the assumption that they control their own destinies. The Prophets' messages about the empires provide the Church with ways of thinking about empires and superpowers in the modern world.
   A minor theme in the Prophets is the articulation of a hope for a better king to come – the figure later called the Messiah (but the word does not come in this connection in the Old Testament). That promise is part of the broader theme that chastisement and persecution will not be God's last word. There is going to be a new heaven and a new earth in the sense of a new Jerusalem, one characterized by mutual commitment rather than by people taking advantage of one another and by joy and fulfilment, where everyone will be able to sit under their vine or fig tree. Some aspects of the Prophets' promises found fulfilment in Israel's life, some illumine what Jesus was and did, some continue to promise us the fulfilment of God's creation purpose.

How did the Old Testament come into being?

The books in the Old Testament were written in the form that we have them between about the eighth and the second centuries before Christ. (Like most things in this Introduction, there could be arguments about those dates – and the same applies to the translation that follows – but I don't think anything here is an idiosyncratic view of mine.)

Most of the Old Testament is of anonymous authorship, and we don't know who wrote the books or when. The King James Version has some introductions such as 'The First Book of Moses, Called Genesis' or 'The Lamentations of Jeremiah', but these are not part of the text. The first books that give us names and dates are those associated with prophets such as Hosea, Amos and Micah, and these give us dates in the eighth century, which is the reason for mentioning the eighth century. The last event directly referred to is the great crisis in Jerusalem in the 160s bc when a Greek Seleucid king banned proper worship in Jerusalem, which the visions in Daniel refer to, so that's the reason for mentioning the second century. We also don't know much about the process whereby the Jewish community came to accept these books as their Scriptures.

The book of Ezra does speak of a priest-theologian called Ezra bringing 'the Torah' from Babylonia to Jerusalem in 458 bc, and 'The Torah' or 'The Law' is the later name for the books from Genesis to Deuteronomy. It wouldn't be surprising if this story in Ezra tells us when 'The Torah' came to be accepted as Scripture in Jerusalem. Later, again in the second century, the preface to a work variously called Ecclesiasticus or Ben Sira or Sirach refers to 'The Law and the Prophets and the rest of the books', which is quite similar to the later expression 'The Torah, the Prophets and the Writings', a common title in the Jewish community for what Christians call the Old Testament.

And as far as Jesus and the New Testament writers were concerned, these were the Scriptures. In putting it that way, I cut a corner a bit, as the New Testament never gives us a list of these Scriptures, but the body of writings that the Jewish people accept is as near as we can get to identifying the collection that Jesus and the New Testament writers would have worked with.

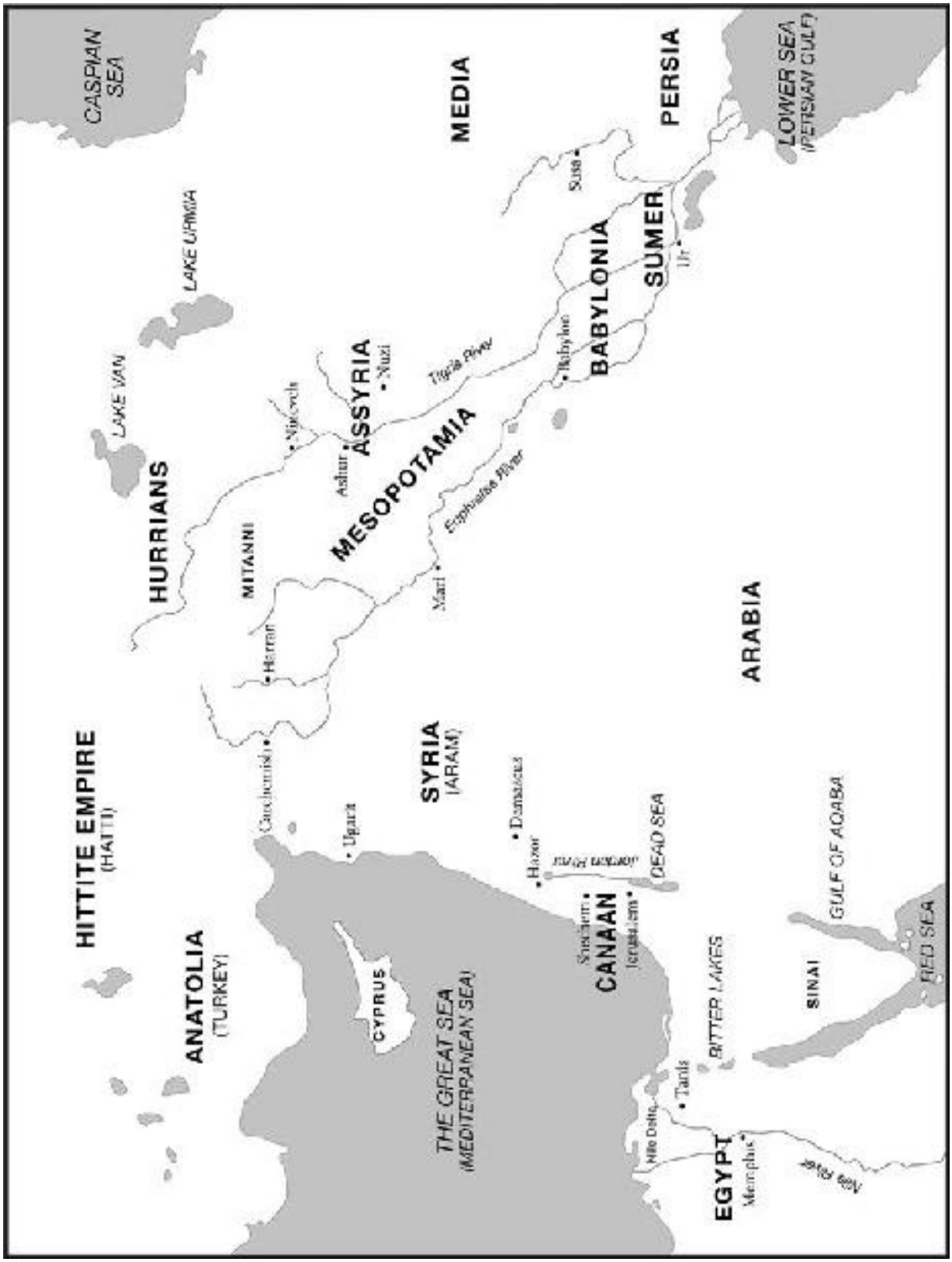
We don't have any record of a meeting 'deciding' that these books and no others would count as the Scriptures. It wouldn't surprise me if it just happened; nobody exactly decided it. These writings compelled themselves on the Jewish people one by one. And it wouldn't surprise me if the last time something compelled itself on the Jewish people with this kind of force was that crisis in Jerusalem in the 160s when the visions in Daniel promised God's deliverance of his people, and were proved true.

The Church also came to accept some extra books such as Maccabees and the aforementioned Ecclesiasticus. They were traditionally called the 'Apocrypha', the books that were 'hidden away', but that name came to imply 'spurious'. They're now often known as the 'Deutero-canonical Writings', which is more cumbersome but less pejorative. It simply indicates that these books have less authority than the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings. The precise list of them varies among different churches. For the purposes of the series of books that sought to expound the 'Old Testament for Everyone', by the 'Old Testament' we meant the Scriptures accepted by the Jewish community, though in the Jewish Bible they come in that different order as the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings.

An outline of the Old Testament story

Here is an outline of the story that emerges from the Old Testament books (I give no dates for events in Genesis, which involves too much guesswork).

1200s	The Israelites are state serfs in Egypt; God enables them to get out of Egypt under Moses and to settle in Canaan under Joshua
1100s	The 'judges'
1000s	The Israelites decide to become a monarchic state; King Saul, King David
900s	King Solomon; Israel splits into two nations, Ephraim and Judah
800s	Elijah, Elisha
700s	Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah; Assyria the superpower; the Assyrians terminate the life of Ephraim (722)
600s	Jeremiah, King Josiah; Babylon the superpower
500s	Ezekiel; the Babylonians terminate the independent life of Judah (587)
	Persia the superpower; Judahites free to return home (537) and rebuild the temple
400s	Ezra brings the Torah to Jerusalem (458); Nehemiah rebuilds its walls (445)
300s	Alexander (333) puts Jerusalem under the authority of Greece as the superpower
200s	Syria (the Seleucids) and Egypt (the Ptolemies) pull Judah one way or the other
100s	Judah rebels against Seleucid domination and persecution and gains independence (164)
000s	Rome the superpower



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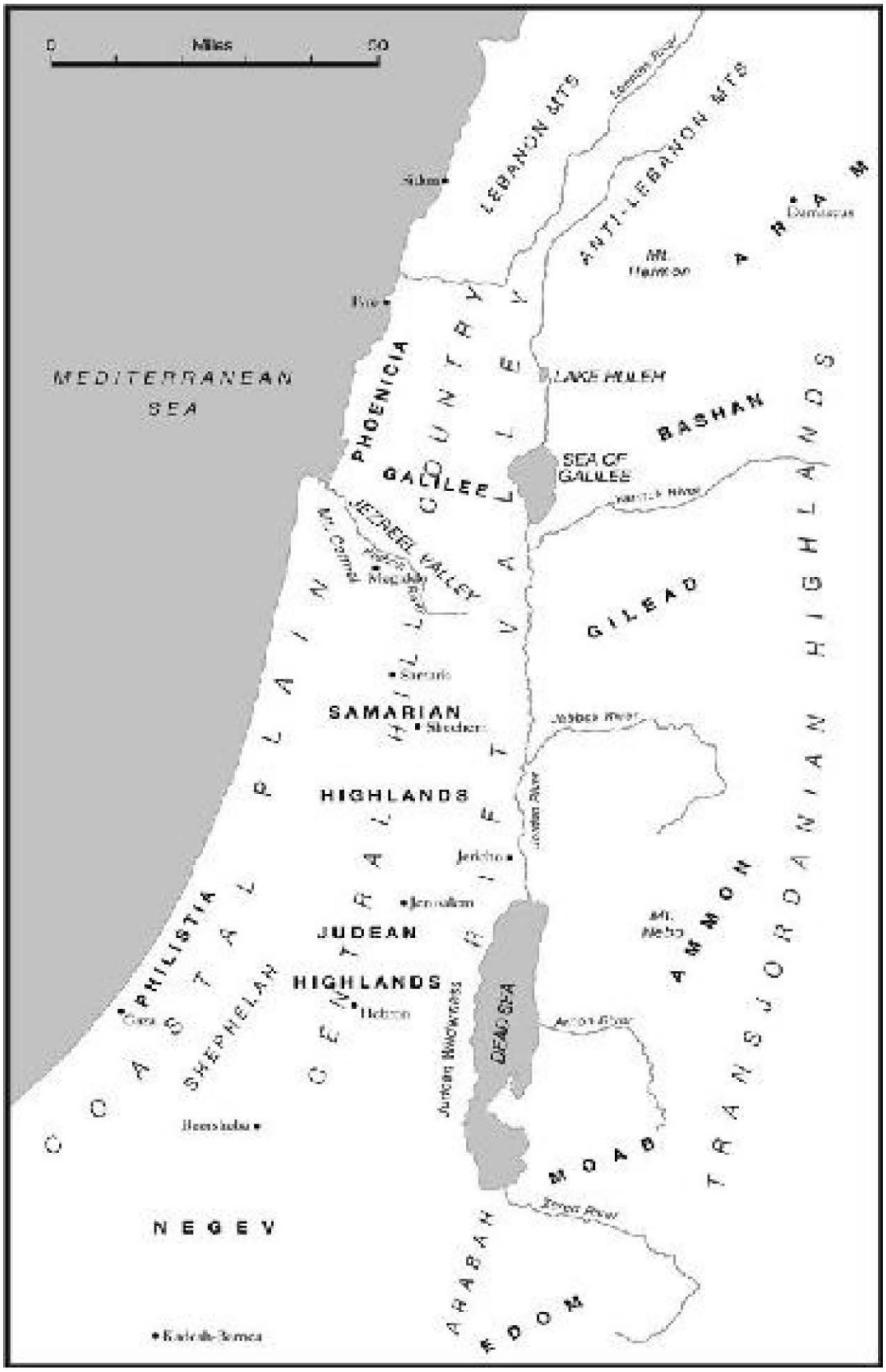
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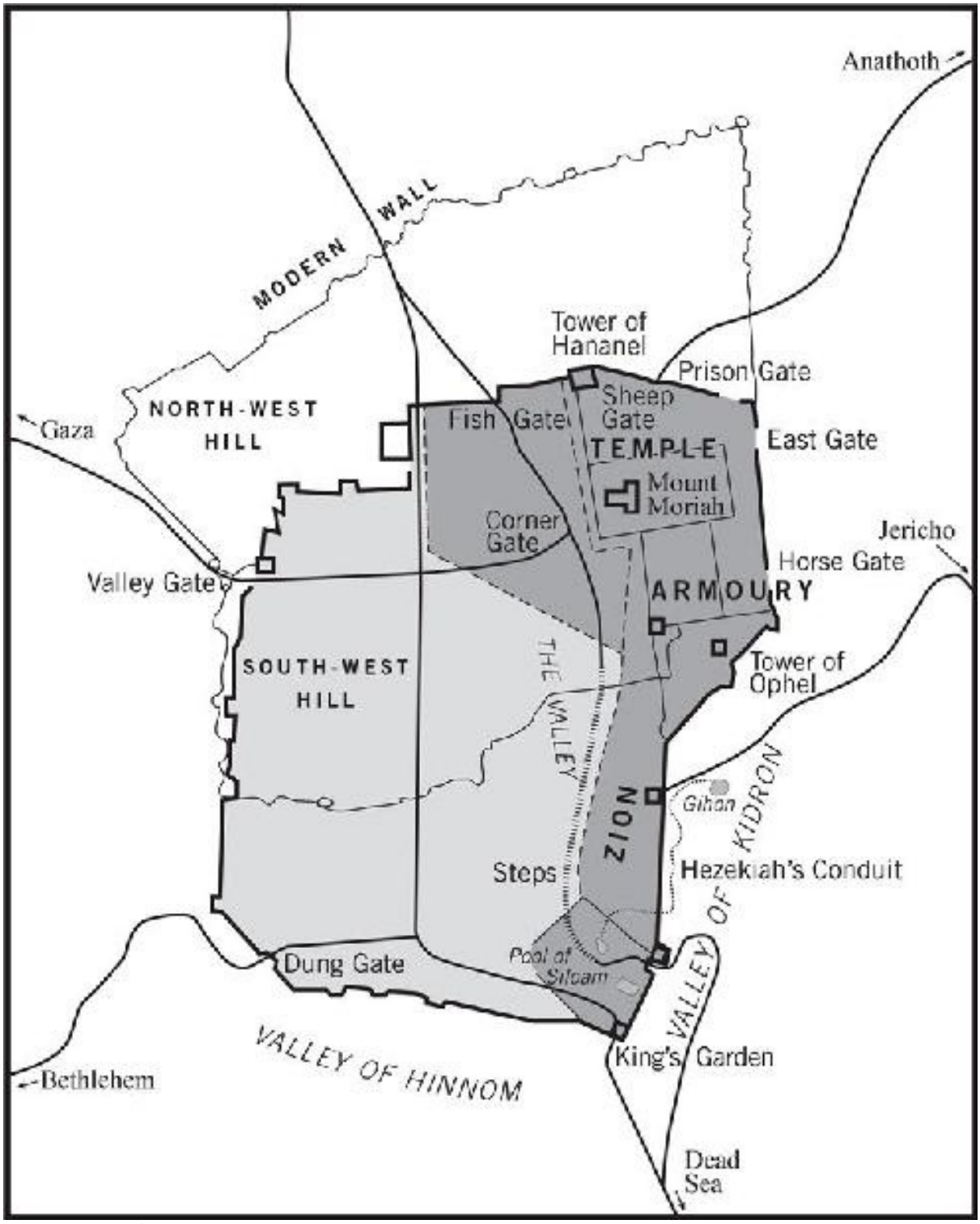

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Genesis

Genesis provides the people of God with two aspects of the back story to its own story. Chapters 1—11 go back to the beginning of the world as a whole. They thus invite the people of God to see their own story against the broadest and longest backcloth. Then chapters 12—50 tell them about their particular prehistory in God's bringing their ancestors from Mesopotamia to Canaan with the intention of settling them there permanently in due course.

By its nature, then, Genesis tells a story about actual events of the past. Yet a reading of the story makes us hesitate to take it as simply historical. Noah putting specimens of every animal species into a giant box in which they survive a worldwide flood? Lot's wife turned into a column of salt? Genesis is like other histories from its world such as the works of the Greek historians Herodotus and Thucydides. They combine reminiscences of historical events, traditional stories and works of imagination, and comment on what it all means and what readers should make of it. In inspiring Genesis, God let its authors write in the way that was natural to them, and used their way of telling a story to instruct Israel and us about ourselves and about him.

Indeed, rather than comparing Genesis with the kind of history that we might try to write, we do better to compare it with Shakespeare or with historical novels or with the kind of Hollywood movie that's 'based on fact'. In understanding such works, we miss the point if we focus too much on what actually happened. What makes them instructive is the way a creative team has turned them into an illuminating story. It's this kind of story that God inspired his team to write.

The plot of the story is as follows. Act One describes how God set the world going but how it soon went wrong, which made God wonder whether the whole thing had been a mistake; that's Scene One. God starts again, but things again go wrong, and you wonder whether there is no way this project can be a success. That's Scene Two.

One can imagine an intermission at chapter 11 before the beginning of Act Two, which occupies the rest of the book. Its three scenes focus on the story of three families. First God summons Abraham and Sarah from Mesopotamia and promises to give them such blessing that the whole world will pray to be blessed as they are blessed. So God is indeed continuing with his original purpose to bless the entire world. Much of the drama of the first scene focuses on whether Abraham and Sarah will ever have a son through whom God's blessing can find fulfilment. This son, Isaac, is the focus of Scene Two. In turn, much of his story focuses on his two sons, and the conflict between them. Scene Three tells of the family of one of these sons, Jacob, which also becomes a story of conflict. By the end of Genesis, Jacob's family has grown to quite a size, so that one element in God's promise has found fulfilment. But because of a famine it has had to take refuge in Egypt, which is not the country that had been promised to it.

So the end of the story is not really the end of the story. It's more like the cliffhanger at the end of the first series in a television drama. We have to read on into Exodus.

Readers often assume that the point of the stories about people such as Abraham and Sarah is to give us examples of how to live or how not to live our lives. This assumption doesn't make sense of the stories. They're more about God and about God as seeking to fulfil his purpose for the world and for his people, which often works despite the actions of human beings rather than via them. They're stories that help us understand who we are rather than stories that tell us what to be.

In the beginning (days one to three)

1 At the beginning of God's creating the heavens and the earth, [2]when the earth was an empty void, with darkness over the face of the deep, and God's breath sweeping over the face of the water, [3]God said, 'Light!' and light came into being. [4]God saw that light was good, and God made a distinction between light and darkness. [5]God called the light 'day'; the darkness he called 'night'. And there was evening and there was morning, day one.

[6]God said, 'A dome in the middle of the water to make water distinct from water!' [7]And God made the dome and made a distinction between the water that was under the dome and the water that was above the dome. So it came to be. [8]God called the dome 'heavens'. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

[9]God said, 'The water under the heavens is to come together into one place so the dry land may appear!' So it came to be. [10]God called the dry land 'earth'; the coming together of water he called 'seas'. God saw that it was good. [11]God said, 'The earth is to put forth vegetation: plants generating seed, fruit trees producing fruit by its species, with its seed in it, on the earth!' So it came to be. [12]The earth brought forth vegetation, plants generating seed by its species, and trees producing fruit with its seed in it by its species. God saw that it was good. [13]And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.

Filling in the outline (days four to six)

[14]God said, 'Lights in the dome of the heavens to make a distinction between day and night! They'll be for signs and set times and days and years, [15]and they'll be lights in the dome of the heavens to give light on the earth!' So it came to be. [16]God made the two big lights (the bigger light to rule the day and the smaller light to rule the night) and the stars. [17]God put them in the dome of the heavens to give light on the earth, [18]to rule over the day and over the night, and to make a distinction between light and darkness. God saw that it was good. [19]And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.

[20]God said, 'The water is to teem with living creatures, and birds are to fly over the earth, over the face of the dome of the heavens!' [21]God created the big sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the water teems, by their species, and every winged bird by its species. God saw that it was good. [22]God blessed them: 'Be fruitful, be numerous, fill the water in the seas; birds are to be numerous on the earth.' [23]And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

[24]God said, 'The earth is to bring forth living creatures by their species – animals, moving things and the living things of the earth, by their species!' So it came to be. [25]God made the living things of the earth by their species, animals by their species and

all the things that move on the ground by their species. God saw that it was good.

The week's work completed

[26]God said, 'Let's make human beings in our image, as our likeness, so they can hold sway over the fish in the sea, over the
birds in the heavens, over the animals, over all the earth and over all the things that move on the earth.' [27]So God created human
beings in his image. He created them in the image of God. He created them male and female. [28]God blessed them, and said to
them, 'Be fruitful, be numerous, fill the earth and subjugate it, hold sway over the fish in the sea, over the birds in the heavens and
over every creature that moves on the earth.'
[29]God said, 'Here, I give you all the plants that generate seed that are on the face of all the earth, and every tree with fruit that
generates seed. These will be food for you, [30]for all the creatures of the earth, for all the birds in the heavens and for all the things
that move on the earth that have living breath in them, all the green plants as food.' So it came to be.
[31]God saw all that he had made, and there – it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.
2 So the heavens and the earth were finished, with all their forces. [2]On the seventh day God had finished his work that he had
been doing, so on the seventh day he stopped from all his work that he had been doing. [3]God blessed the seventh day and
made it sacred, because on it God stopped from his entire work of creation that he had been doing.

To put it another way . . .

[4]These are the lines of descent of the heavens and the earth when they were created.
When Yahweh God made the earth and the heavens, [5]and no bush of the wild was on the earth yet and no plant of the wild had
grown yet (because Yahweh God had not made it rain on the earth, and there was no human being to serve the ground, [6]though a
stream would go up from the earth and water the entire face of the ground), [7]Yahweh God shaped a human person [*adam*] with
earth from the ground [*adamah*] and blew into its nostrils living breath, and the human person became a living being.
[8]Yahweh God planted a garden in Eden ['Lavishness'], in the east, and put there the human being he had shaped. [9]Yahweh God
made to grow up from the ground every tree that's desirable to look at and good for food, with the life-tree in the middle of the
garden, and the good-and-bad-knowledge tree.
[10]There was a river going out of Eden to water the garden, and from there dividing and becoming four headwaters. [11]The name
of the first was Pishon; it was the one going round the entire Havilah region, where the gold is. ([12]The gold of that region is good;
pearl and onyx stone are there.) [13]The name of the second river was Gihon; it was the one going round the entire Kush [Sudan]
region. [14]The name of the third river was Tigris; it was the one going east of Ashshur. The fourth river was the Euphrates.

The helper

[15]Yahweh God took the human being and set him down in Eden Garden to serve it and keep it. [16]Yahweh God ordered the
human being: 'From every tree in the garden you may definitely eat. [17]But from the good-and-bad-knowledge tree you will not
eat, because on the day you eat from it, you will definitely die.'
[18]Yahweh God said, 'It's not good for the human being to be on his own. I'll make him a helper suitable for him.' [19]Yahweh
God shaped from the ground every creature of the wild and every bird in the heavens, and brought them to the human being to see
what he'd call it. Whatever the human being called a living being, that became its name. [20]The human being gave names to all the
animals, to the birds in the heavens and to all the creatures of the wild. But for a human being he didn't find a helper suitable for
him.
[21]So Yahweh God made a coma fall on the human being so he slept, took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.
[22]Yahweh God built the rib that he'd taken from the human being into a woman, and brought her to the human being. [23]The
human being said: 'This, now, is bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh! This one will be called Woman [*ishshah*], because
from a man [*ish*] this one was taken.' [24]That's why a man abandons his father and his mother and attaches himself to his woman
and they become one flesh.
[25]The two of them were naked, the man and his woman, but they felt no shame.

Creation asserts itself

3 Now the snake was the shrewdest of all the creatures of the wild that Yahweh God had made. It said to the woman, 'Did God
really say you will not eat from any tree in the garden?' [2]The woman said to the snake, 'We may eat of the fruit from the
trees in the garden, [3]but from the fruit of the tree that's in the middle of the garden God said, "You will not eat of it and you will
not touch it, so that you don't die."'
[4]The snake said to the woman, 'You won't die at all. [5]Rather, God knows that on the day you eat of it, your eyes will open and
you'll become like gods, knowing good and bad.' [6]The woman saw that the tree was good to eat and that it was an object of
longing to the eyes, and the tree was desirable for giving insight. So she took of its fruit and ate, and also gave some to her man
with her, and he ate. [7]The eyes of the two of them opened and they knew that they were naked, so they sewed fig leaves together
and made themselves loincloths.
[8]They heard the sound of Yahweh God walking about in the garden in the breezy time of the day, so the man and his woman
hid from the face of Yahweh God among the trees in the garden. [9]Yahweh God called to the man and said to him, 'Where are
you?' [10]He said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid.' [11]He said, 'Who told you

that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I ordered you not to eat from?' [12]The man said, 'The woman you put with me – she gave to me from the tree, and I ate.' [13]Yahweh God said to the woman, 'What is this that you've done?' The woman said, 'The snake – it deceived me, and I ate.'

The consequences

[14]Yahweh God said to the snake, 'Because you've done this, you're cursed, away from all the animals and the creatures of the wild. On your stomach you'll go and soil you'll eat all the days of your life. [15]I shall put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He'll hit you on the head; you'll hit him on the heel.'
[16]To the woman he said, 'I shall make very great your pain in connection with pregnancy. In painfulness you'll give birth to children. Towards your man will be your desire, but he – he'll rule over you.'
[17]To Adam he said, 'Because you listened to the voice of your woman and ate from the tree I ordered you, "You will not eat from it", the ground is cursed because of you. In pain you'll eat from it all the days of your life. [18]Thorn and thistle it will grow for you and you'll eat plants of the wild. [19]By the sweat of your face you'll eat bread, until you go back to the ground, because you were taken from it. Because you were earth, and you'll go back to earth.'
[20]The man named his woman Havvah [Eve], because she became the mother of every living person [*hay*]. [21]Yahweh God made for Adam and his woman leather coats, and clothed them. [22]But Yahweh God said, 'Here, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and bad. So now, he mustn't put out his hand and also take from the life-tree and eat, and live permanently.' [23]So Yahweh God sent him off from Eden Garden to serve the ground from which he'd been taken.
[24]So Yahweh God drove the man out and made the sphinxes dwell east of Eden Garden, with a sword-like flame whirling, to keep the way to the life-tree.

The first family, the first worship, the first acceptance, the first rejection

4 Now the man slept with his woman, Havvah, she got pregnant, and she gave birth to Qayin [Cain]. She said, 'I've acquired [*qanah*] someone with Yahweh.' [2]She went on to give birth to his brother, Hebel ['Breath'; Abel]. Hebel became one who kept sheep, while Qayin became one who served the ground. [3]After some time, Qayin brought some of the fruit of the ground as an offering for Yahweh, [4]while Hebel, too, brought some of the firstborn of his flock, some of the fat parts. Yahweh recognized Hebel and his offering, [5]but Qayin and his offering Yahweh did not recognize. It really enraged Qayin and he went into a huff. [6]Yahweh said to Qayin, 'Why does it enrage you? Why have you gone into a huff? [7]If you do what's good, there'll be honouring, won't there? But if you don't do what's good, wrongdoing is crouching at the entrance. Towards you will be its desire, but you – you're to rule over it.'
[8]Qayin said to Hebel his brother . . . And while they were in the open country, Qayin set upon Hebel his brother and killed him.
[9]Yahweh said to Qayin, 'Where's Hebel, your brother?' He said, 'I don't know – am I the one who keeps my brother?' [10]He said, 'What have you done? A sound! Your brother's spilt blood is crying out to me from the ground. [11]There, you are cursed, away from the ground that has opened its mouth to receive your brother's spilt blood from your hand. [12]When you serve the ground, it will no more give its energy to you. A drifter, a vagrant, you'll be on the earth.'

The protection

[13]Qayin said to Yahweh, 'My waywardness is too big to carry. [14]Here, you've driven me away today from the face of the ground, and from your face I'm to conceal myself, and I'm to be a drifter, a vagrant on the earth – and anyone who finds me can kill me.' [15]But Yahweh said to him, 'Therefore, anyone who kills Qayin, sevenfold it's to be redressed.' And Yahweh put a mark on Qayin so no one who found him would strike him down. [16]So Qayin went out from being before Yahweh's face and lived in the country of Nod ['Drifting'], east of Eden.
[17]Qayin slept with his woman, she got pregnant, and she gave birth to Hanok. He was building a town, and he named the town after his son Hanok. [18]To Hanok was born Irad, Irad fathered Mehuya'el, Mehiya'el fathered Metusa'el, and Metusa'el fathered Lemek. [19]Lemek got himself two women; the name of one was Adah, the name of the second Tsillah. [20]Adah gave birth to Yabal; he was the ancestor of everyone who lives with a tent and livestock. [21]His brother's name was Yubal; he was the ancestor of everyone who plays guitar or pipe. [22]Tsillah, she too gave birth, to Tubal Qayin, forger of all copper and iron. Tubal-qayin's sister was Na'amah.
[23]Lemek said to his women,

Adah and Tsillah, listen to my voice;
as Lemek's women, give ear to my word.
Because I've killed someone for wounding me,
a young man for injuring me.
[24]If for Qayin it's to be redressed sevenfold,
for Lemek seventy-sevenfold.

[25]Once more Adam slept with his woman and she gave birth to a son. She named him Set, because 'God has granted me [*sit*] another offspring in place of Hebel, because Qayin killed him'. [26]To Set, too, a son was born, and he named him Enosh. At that time a beginning was made to calling in Yahweh's name.

Then he died

5 This is the document with Adam's lines of descent. On the day God created human beings, it was in the likeness of God that he made them. [2]Male and female he created them, and he blessed them, and named them 'human beings', on the day he created them.

[3]When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered someone in his likeness, as his image, and named him Set. [4]Adam's days after fathering Set came to 800 years, and he fathered sons and daughters. [5]So all the days that Adam lived came to 930 years. Then he died.

[6]When Set had lived 105 years, he fathered Enosh. [7]Set lived 807 years after fathering Enosh, and he fathered sons and daughters. [8]So all the days of Set came to 912 years. Then he died.

[9]When Enosh had lived 90 years, he fathered Qenan. [10]Enosh lived 815 years after fathering Qenan, and he fathered sons and daughters. [11]So all the days of Enosh came to 905 years. Then he died.

[12]When Qenan had lived 70 years, he fathered Mahalal'el. [13]Qenan lived 840 years after fathering Mahalal'el, and he fathered sons and daughters. [14]So all the days of Qenan came to 910 years. Then he died.

[15]When Mahalal'el had lived 65 years, he fathered Yared. [16]Mahalal'el lived 830 years after fathering Yared, and he fathered sons and daughters. [17]So all the days of Mahalal'el came to 895 years. Then he died.

[18]When Yared had lived 162 years, he fathered Hanok [Enoch]. [19]Yared lived 800 years after fathering Hanok, and he fathered sons and daughters. [20]So all the days of Yared came to 962 years. Then he died.

[21]When Hanok had lived 65 years, he fathered Metushalah. [22]Hanok walked about with God 300 years after fathering Metushalah, and he fathered sons and daughters. [23]So all the days of Hanok came to 365 years. [24]Hanok walked about with God, and then he was no more, because God took him.

The need and the promise

[25]When Metushalah had lived 187 years, he fathered Lemek. [26]Metushalah lived 782 years after fathering Lemek, and he fathered sons and daughters. [27]So all the days of Metushalah came to 969 years. Then he died.

[28]When Lemek had lived 182 years, he fathered a son, [29]and named him Noah ['Settling Down'], saying: 'This man: he'll relieve us [*niham*] from our work, from the pain of our hands, from the ground that Yahweh cursed.' [30]Lemek lived 595 years after fathering Noah, and he fathered sons and daughters. [31]So all the days of Lemek came to 777 years. Then he died.

[32]When Noah had lived 500 years, Noah fathered Shem, Ham and Yephet.

6 When humanity started to be numerous on the face of the ground and daughters were born to them, [2]the sons of the divine beings saw that the daughters of the human beings were good-looking and they took women for themselves, any one that they chose.

[3]Yahweh said, 'My spirit will not dwell in humanity permanently, because it's flesh. Its time will be 120 years.' [4]Now the Nephilim ['Fallen'] were on the earth at that time, and also afterwards, when the sons of the divine beings had sex with the daughters of human beings, and they gave birth for them. These were the strong men that were of old, famous men.

[5]Yahweh saw that humanity's bad state on the earth was great. The entire inclination of its mind's intentions was simply bad, all day. [6]Yahweh regretted that he had made humanity on the earth. It pained his heart. [7]Yahweh said, 'I shall wipe out the humanity that I created from the face of the ground, from humanity to animals to moving things to birds in the heavens, because I regret that I made them.' [8]But Noah found grace in Yahweh's eyes.

[9]These are Noah's lines of descent. Now Noah was someone who was faithful and a person of integrity among his generations. It was with God that Noah walked about. [10]Noah fathered three sons, Shem, Ham and Yephet.

Filled with violence

[11]So the earth had become devastated before God; the earth was full of violence. [12]God looked at the earth: there, it had become devastated, because all flesh had devastated its way on the earth.

[13]So God said to Noah, 'The end of all flesh has come before me, because the earth is full of violence through them. Here, I'm going to devastate them, with the earth. [14]Make for yourself a chest of gopher wood. With rooms you're to make the chest, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. [15]This is how you're to make it: the length of the chest 150 metres, its width 25 metres and its height 15 metres. [16]You're to make a skylight for the chest, to finish it to half a metre above, and to put the entrance of the chest in its side. You're to make it with bottom, second and third levels.

[17]And I: here, I'm bringing a deluge, water on the earth, to devastate all flesh in which there is living breath, from under the heavens. Everything on the earth will breathe its last. [18]But I shall implement my pact with you. You're to come into the chest, you, your sons, your wife and your sons' wives with you. [19]And of everything living, of all flesh, bring two of each into the chest to keep them alive with you. They're to be a male and a female. [20]Of the birds of each species, of the animals of each species and of everything that moves on the ground of each species, two of each are to come to you to keep them alive. [21]And you: get yourself some of all food that's eaten and gather it for yourself. It will be food for you and for them.'

[22]Noah acted in accordance with all that God ordered him. So he did.

The great deep breaks out

Yahweh said to Noah, 'Go into the chest, you and your entire household, because I've seen that you're a person who is faithful

7 before me in this generation. [2]Of every pure animal take with you seven of each, a male and its mate, and of an animal that's
not pure, two, a male and its mate, [3]also of the birds in the heavens seven of each, male and female, to keep offspring alive
on the face of the entire earth. [4]Because in seven more days I'm going to make it rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights
and wipe out everything that exists that I made, from on the face of the ground.' [5]Noah acted in accordance with all that God
ordered him.

[6]Noah was a man of 600 years when the deluge happened, as water on the earth. [7]Noah, his sons, his wife and his sons' wives
with him came into the chest because of the water of the deluge. [8]Of the pure animals, of the animals that are not pure, of the birds
and of everything that moves on the ground, [9]two of each came to Noah into the chest, male and female, as God ordered Noah;
[10]and after the seven days the water of the deluge came on the earth. [11]In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second
month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the springs in the great deep broke out and the apertures in the
heavens opened. [12]The rain came on the earth forty days and forty nights.

And God shut him in

[13]On this particular day Noah, with Shem, Ham and Yephet, Noah's sons, and Noah's wife and his sons' three wives, came into
the chest, [14]they and every living thing by its species, every animal by its species, everything that moves on the earth by its
species and everything that flies by its species, every bird and every winged creature. [15]They came to Noah into the chest, two
each of all flesh in which was living breath. [16]So the ones who came, male and female from all flesh, came as God ordered him.
And Yahweh shut him in.

[17]The deluge went on for forty days on the earth, and the water increased and lifted the chest, and it rose up from on the earth.
[18]The water grew strong and increased greatly on the earth, and the chest moved on the face of the water. [19]When the water grew
very, very strong on the earth, all the lofty mountains under the entire heavens were covered. [20]Seven metres higher the water
grew strong; the mountains were covered. [21]All flesh moving on the earth breathed its last: birds, animals, living things, all the
things teeming on the earth, and all humanity. [22]Everything that had living breath in its nostrils, everything that was on the dry
land, died. [23]It wiped out everything that existed that was on the face of the ground, from human beings to animals to moving
things to birds in the heavens. They were wiped out from the earth. Only Noah and those with him in the chest remained. [24]And
the water grew strong on the earth for 150 days.

But God remembered Noah

8 But God was mindful of Noah and all the living things and the animals that were with him in the chest, and God made a wind
pass over the earth, and the water abated. [2]The springs in the deep and the apertures in the heavens were blocked up, the rain
from the heavens held back [3]and the water gradually withdrew from on the earth. The water decreased at the end of 150 days,
[4]and the chest came to a stop in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the Ararat mountains. [5]As the water
gradually decreased until the tenth month, in the tenth month on the first day of the month the tops of the mountains appeared.

[6]At the end of forty days, Noah opened the window in the chest that he had made [7]and sent out a raven. It continued to go out
and come back until the water dried up from on the earth. [8]He sent out a dove from being with him to see if the water had
diminished from on the face of the ground, [9]but the dove didn't find a place to alight for the sole of its foot and it came back to
him to the chest, because there was water on the face of the entire earth. So he put out his hand and took it and brought it to him
into the chest.

[10]He waited again seven more days and once more sent out the dove from the chest. [11]The dove came to him at evening time,
and there, in its mouth a plucked-off olive leaf. So Noah knew that the water had diminished from on the earth. [12]He waited again
seven more days and sent out the dove, and it didn't come back to him again.

Never again

[13]In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first of the month, the water dried up from on the earth. Noah
removed the chest's cover and looked: there, the face of the ground was dry. [14]In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of
the month, the earth was dried out. [15]God spoke to Noah: [16]'Get out of the chest, you, your wife, your sons and your sons' wives
with you. [17]Every living thing that's with you from all flesh, birds, animals and everything that moves on the earth: get them out
with you, so they may teem on the earth and be fruitful and be numerous on the earth.'

[18]So Noah got out, he, his sons, his wife and his sons' wives with him. [19]Every living thing, everything that moves and every
bird, everything that moves on the earth got out of the chest by their families.

[20]Noah built an altar for Yahweh, took some of every pure animal and of every pure bird, and offered up burnt offerings on the
altar, [21]and Yahweh smelled the nice smell. Yahweh said to himself, 'I won't ever again slight the ground on account of
humanity, because the inclination of the human mind is bad from its youth. I won't ever again strike down everything living, as I
did. [22]Never again, for all earth's days, will seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, stop.'

The renewed creation blessing and the first pact or covenant

9 God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, 'Be fruitful, be numerous, fill the earth. [2]Reverence towards you and awe
towards you will be on all the living things on the earth, on all the birds in the sky, on everything that moves on the ground
and on all the fish in the sea; they're given into your hand. [3]Everything that moves, that's alive, will be yours as food. As I gave

you green plants, everything is yours. [4]Yet flesh with its life, its blood, you will not eat.
[5]And indeed, your blood, for your life, I shall require. From every living thing I shall require it, and from a human being I shall require a human life, an individual for his brother. [6]One who sheds human blood, by means of a human being his blood will flow, because it was in God's image that he made humanity. [7]But you: be fruitful, be numerous, teem on the earth, be numerous on it.'
[8]And God said to Noah and to his sons with him: [9]'Here, I myself am going to implement my pact with you, with your offspring after you [10]and with every living being that's with you: birds, animals and every living thing on the earth with you, all that got out of the chest, every living thing on the earth. [11]I shall implement my pact with you and all flesh will not be cut off again by the water of a deluge. Never again will there be a deluge to devastate the earth.'

The bow laid aside (but things go wrong again)

[12]And God said, 'This is the sign of the pact that I'm putting between me and you and every living creature that's with you, to the generations, permanently. [13]I've put my bow in the clouds. It will be a sign of the pact between me and the earth. [14]When I bring clouds on the earth and the bow appears in the clouds, [15]I shall be mindful of my pact that's between me and you and every living creature among all flesh, and the water will never again become a deluge to devastate all flesh. [16]The bow will be in the clouds and I shall see it, being mindful of the permanent pact between God and every living creature among all flesh that's on the earth.' [17]God said to Noah, 'This will be the sign of the pact that I've implemented between me and all flesh that's on the earth.'
[18]Noah's sons who got out of the chest were Shem, Ham and Yephet; Ham was the father of Kena'an [Canaan]. [19]These three were Noah's sons, and from them the entire earth dispersed.
[20]Noah, a man of the ground, as his first act planted a vineyard. [21]He drank some of the wine and got drunk, and exposed himself inside his tent. [22]Ham, Kena'an's father, saw his father's nakedness and told his two brothers outside. [23]Shem and Yephet took a cover, put it on both their shoulders, walked backwards and covered their father's nakedness, with their faces turned backwards so they didn't see their father's nakedness.
[24]Noah woke up from his wine and came to know what his youngest son had done to him. [25]He said, 'Cursed be Kena'an ['Bow Down']: he'll be the lowest servant to his brothers.' [26]And he said, 'Yahweh, the God of Shem, be blessed. May Kena'an be a servant to them. [27]May God extend [*yapht*] Yephet and may he dwell in Shem's tents. May Kena'an be a servant to them.'
[28]Noah lived after the deluge 350 years. [29]So all Noah's days came to 950 years. Then he died.

The nations

10 These are the lines of descent of Noah's sons, Shem, Ham and Yephet. Sons were born to them after the deluge.
[2]The sons of Yephet: Gomer, Magog, Maday [Media], Yavan [Greece], Tubal, Meshek and Tiras.
[3]The sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, Riphat and Togarmah.
[4]The sons of Yavan: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittites and Dodanites.
[5]From these, the nations on far shores parted into their countries, each with its language, by their kin-groups among their nations.
[6]The sons of Ham: Kush [Sudan], Misrayim [Egypt], Put and Kena'an.
[7]The sons of Kush: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Ra'mah and Sabteka.
The sons of Ra'mah: Sheba and Dedan.
[8]Kush fathered Nimrod, who was the first to become a strong man on the earth. [9]He became a strong man as a hunter before Yahweh; that's why it's said, 'Like Nimrod, a strong man as a hunter before Yahweh'. [10]The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erek, Akkad and Kalneh, in the region of Shin'ar. [11]From that region Ashshur went out and built Nineveh and the town squares, Kalah, [12]and Resen between Nineveh and Kalah: that's the big town.
[13]Misrayim fathered Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, [14]Patrusites, Kasluhites (from whom the Pelishtites [Philistines] went out) and Kaphtorites.
[15]Kena'an fathered Tsidon his firstborn, Het, [16]the Yebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, [17]the Hivvites,the Arkites, the Sinites, [18]the Arvadites, the Tsemarites and the Hamatites. Later, the Kena'anite kin-groups dispersed [19]and the Kena'anite border reached from Tsidon until you come to Gerar, near Azzah [Gaza], until you come to Sedom, Amorah, Admah and Tseboyim, near Lasha.
[20]These are the descendants of Ham by their kin-groups, by their languages, in their countries, by their nations.

Babel becomes Babble-on

[21]Sons were also born to Shem, the ancestor of all the descendants of Eber, and Yephet's older brother. [22]The descendants of Shem: Elam, Ashshur, Arpakshad, Lud and Aram.
[23]The descendants of Aram: Uts, Hul, Geter and Mash.
[24]Arpakshad fathered Shelah; Shelah fathered Eber.
[25]Two sons were born to Eber: the name of the first was Peleg, because in his time the earth divided [*palag*], and the name of the second was Yoktan.
[26]Yoktan fathered Almodad, Sheleph, Hatsarmavet, Yerah, [27]Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, [28]Obal, Abima'el, Sheba, [29]Ophir, Havilah and Yobab. All these were descendants of Yoktan. [30]Their settlements went from Mesha until you come to Sephar, the eastern highland.
[31]These are the descendants of Shem by their kin-groups, by their languages, in their countries, by their nations.
[32]These are the kin-groups of Noah's sons by their lines of descent according to their nations. From these the nations parted in

the earth after the deluge.

11 Now the entire earth was of one language and common words. [2]As people moved on in the east they found a valley in the region of Shin'ar and lived there. [3]They said, one to his neighbour, 'Come on, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly'; so they had brick in place of stone, and tar in place of cement. [4]They said, 'Come on, let's build ourselves a town and a tower with its top in the heavens, and make a name for ourselves, so we don't disperse over the face of the entire earth.'

[5]But Yahweh went down to see the town and the tower that the human beings had made. [6]Yahweh said, 'Here, one people with one language for all of them, and this is the first thing they do. So now nothing that they may scheme to do is closed off from them. [7]Come on, let's go down and make a babble of their language there, so one person won't be able to hear his neighbour's language.'

[8]So Yahweh dispersed them from there over the face of the entire earth and they left off from building the town. [9]That's why it was named Babel, because there Yahweh made a babble of the language of the entire earth, and from there Yahweh dispersed them over the face of the entire earth.

The tragedies of family

[10]These are Shem's lines of descent.

When Shem had lived 100 years, he fathered Arpakshad, two years after the deluge. [11]After fathering Arpakshad, Shem lived 500 years and fathered sons and daughters.

[12]When Arpakshad had lived 35 years, he fathered Shelah. [13]After fathering Shelah, Arpakshad lived 403 years and fathered sons and daughters.

[14]When Shelah had lived 30 years, he fathered Eber. [15]After fathering Eber, Shelah lived 403 years and fathered sons and daughters.

[16]When Eber had lived 34 years, he fathered Peleg. [17]After fathering Peleg, Eber lived 430 years and fathered sons and daughters.

[18]When Peleg had lived 30 years, he fathered Re'u. [19]After fathering Re'u, Peleg lived 209 years and fathered sons and daughters.

[20]When Re'u had lived 32 years, he fathered Serug. [21]After fathering Serug, Re'u lived 207 years and fathered sons and daughters.

[22]When Serug had lived 30 years, he fathered Nahor. [23]After fathering Nahor, Serug lived 200 years and fathered sons and daughters.

[24]When Nahor had lived 29 years, he fathered Terah. [25]After fathering Terah, Nahor lived 119 years and fathered sons and daughters. [26]When Terah had lived 70 years, he fathered Abram, Nahor and Haran.

[27]So these are Terah's lines of descent. Terah fathered Abram, Nahor and Haran, and Haran fathered Lot. [28]Haran died before Terah his father in the country that was his homeland, Ur of the Kasdites [Babylonians]. [29]Abram and Nahor got themselves wives; the name of Abram's wife was Sarai and the name of Nahor's wife was Milkah daughter of Haran, the father of Milkah and of Yiskah. [30]But Sarai was infertile; she had no child.

Get yourself out of here

[31]Terah took Abram his son, Lot ben Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, the wife of Abram, and they left Ur of the Kasdites together to go to the country of Kena'an, but they came as far as Harran and lived there. [32]Terah's days came to 205 years, and Terah died in Harran.

12 Yahweh said to Abram, 'Get yourself from your country, from your homeland and from your father's household, to the country that I shall enable you to see, [2]and I shall make you into a big nation. I shall bless you and make your name big and you'll become a blessing. [3]I shall bless the people who bless you, but the person who slights you I shall curse. All the kin-groups on the earth will bless themselves by you.' [4]Abram went as Yahweh spoke to him, and Lot went with him. Abram was a man of seventy-five years when he left Harran.

[5]So Abram took Sarai his wife, Lot his brother's son, all the property that they had acquired and all the people that they had produced in Harran, and left to go to the country of Kena'an. When they came to the country of Kena'an, [6]Abram passed through the country as far as the site at Shekem, as far as Moreh Oak. The Kena'anites were then in the country. [7]Yahweh appeared to Abram and said, 'To your offspring I shall give this country.' He built an altar there for Yahweh who had appeared to him. [8]He went on from there to the mountain country on the east of Bet-el [Bethel], and spread his tent, Bet-el on the west, Ha'ay [Ai, 'The Ruin'] on the east. He built an altar there for Yahweh and called in Yahweh's name.

[9]Abram moved on, moving on gradually to the Negeb.

The fear and the lie

[10]A famine came in the country, and Abram went down to Misrayim to reside there, because the famine was heavy in the country. [11]When he was near coming into Misrayim, he said to Sarai his wife, 'Here, please: I know that you're a woman who's attractive in appearance. [12]When the Misrayimites see you and say, "She's his wife", they may kill me and let you live. [13]Please say that you're my sister, in order that things may be good for me on account of you and I myself may live on by means of you.' [14]When Abram came to Misrayim, the Misrayimites saw that the woman was very attractive. [15]The officials of Par'oh [Pharaoh]

saw her and praised her to Par'oh, and the woman was taken into Par'oh's household. [16]For Abram things were good because of her; he had flock, herd, male and female donkeys, servants, maidservants and camels.

[17]But Yahweh touched Par'oh and his household with serious epidemics on account of Sarai, Abram's wife. [18]Par'oh called for Abram and said, 'What is this that you've done to me? Why didn't you tell me that she was your wife? [19]Why did you say "She's my sister", so I got her for myself as a wife? Now, here's your wife; take her and go.' [20]Par'oh gave men orders concerning him and sent him off, him and his wife and all that he had.

13 So Abram went up from Misrayim, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, to the Negeb.

[2]Now Abram was a man of great substance, with livestock, with silver and with gold. [3]In his moving on he went from the Negeb as far as Bet-el, as far as the place where his tent had been formerly, between Bet-el and Ha'ay, [4]the site of the altar that he had made there at first. There Abram called in Yahweh's name.

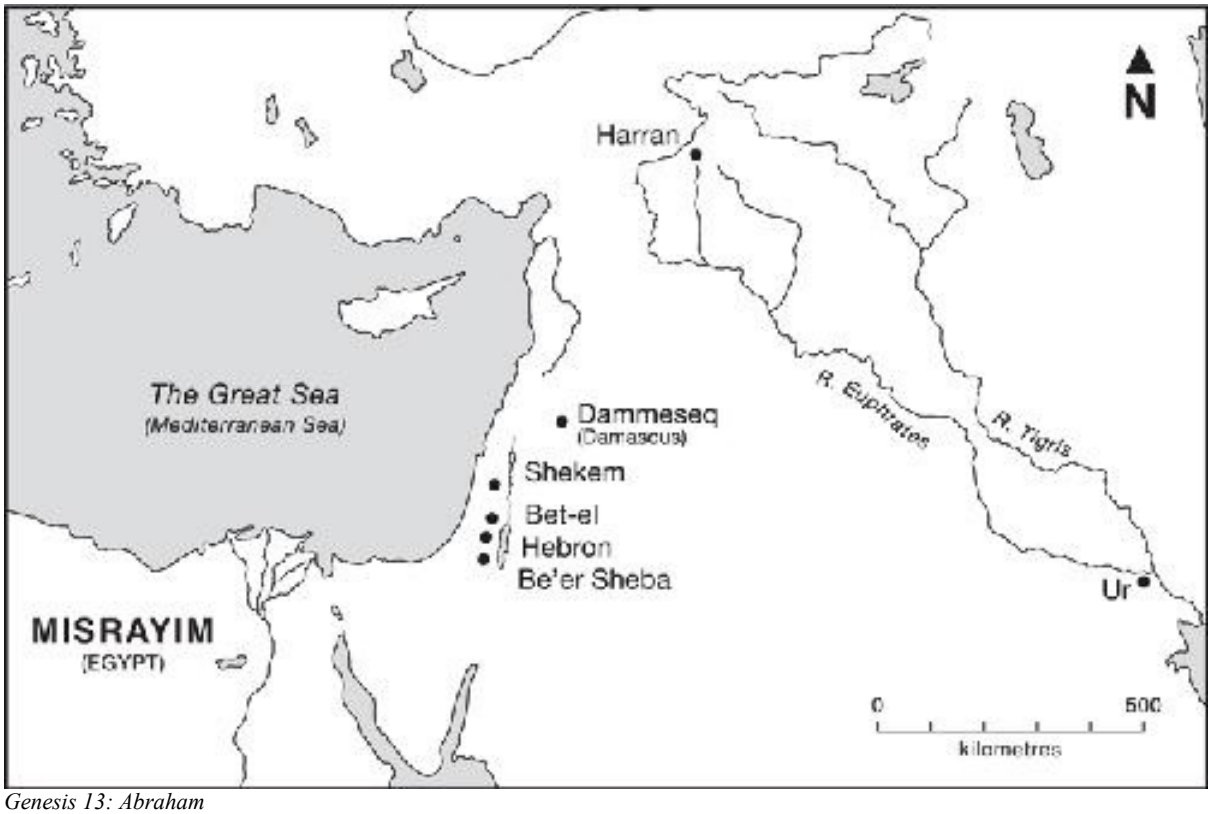
The implausible promise

[5]Lot, who went with Abram, also had flock and herd and tents, [6]and the region couldn't support them living together, because their property was great. So they couldn't live together. [7]There was argument between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock (and the Kena'anite and the Perizzite were then living in the country). [8]So Abram said to Lot, 'Please, there mustn't be arguing between me and you and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, because we're brothers. [9]The entire country is before you, isn't it? Part from me, please: if you go north, I'll go south, but if you go south, I'll go north.'

[10]Lot lifted his eyes and looked at the entire plain of the Yarden [Jordan], that it was well-watered, all of it, before Yahweh devastated Sedom and Amorah [Sodom and Gomorrah], like Yahweh's garden, like the country of Misrayim as you come to Tso'ar; [11]and Lot chose for himself the entire Yarden plain.

So Lot moved on east, and they parted, each from his brother. [12]Abram lived in the country of Kena'an, and Lot lived in the towns of the plain and put up his tents near Sedom. [13]Now the people of Sedom were bad, wrongdoers in relation to Yahweh, greatly. [14]But Yahweh said to Abram after Lot parted from him, 'Lift your eyes and look, please, from the place where you are, to the north, to the south, to the east and to the west, [15]because the entire country that you're looking at I shall give to you and to your offspring, permanently. [16]I shall make your offspring like the earth's soil, so if a person can count the earth's soil, your offspring will also be counted. [17]Set off, walk about in the country, through its length and its width, because I shall give it to you.'

[18]So Abram moved his tents and came and lived by the Mamre oaks, which are at Hebron, and built an altar for Yahweh there.



Genesis 13: Abraham

Sedom not such a safe place

14 In the time of Amraphel king of Shin'ar, Aryok king of Ellasar, Kedorla'omer king of Elam and Tid'al king of Goyim, [2]they did battle with Bera king of Sedom, Birsha king of Amorah, Shin'ab king of Admah, Shem'eber king of Tseboyim, and the king of Bela (i.e. Tso'ar). [3]All these joined together in Siddim Vale (i.e. the Salt Sea). [4]For twelve years they had served Kedorla'omer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

[5]In the fourteenth year, Kedorla'omer and the kings who were with him came and struck down the Repha'ites at Ashterot Karnayim, the Zuzites at Ham, the Emim at Qiryatayim Plain [6]and the Horites in their highland, Se'ir as far as Pa'ran Oak, which is near the wilderness. [7]They went back and came to Ayin Mishpat (i.e. Qadesh), and struck down the Amaleqites' entire area, and also the Amorites who were living in Hatsatson Tamar.

[8]Then the king of Sedom, the king of Amorah, the king of Admah, the king of Tseboyim and the king of Bela (i.e. Tso'ar) went out, and lined up with them for battle in the Siddim Vale: [9]Kedorla'omer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goyim, Amraphel king of Shin'ar and Aryok king of Ellasar, four kings against the five. [10]Now the Siddim Vale was pit after pit of bitumen; the kings of Sedom and Amorah fled and fell into them, while the rest fled to the highland.

And a time for war

[11]They took all the property of Sedom and Amorah and all their food, and went. [12]So they took Lot, the son of Abram's brother, and his property, and went; he was living in Sedom. [13]Someone who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew. He was dwelling by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshkol and brother of Aner; these were partners in a pact with Abram.

[14]So Abram heard that his brother had been taken captive and mustered his trained men, people born in his household, 318 of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. [15]He and his servants split up against them by night, struck them down and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Dammeseq [Damascus]. [16]He took back all the property, and took back both his brother Lot and his property, and also the women and the company. [17]The king of Sedom went out to meet him after he got back from striking down Kedorla'omer and the kings that were with him, in the Shaveh Vale (i.e. the King's Vale), [18]and Melkitsedeq king of Salem brought out bread and wine (he was priest of God On High) [19]and blessed him, saying,

Blessed be Abram by God On High,
Lord of the heavens and the earth,
[20]And God On High be blessed,
who has delivered your attackers into your hand.

He gave him a tenth of everything. [21]The king of Sedom said to Abram, 'Give me the people but take the property for yourself.' [22]But Abram said to the king of Sedom, 'I raise my hand to Yahweh, God On High, Lord of the heavens and the earth: [23]"From a thread to a bootstrap, if I take anything that's yours . . ." You will not say, "I'm the one who made Abram wealthy." [24]Not me. Only what the boys have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshkol and Mamre – they are to have their share.'

How can you know?

15 Subsequently, Yahweh's word came to Abram in a vision: 'Don't be afraid, Abram. I will be your deliverance, and your wages will be very big.' [2]Abram said, 'Lord Yahweh, what will you give me, when I'm going to die childless, and the heir to my household will be a man from Dammeseq, Eli'ezer?'

[3]So Abram said, 'Here, you haven't given me offspring. Here, someone from my household will come into possession from me.' [4]But here, Yahweh's word came to him: 'This man won't come into possession from you. No, only someone who comes from inside you – he'll come into possession from you.' [5]He took him outside and said, 'Look at the heavens, please, and count the stars, if you can count them.' He said to him, 'That's what your offspring will be like.'

[6]He trusted in Yahweh, and he deemed it as faithfulness on his part. [7]He said to him, 'I am Yahweh who brought you out from Ur of the Kasdites to give you this country as a possession.'

[8]But he said, 'Lord Yahweh, how may I know that I shall take possession of it?' [9]He said to him, 'Get me a heifer of three years, a goat of three years, a ram of three years, a pigeon and a baby bird.' [10]He got him all these, cut them in half and put one half opposite its neighbour, but didn't cut the birds in half. [11]Birds of prey came down on the carcases, but Abram drove them away. [12]As the sun was about to go, a coma fell on Abram, and there, a great dark dread was falling on him.

Yahweh confirms a pact or covenant (but will they believe it?)

[13]He said to Abram, 'You can know for sure that your offspring will be residents in a country not theirs. They will serve them, and they will humble them for 400 years. [14]But the nation that they serve I'm indeed going to judge. After this they will get out with much property. [15]But you: you will go to your ancestors with things being well. You'll be buried in a good old age. [16]In the fourth generation they'll come back here, because the Amorites' waywardness is not yet complete.'

[17]The sun went and it was dark, and there, a smoking firepot, a blazing torch, that passed between those pieces. [18]On that day Yahweh solemnized a pact with Abram, saying 'To your offspring I'm giving this country, from the Misrayimite river to the big river (the River Euphrates): [19]the Qenite, the Qenizzite, the Qadmonite, [20]the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Repha'ites, [21]the Amorite, the Kena'anite, the Girgashite and the Yebusite.'

16 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had not borne children for him. She had a Misrayimite maidservant; her name was Hagar. [2]Sarai said to Abram, 'Here, Yahweh has held me back from giving birth to children. You have sex with my maidservant; maybe I can be built up through her.'

Abram listened to Sarai's voice. [3]Sarai, Abram's wife, got Hagar the Misrayimite, her maidservant (after Abram had been living in the country of Kena'an for ten years), and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. [4]He had sex with Hagar and she got pregnant. When she saw that she was pregnant, her mistress became of slight worth in her eyes.

Hagar names God

[5]Sarai said to Abram, ‘The violence done to me rests on you. I myself put my maidservant in your arms, she’s seen that she’s pregnant, and I’ve become of slight worth in her eyes. Yahweh decide between me and you!’ [6]Abram said to Sarai, ‘Here, your maidservant is in your hand. Do to her what’s good in your eyes.’ Sarai humbled her, and she took flight from her.
[7]Yahweh’s envoy found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the Shur road. [8]He said, ‘Hagar, maidservant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?’ She said, ‘From Sarai, my mistress – I’m taking flight.’ [9]Yahweh’s envoy said to her, ‘Go back to your mistress. Let yourself be humbled under her hand.’ [10]But Yahweh’s envoy said to her, ‘I shall make your offspring very numerous; they won’t be able to be counted because of the large number.’
[11]Yahweh’s envoy said to her, ‘There, you’re pregnant and you’ll give birth to a son. You’re to name him Yishma’e’l [Ishmael], because Yahweh has listened [*shama*] to your humbling. [12]And he – he’ll be a wild donkey of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone’s hand against him, and he’ll dwell over against all his brothers.’
[13]She named Yahweh who spoke to her, ‘You are “God Seeing Me” [El Ro’i]’, because (she said), ‘Did I really see here, after he was seeing me?’ [14]That’s why they called the well ‘The Well of the Living One Seeing Me’ [Be’er Lahay Ro’i]. There, it’s between Qedesh and Bered.
[15]So Hagar gave birth to a son for Abram, and Abram named his son, to whom Hagar gave birth, Yishma’e’l. [16]Abram was a man of 86 years when Hagar gave birth to Yishma’e’l for Abram.

God renames Abram and Sarai

17 Abram was a man of ninety-nine years. Yahweh appeared to Abram and said to him, ‘I am God Shadday. Live your life before me and be a person of integrity. [2]I shall make my pact between me and you, and make you very, very numerous.’ [3]Abram fell on his face.
God spoke with him: [4]‘I myself – here is my pact with you. You’ll become the ancestor of a horde of nations. [5]You’ll no longer be named Abram. Your name will be Abraham, because I’m making you the “ancestor of a horde” [*ab-hamon*] of nations. [6]I shall enable you to be very, very fruitful and I shall make you into nations. From you kings will come. [7]I shall implement my pact between me and you and your offspring after you, through their generations, as a permanent pact, to be God for you and for your offspring after you. [8]I shall give to you, and to your offspring after you, the country in which you’re residing, the entire country of Kena’an, as a permanent holding, and I shall be God for them.’
[9]God said to Abraham, ‘And you, you’re to keep my pact, you and your offspring after you, through their generations. [10]This is my pact that you’re to keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: the circumcising of every male you have. [11]You’re to circumcise the flesh of your foreskin. It will be the sign of a pact between me and you. [12]As a child of eight days, every male among you is to be circumcised, through your generations. The person born in the household or acquired for silver from any foreigner, who doesn’t belong to your offspring: [13]he’s definitely to be circumcised, the one born in your household and the one acquired for silver. My pact in your flesh will be a permanent pact. [14]But a foreskinned male who does not circumcise the flesh of his foreskin: that person will be cut off from his kin. He’s contravened my pact.’
[15]And God said to Abraham: ‘Sarai, your wife: you’re not to name her Sarai, because her name is Sarah [‘Princess’]. [16]I shall bless her. There, I’m giving you a son from her. I shall bless her and she’ll become nations; kings of peoples will come from her.’

A promise for Yishma’e’l

[17]Abraham fell on his face, laughed and said to himself, ‘Can a child be born to a man of a hundred years, or can Sarah give birth to a child as a woman of ninety years?’ [18]Abraham said to God, ‘If only Yishma’e’l might live before you.’ [19]God said, ‘Well: Sarah your wife, she’s going to give birth to a son for you, and you’re to name him Yitshaq [Isaac]. I shall implement my pact for him as a permanent pact for his offspring after him.
[20]As for Yishma’e’l: I’ve listened. There, I’m blessing him, and making him fruitful and making him very, very numerous. Twelve leaders he will father, and I shall make him a big nation. [21]But my pact I shall implement with Yitshaq, to whom Sarah will give birth for you at this set time next year.’ [22]When he had finished speaking with him, God went up from Abraham.
[23]So Abraham took Yishma’e’l his son and all those born in his household and all those bought with his silver, every male among the people in Abraham’s household, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin, on that very day, as God had spoken with him. [24]Abraham was a man of ninety-nine years at the circumcising of the flesh of his foreskin, [25]while Yishma’e’l his son was a boy of thirteen years at the circumcising of the flesh of his foreskin. [26]On that very day Abraham and Yishma’e’l his son were circumcised, [27]and all the men in his household, those born in the household and those acquired with silver from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.
18 Yahweh appeared to him by the Mamre oaks, when he was sitting at the tent entrance as the day grew hot. [2]He lifted his eyes and looked, and there, three men were standing opposite him. When he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent entrance, bowed to the ground, [3]and said, ‘Sirs, please, if I’ve found grace in your eyes, don’t pass by your servant, please. [4]May someone please get a little water? Bathe your feet. Rest under the tree. [5]I shall get a bit of bread. Sustain your heart, then you can pass on, since you’ve passed near your servant.’ They said, ‘Yes, you may do as you have spoken.’

Entertaining angels unawares

[6]Abraham hurried to the tent to Sarah and said, ‘Hurry, three measures of fine flour, meal, knead it, make bread.’ [7]Abraham ran to the herd, got a nice, tender calf, and gave it to a boy, and he hurried to prepare it. [8]He got curds and milk and the calf that he’d

prepared and set it before them. He stood opposite them under the tree as they ate.
[9]They said to him, 'Where's Sarah your wife?' He said, 'There, in the tent.' [10]He said, 'I shall definitely come back to you at [nature's] reviving time. There, Sarah your wife will have a son.' Sarah was listening at the tent entrance, which was behind him. [11]Now Abraham and Sarah were old, going on in years; the way women menstruate had left off from happening for Sarah.
[12]So Sarah laughed to herself, saying 'After I'm withered is there going to be enjoyment for me, with my lord old?' [13]Yahweh said to Abraham, 'Why did Sarah laugh, saying "Shall I truly give birth, when I'm old?" [14]Is a thing too extraordinary for Yahweh? At this set time I shall come back to you at reviving time and Sarah will have a son.' [15]Sarah lied, saying 'I didn't laugh', because she was afraid. He said, 'No, you laughed.'
[16]From there the men set off, and they looked down at Sedom, with Abraham going with them to send them off.
[17]Now Yahweh had said, 'Am I going to hide from Abraham what I'm doing, [18]when Abraham is indeed to become a big, numerous nation, and all the nations on the earth are to bless themselves by him? [19]Because I've acknowledged him in order that he may order his children and his household after him so they may keep Yahweh's way by showing faithfulness in the exercise of authority, in order that Yahweh may bring about for Abraham what he's spoken concerning him.'

The cry from and for Sedom

[20]So Yahweh said, 'The outcry of Sedom and Amorah, it's big. Their wrongdoing, it's very grave. [21]I must go down and see whether they have acted totally in keeping with the outcry that has come to me. If not, I must acknowledge it.'
[22]The men turned their face from there and went to Sedom, while Abraham was still standing before Yahweh. [23]Abraham came up and said, 'Will you really sweep away the faithful with the faithless? [24]Maybe there are fifty faithful people within the town. Will you really sweep it away and not bear with the place for the sake of the fifty faithful people within it? [25]Far be it from you to do a thing like this, putting to death the faithful with the faithless, so the faithful and the faithless are the same. Far be it from you. Isn't the one who exercises authority over the entire earth to exercise authority?'
[26]Yahweh said, 'If I find in Sedom fifty faithful people within the town, I shall bear with the entire place on account of them.' [27]Abraham answered: 'There, please: I've resolved to speak to my Lord, when I'm soil and ash. [28]Maybe the fifty faithful will be five short. Will you devastate the entire town because of five?' He said, 'I won't devastate it if I find there forty-five.'
[29]He spoke yet again to him: 'Maybe forty will be found there.' He said, 'I won't act, on account of the forty.' [30]He said, 'May it please not enrage my Lord, and I shall speak. Maybe thirty will be found there.' He said, 'I won't act if I find there thirty.' [31]He said, 'There, please: I've resolved to speak with my Lord. Maybe twenty will be found there.' He said, 'I won't devastate it on account of the twenty.' [32]He said, 'May it please not enrage my Lord, and I shall speak one last time. Maybe ten will be found there.' He said, 'I won't devastate it on account of the ten.'
[33]Yahweh went when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham went back to his place.

Sex and violence in Sedom

19 The two envoys came to Sedom in the evening, and Lot was sitting at the gateway of Sedom. Lot saw them, and got up to meet them. He bowed low, his face to the ground. [2]He said, 'Here, sirs, please do turn aside to your servant's house so you can stay the night and bathe your feet. Then you can start early and go on your way.' They said, 'No, because we can stay the night in the square.' [3]But he pressed them hard, so they turned aside to him and came into his house. He made a banquet for them and baked flatbread, and they ate.
[4]Before they could go to bed, the men of the town, the men of Sedom, surrounded the house, from young right to old, the entire people, from every part. [5]They called to Lot and said to him, 'Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out so we can have sex with them.' [6]Lot went out to them at the entrance but shut the door behind him.
[7]He said, 'My brothers, don't do this wrong, please. [8]So, please: I have two daughters who haven't had sex with a man. Let me bring them out to you and you can do to them whatever is good in your eyes. Only don't do anything to these men, because this is why they've come under the shelter of my roof-beam.'
[9]But they said, 'Get over there.' They said, 'The man came to reside, and he's actually exercising authority. Now we'll deal badly with you, worse than with them.' They pressed hard against the man (against Lot) and came up to break the door. [10]But the men put out their hand and got Lot to come to them, into the house, and they shut the door. [11]As for the men who were at the entrance of the house, they struck them down with a daze, from young right to old, so they became weary of trying to find the entrance.

Don't look back

[12]The men said to Lot, 'Who else do you have here, sons-in-law, sons, daughters, anyone who belongs to you in the town? Take them out of the place. [13]Because we're going to devastate this place, because the outcry before Yahweh against them has become so big that Yahweh has sent us to devastate it.' [14]So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were to get his daughters, and said 'Set off, get out of this place, because Yahweh is going to devastate the town.' But in the eyes of his sons-in-law he was like someone making a joke.
[15]As dawn came, the envoys pressed Lot, saying 'Set off, take your wife and your two daughters who are to be found here, so you're not swept away because of the waywardness of the town.' [16]But he delayed, so the men took strong hold of his hand, his wife's hand and his two daughters' hand, by Yahweh's mercy on him, and got him out and set him down outside the town. [17]When they had got them outside, one said, 'Escape for your life, don't gaze behind you, don't halt anywhere in the plain. Escape to the highland, so you're not swept away.'

[18]Lot said to them, ‘No, please, my Lord! [19]There, please: your servant has found grace in your eyes. You’ve acted in such great commitment with me in preserving my life. But I – I can’t flee to the highland in order that the bad event doesn’t attach itself to me and I die. [20]Here, please – this town’s near for fleeing to, and it’s small. I can flee there, it’s small, so my life can be preserved.’

[21]He said to him, ‘Here, I honour your person in this thing too, in not overthrowing the town that you spoke of. [22]Hurry up and escape there, because I can’t do anything till you come there.’ That’s why the town was named Tso’ar [‘Small’].

[23]As the sun rose on the earth and Lot arrived at Tso’ar, [24]Yahweh rained on Sedom and Amorah burning sulphur from Yahweh, from the heavens. [25]He overthrew these towns and the entire plain and all the people living in the towns and what grew in the ground.

A distasteful aftermath

[26]But his wife gazed behind him and became a salt pilaster.

[27]Abraham started early in the morning for the place where he had stood before Yahweh [28]and looked out over the face of Sedom and Amorah and over the face of the entire plain region. He saw, and there, smoke from the region went up like the smoke from a furnace. [29]So it was that when God devastated the towns of the plain, God was mindful of Abraham and sent Lot out from the middle of the overthrow, when he overthrew the towns in which Lot lived.

[30]Lot went up from Tso’ar and lived in the highland, his two daughters with him, because he was afraid to live in Tso’ar. He lived in a cave, he and his two daughters. [31]The firstborn said to the young one, ‘Our father is old and there’s no one on earth to have sex with us in the way of the entire world. [32]Come on, let’s get our father to drink wine so we can sleep with him and get offspring alive through our father.’

[33]So they got their father to drink wine that night, and the firstborn went in and slept with her father. He didn’t know when she lay down or when she got up. [34]Next day the firstborn said to the young one, ‘There, I slept with my father last night. Let’s get him to drink wine tonight as well, and you come and sleep with him, so we can get offspring alive through our father.’ [35]So they got their father to drink wine that night as well, and the young one got up and slept with him. He didn’t know when she lay down or when she got up.

[36]So Lot’s two daughters got pregnant through their father. [37]The firstborn gave birth to a son and named him Mo’ab. He’s the ancestor of Mo’ab until today. [38]The younger one also gave birth to a son, and named him Ben-ammi. He’s the ancestor of the Ammonites until today.

Do we ever learn?

20 Abraham moved on from there to the Negeb region and lived between Qadesh and Shur. When he resided in Gerar, [2]Abraham said of Sarah his wife, ‘She’s my sister.’ So Abimelek king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. [3]But God came to Abimelek in a dream by night and said to him, ‘Here, you’re a dead man because of the woman whom you’ve taken. She’s married to someone.’

[4]Now Abimelek had not approached her. He said, ‘Lord, would you kill a nation even if it’s faithful? [5]That man said to me, “She’s my sister”, didn’t he. And she herself also said, “He’s my brother.” It was with integrity in my heart and with freedom of guilt in the palms of my hands that I did this.’ [6]God said to him in the dream, ‘I myself both know that you did this with integrity in your heart, and have also held you back from doing wrong in relation to me. That’s why I didn’t let you touch her. [7]So now give the man’s wife back. Because he’s a prophet, he can intercede for you. Save your life. But if you don’t give her back, acknowledge that you will definitely die, you and everything that’s yours.’

[8]Abimelek started early in the morning, called for all his servants and spoke all these things in their ears. The men were very frightened. [9]Abimelek called for Abraham and said to him, ‘What have you done to us? How did I do wrong in relation to you that you’ve brought a big wrong on me and on my entire kingdom? You’ve done deeds with me that should not be done.’

[10]Abimelek said to Abraham, ‘What did you see that you did this thing?’ [11]Abraham said, ‘I said, “There’s just no awe for God in this place, and they’ll kill me on account of my wife.” [12]And also, she truly is my sister, my father’s daughter, admittedly not my mother’s daughter. So she became my wife, [13]and when God made me wander from my father’s household, I said to her, “This is the commitment with which you’re to act towards me: every place we come to, say about me: he’s my brother.”’

The promise fulfilled

[14]Abimelek took flock and herd, servants and maidservants, and gave them to Abraham, and gave his wife Sarah back to him. [15]Abimelek said, ‘Here, my country is before you. Live wherever is good in your eyes.’ [16]To Sarah he said, ‘Here, I’m giving your brother a thousand pieces of silver. Here, it will be cover over the eyes for you and for everyone who is with you and with everyone, and you will be vindicated.’

[17]Abraham interceded with God and God healed Abimelek and his wife and his handmaids, and they gave birth ([18]because Yahweh had totally held back every womb belonging to Abimelek’s household on account of Sarah, Abraham’s wife).

21 When Yahweh attended to Sarah as he had said, Yahweh did for Sarah as he had spoken, [2]and Sarah got pregnant and gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. [3]Abraham named his son, who had been born to him, whom Sarah had borne to him, Yitshaq [‘He Will Laugh’]. [4]Abraham circumcised Yitshaq his son when he was eight days old, as God ordered him, [5]Abraham being a man of a hundred years when his son Yitshaq was born to him.

[6]Sarah said, ‘God has made laughter for me, since everyone who hears will laugh for me’, [7]and said, ‘Who would have uttered to Abraham, “Sarah has nursed children”? But I’ve given birth to a son for his old age.’

On not watching your son die

[8]The child grew and was weaned, and Abraham made a big banquet on the day that Yitshaq was weaned. [9]But Sarah saw the
son of Hagar the Misrayimite, to whom she gave birth for Abraham, laughing. [10]She said to Abraham, 'Drive this handmaid and
her son out, because this handmaid's son is not to come into possession with my son, with Yitshaq.'
[11]The thing was very bad in Abraham's eyes, on account of his son. [12]But God said to Abraham, 'It isn't to be bad in your eyes
about the boy or about your handmaid. Everything that Sarah says to you, listen to her voice, because it's through Yitshaq that
offspring will be named for you. [13]The son of the handmaid: I shall make him into a nation, too, because he's your offspring.'
[14]Abraham started early in the morning, got bread and a skin of water, and gave them to Hagar. He put them on her shoulder,
and the child, and sent her away. She went, and wandered about in the Be'er Sheba Wilderness. [15]When the water in the skin was
finished, she threw the child under one of the bushes [16]and went and sat herself down at a distance, a bowshot away, because (she
said), 'I'm not going to watch the child die.'
So she sat down at a distance and lifted up her voice and cried. [17]But God listened to the boy's voice, and God's envoy called to
Hagar from the heavens and said to her, 'What's with you, Hagar? Don't be afraid, because God has listened to the voice of the
boy where he is. [18]Get up, lift up the boy, take strong hold of him with your hand, because I'm going to make him into a big
nation.' [19]And God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. She went and filled the skin with water, and got the boy to drink.
[20]God was with the boy. He grew up and lived in the wilderness, and became a bowman. [21]He lived in the Pa'ran Wilderness.
His mother got a wife for him from the country of Misrayim.

Testimony to the blessing fulfilled

[22]At that time Abimelek and Phikol, his army officer, said to Abraham: 'God is with you in everything that you do. [23]So now,
swear to me here by God: if you deal falsely with me or with my offspring or with my posterity . . . You're to act with me and
with the country in which you've resided in accordance with the commitment with which I've acted with you.' [24]Abraham said, 'I
myself swear.'
[25]Abraham reproved Abimelek concerning a well of water that Abimelek's servants had seized. [26]Abimelek said, 'I don't know
who did this thing. You didn't tell me; I hadn't heard of it till today.' [27]Abraham took flock and herd and gave them to Abimelek,
and the two of them solemnized a pact. [28]Abraham put seven ewes from the flock on their own. [29]Abimelek said to Abraham,
'What are these seven ewes here that you've put on their own?' [30]He said, 'You're to take the seven ewes from my hand so it will
be a witness for me that I dug this well [*be'er*].' [31]That's why that place was called Be'er Sheba, because the two of them swore
[*shaba*] there. [32]So they solemnized a pact at Be'er Sheba, and Abimelek and Phikol, his army officer, set off and went back to the
Pelishtites' country.
[33]He planted a tamarisk at Be'er Sheba and called there in the name of Yahweh, God For Ever. [34]Abraham resided in the
Pelishtites' country for a long time.

The test

22 Subsequently, God tested Abraham. He said to him, 'Abraham!' He said, 'I'm here.' [2]He said, 'Please take your son, your
only one, the one you love, Yitshaq, get yourself out to the Moriyyah region and offer him up as a burnt offering there, on
one of the mountains that I shall say to you.'
[3]Abraham started early in the morning, saddled his donkey and took two of his boys with him, and Yitshaq his son. He cut the
wood for the burnt offering, set off and went to the place that God said to him. [4]On the third day, Abraham lifted his eyes and saw
the place from a distance. [5]Abraham said to his boys, 'You stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go over there and bow
low, and come back to you.' [6]Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and put it on his son Yitshaq, and took in his own
hand the fire and the knife, and the two of them walked together.
[7]Yitshaq said to Abraham his father, 'Father!' He said, 'I'm here, son.' He said, 'Here are the fire and the wood, but where's
the sheep for the burnt offering?' [8]Abraham said, 'God will see for himself to the sheep for the burnt offering, son.' The two of
them walked together [9]and came to the place that God had said to him. There Abraham built the altar, laid out the wood, bound
his son Yitshaq and placed him on the altar on top of the wood. [10]Abraham put out his hand and got the knife to slaughter his son.
[11]But Yahweh's envoy called to him from the heavens and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' He said, 'I'm here.' [12]He said, 'Don't
put out your hand to the boy, don't do anything to him, because now I acknowledge that you live in awe of God; you haven't held
back your son, your only son, from me.'
[13]Abraham lifted his eyes and looked: there, a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and got the ram and offered it
up as a burnt offering in place of his son. [14]Abraham named that place 'Yahweh Sees' [*Yahweh yir'eh*], so it's said today, 'On
Yahweh's mountain it's seen.'

The promise and the loss

[15]Yahweh's envoy called to Abraham a second time from the heavens [16]and said, 'By myself I swear (Yahweh's declaration)
that since you've done this thing and not held back your son, your only one, [17]I shall bless you abundantly and make your
offspring very numerous, like the stars in the heavens and like the sand that's on the seashore; your offspring will take possession
of their enemies' gateway. [18]All the nations on the earth will bless themselves by your offspring, on account of the fact that you
listened to my voice.'

[19]Abraham went back to his boys and they set off and went together to Be'er Sheba. Abraham lived at Be'er Sheba.
[20]Subsequently, it was told to Abraham: 'Here, Milkah has given birth to children for your brother Nahor, too: [21]Uts his firstborn, Buz his brother, Qemu'el the father of Aram, [22]Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Yidlaph and Betu'el'; [23]and Betu'el fathered Ribqah. To these eight Milkah gave birth for Nahor, Abraham's brother. [24]His secondary wife – her name was Re'umah – also gave birth to Tebah, Gaham, Tahash and Ma'akah.

23 Sarah's lifetime was 127 years (the years of Sarah's life). [2]Sarah died at Arba Township (i.e. Hebron) in the country of Kena'an. Abraham came to lament for Sarah and bewail her.
[3]Abraham set off from being in the presence of his dead and spoke to the Hittites: [4]'I'm a resident, a settler, living with you. Give me a burial holding with you, so I may bury my dead away from my presence.' [5]The Hittites answered Abraham, [6]'Hear us, sir. You're an almighty leader among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places. None of us would withhold his burial place from you for burying your dead.'

The polite negotiation

[7]Abraham got up and bowed low to the people of the country, to the Hittites, [8]and spoke with them: 'If it's your desire that I should bury my dead away from my presence, hear me and intercede for me with Ephron ben Tsohar, [9]so he may give me the cave at Makpelah which is his and which is at the edge of his field. May he give it to me for the full silver as a burial holding among you.' [10]Ephron was sitting among the Hittites.
Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the ears of the Hittites, all who came to the town gateway: [11]'No, sir, listen to me. The field – I give it to you, and the cave that's in it. I give it to you, before the eyes of the members of my people I give it to you. Bury your dead.' [12]Abraham bowed low before the people of the country [13]and spoke with Ephron in the ears of the people of the country: 'But if you yourself would please listen to me: I give you the silver for the field. Take it from me, so I may bury my dead there.' [14]Ephron answered Abraham, [15]'Sir, listen to me: land worth 400 sheqels – between me and you, what's that? Bury your dead.' [16]Abraham listened to Ephron.
So Abraham weighed out to Ephron the silver that he had spoken of in the ears of the Hittites, 400 sheqels of silver, as current for the merchants. [17]And Ephron's field which is at Makpelah, which is close to Mamre (the field and the cave that was in it and all the trees that were in the field, which were in all its border around) passed [18]to Abraham as his acquisition before the eyes of the Hittites, all who had come to the town gateway.
[19]After this Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave in the field at Makpelah, close to Mamre (i.e. Hebron) in the country of Kena'an. [20]The field and the cave that was in it became the sure possession of Abraham as a burial holding, from the Hittites.

Where to find Yitshaq a wife

24 Abraham was old, going on in years, and Yahweh had blessed Abraham in every way. [2]Abraham said to his senior servant in his household, who ruled over everything that he had, 'Please put your hand under my thigh, [3]and I'll get you to swear by Yahweh the God of the heavens and the God of the earth that you won't get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Kena'anites among whom I'm living, [4]but go to my country, to my homeland, and get a wife for my son, for Yitshaq.'
[5]The servant said to him, 'Maybe the woman won't be willing to follow me to this country. Should I actually take your son back to the country that you left?' [6]Abraham said to him, 'Keep watch so that you don't take my son back there. [7]Yahweh, the God of the heavens, who took me from my father's household and from the country that is my homeland and spoke to me and swore to me: "To your offspring I shall give this country" – he will send his envoy before you and you'll get a wife for my son from there. [8]If the woman is not willing to follow you, then you'll be free from this oath to me. Only don't take my son back there.'
[9]The servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his lord and swore to him concerning this thing. [10]The servant took ten camels from his lord's camels and went, with all the good things belonging to his lord in his possession. He set off and went to Aram of the Two Rivers, to Nahor's town, [11]and got the camels to kneel outside the town at the water well, at evening time, at the time when the women who draw water go out.

Too much of a coincidence

[12]He said, 'Yahweh, God of my lord Abraham, please make things happen for me today. Act with commitment to my lord Abraham. [13]Here, I'm standing by the water spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are going out to draw water. [14]May the girl to whom I say "Please put down your pitcher so I can drink", and she says "Drink, and I'll also water your camels", may she be the one you've decided on for your servant, for Yitshaq. By this I shall acknowledge that you've acted with commitment to my lord.'
[15]Before he had finished speaking, there was Ribqah [Rebekah], who had been born to Betu'el ben Milkah, wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, coming out with her pitcher on her shoulder. [16]The girl was very good-looking, a young girl that no one had had sex with. She went down to the spring, filled her pitcher and went up.
[17]The servant ran to meet her and said, 'Please may I sip a little water from your pitcher.' [18]She said, 'Drink, sir', and hurried and lowered her pitcher onto her hand and let him drink. [19]When she had finished letting him drink, she said, 'I'll draw water for your camels as well, till they've finished drinking.' [20]She hurried and emptied her pitcher into the trough, ran back to the well to draw and drew for all his camels, [21]while the man was looking at her, staying quiet, to know whether or not Yahweh had made his journey successful.

[22]When the camels had finished drinking, the man got a gold nose-ring (its weight a half-sheqel) and two gold hand-bracelets (their weight ten sheqels). [23]He said, 'Whose daughter are you? Please tell me, is there room at your father's house for us to stay the night?' [24]She said to him, 'I'm the daughter of Betu'el ben Milkah, to whom she gave birth for Nahor.' [25]And she said to him, 'There's plenty of both straw and fodder with us, and also a place to stay the night.'

Meet the family

[26]The man bent his head and bowed low to Yahweh [27]and said, 'Yahweh the God of my lord Abraham be blessed, who hasn't abandoned his commitment and his truthfulness with my lord. I myself – Yahweh has led me on the way to the house of my lord's brothers!' [28]The girl ran and told her mother's household all these actual words.

[29]Now Ribqah had a brother; his name was Laban. Laban ran out to the spring to the man. [30]When he saw the nose-ring and his sister's two hand-bracelets and heard the words of his sister Ribqah, 'This is how the man spoke to me', he came to the man. There he was, standing by the camels by the spring. [31]He said, 'Come in, you who are blessed by Yahweh. Why stand outside when I've cleared the house and a place for the camels?'

[32]So the man came into the house and unharnessed the camels. He gave the camels straw and fodder, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. [33]Something to eat was set before him, but he said, 'I won't eat until I've spoken my words.' So he said, 'Speak.'

[34]He said, 'I'm Abraham's servant. [35]As Yahweh has greatly blessed my lord, he's become big. He's given him flock and herd, silver and gold, servants and maidservants, camels and donkeys. [36]Sarah, my lord's wife, gave birth to a son for my lord in her old age, and he's given him everything that he has. [37]My lord got me to swear, saying "You will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Kena'anites among whom I'm living in their country. [38]No, you are to go to my father's household, to my kin-group, and get a wife for my son."

It's from God

[39]I said to my lord, "Maybe the woman won't follow me." [40]He said to me, "Yahweh, before whom I've walked – he will send his envoy with you and he will make your journey successful. You'll get a wife for my son from my kin-group. [41]Then you'll be free from the vow to me if, when you come to my kin-group, they don't give her to you. You'll be free from the vow to me."

[42]So I came today to the spring and I said, "Yahweh, God of my lord Abraham: if you could please be one who makes my journey that I'm going on successful! [43]Here, I'm standing by the water spring. May the girl who goes out to draw and to whom I say 'Please let me drink a little water from your pitcher', [44]and she says to me 'Drink, and I'll also draw for your camels', may she be the woman whom Yahweh has decided on for my lord's son."

[45]Before I'd finished speaking in my mind, there was Ribqah going out with her pitcher on her shoulder. She went down to the spring and drew. I said to her, "Please give me a drink." [46]She hurried and lowered her pitcher from on her shoulder and said, "Drink, and I'll water your camels as well." So I drank, and she watered the camels as well. [47]I asked her, "Whose daughter are you?" and she said, "The daughter of Betu'el ben Nahor, to whom Milkah gave birth for him." I put the nose-ring on her nose and the bracelets on her hands. [48]I bent my head and bowed low to Yahweh and blessed Yahweh the God of my father Abraham, who had led me on a true way to get the daughter of my lord's brother for his son.

Will you go with this man?

[49]So now: if you're going to act with commitment and truthfulness to my lord, tell me. And if not, tell me, so I may turn my face to the right or to the left.'

[50]Laban and Betu'el answered, 'It's from Yahweh that the thing has issued. We can't speak to you bad or good. [51]Here is Ribqah before you. Take her and go, so she can be a wife for your lord's son, as Yahweh has said.'

[52]When Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed low to the ground before Yahweh. [53]The servant brought out objects of silver and objects of gold, and clothes, and gave them to Ribqah, and he gave choice things to her brother and to her mother. [54]They ate and drank, he and the men who were with him, and stayed the night.

They got up in the morning, and he said, 'Send me off to my lord.' [55]Her brother and her mother said, 'The girl should stay with us for some days – say ten. Afterwards, she can go.' [56]He said to them, 'Don't make me delay when Yahweh has made my journey successful. Send me off so I can go to my lord.'

[57]They said, 'Let's call the girl and ask for her bidding.' [58]They called Ribqah and said to her, 'Will you go with this man?' She said, 'I'll go.' [59]So they sent Ribqah their sister off, with her nanny and Abraham's servant and his men. [60]They blessed Ribqah and said to her, 'Our sister, may you become thousands of myriads, and may your offspring take possession of the gateway that belongs to people who are hostile to them.' [61a]Ribqah and her girls got up, mounted their camels and followed the man.

The romantic story finds a satisfactory ending

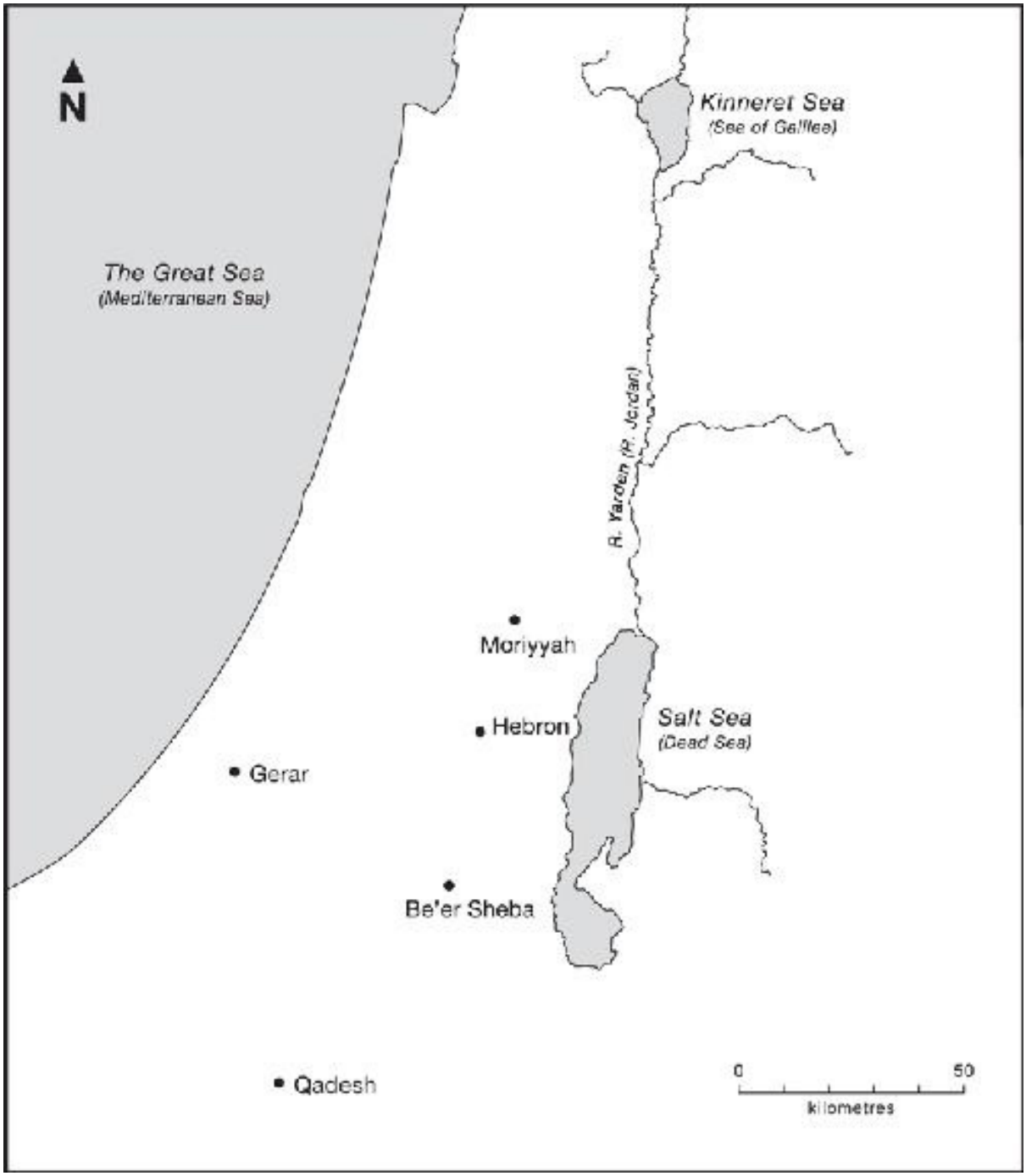
[61b]So the servant took Ribqah and went. [62]Now Yitshaq had come from where you come to The Well of the Living One Seeing Me; he was living in the Negeb region. [63]Yitshaq had gone out to think in the open country as evening turned its face. He lifted his eyes and saw: there, camels coming.

[64]And Ribqah lifted her eyes and saw Yitshaq. She jumped down from her camel [65]and said to the servant, 'Who's that man walking in the open country about to meet us?' The servant said, 'That's my lord.' She took her veil and covered herself, [66]and the

servant told Yitshaq all the things that he'd done. [67]Yitshaq brought her into the tent of Sarah his mother. He took Ribqah and she
became his wife, and he loved her. So Yitshaq found consolation after his mother.
25 Abraham again took a wife; her name was Qeturah. [2]She gave birth to Zimran, Yoqshan, Medan, Midyan, Yishbaq and
Shuah for him. [3]Yoqshan fathered Sheba and Dedan, while Dedan's descendants were the Ashshurites, the Letushites and the
Le'ummites, [4]and Midyan's descendants were Ephah, Epher, Hanok, Abida and Elda'ah. All these were Qeturah's descendants.
[5]Abraham gave all that he had to Yitshaq, [6]but to the sons of Abraham's secondary wives Abraham gave gifts while he was still
alive and sent them off away from Yitshaq his son eastward, to the east country.
[7]This is the span of the years in the life that Abraham lived: 175 years. [8]So he breathed his last. Abraham died at a good age,
old and full, and was gathered to his kin. [9]Yitshaq and Yishma'e'l his sons buried him in the cave at Makpelah in the field of
Ephron ben Tsohar the Hittite, which is close to Mamre, [10]the field that Abraham acquired from the Hittites. There Abraham and
his wife Sarah were buried.
[11]After Abraham's death, God blessed Yitshaq his son. Yitshaq lived near The Well of the Living One Seeing Me.

The hand grasping the heel

[12]These are the lines of descent of Yishma'e'l, Abraham's son, to whom Hagar the Misrayimite, Sarah's maidservant, gave
birth for Abraham. [13]These are the names of Yishma'e'l's sons, by their names according to their lines of descent. Yishma'e'l's
firstborn, Nebayot, Qedar, Adbe'el, Mibsam, [14]Mishma, Dumah, Massa, [15]Hadad, Tema, Yetur, Naphish and Qedemah. [16]These
are Yishma'e'l's sons and these are their names, by their villages and by their enclosures, twelve leaders for their peoples.
[17]These are the years of Yishma'e'l's life: 137 years. So he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his kin.
[18]They dwelt from Havilah as far as Shur, which is close to Misrayim, as you come to Ashshur. He fell close to all his brothers.
[19]These are the lines of descent of Yitshaq, Abraham's son. Abraham fathered Yitshaq, [20]and Yitshaq was a man of forty years
when he got himself as wife Ribqah daughter of Betu'el the Aramite of Paddan Aram, sister of Laban the Aramite. [21]Yitshaq
entreated Yahweh on behalf of his wife, because she was infertile. Yahweh let himself be entreated, and Ribqah his wife got
pregnant. [22]The children pressed on one another inside her, and she said, 'If this is how it is, why is it that I exist?'
She went to enquire of Yahweh [23]and Yahweh said to her, 'Two nations are in your womb; two peoples will divide from your
body. One people will be stronger than the other people, and the older one will serve the younger one.'
[24]Her time became full for giving birth, and there, twins were in her womb. [25]The first came out red, all of him, like a garment
of hair [*se'ar*]. So they named him Esaw. [26]After that, his brother came out, his hand grasping Esaw's heel [*aqeb*]. They named
him Ya'aqob [Jacob]. Yitshaq was a man of sixty years when they were born.



Genesis 25: Yitshaq (Isaac)

The birthright

[27]The boys grew up and Esaw became a man who knew about hunting, a man of the open country, while Ya'aqob was a regular man, staying at the tents. [28]Yitshaq loved Esaw because there was game in his mouth, while Ribqah loved Ya'aqob.

[29]Ya'aqob cooked stew, and Esaw came in from the open country. He was faint. [30]Esaw said to Ya'aqob, 'Please let me wolf down some of the red [*adom*] stuff, this red stuff, because I'm faint' (that's why they named him Edom). [31]Ya'aqob said, 'Sell me your birthright today.' [32]Esaw said, 'Here, I'm about to die. What use is a birthright to me?' [33]Ya'aqob said, 'Swear to me today.' So he swore to him. He sold his birthright to Ya'aqob, [34]and Ya'aqob gave Esaw bread and lentil stew. He ate and drank, and got up and went. So Esaw despised the birthright.

26 There was a famine in the country, apart from the first famine that happened in Abraham's time, and Yitshaq went to Gerar, to Abimelek, king of the Pelishtites. [2]Yahweh appeared to him and said, 'Don't go down to Misrayim. Dwell in the country that I'm telling you about. [3]Reside in this country. I shall be with you and I shall bless you, because I shall give you and your offspring all these regions. I shall implement the oath that I swore to Abraham your father. [4]I shall make your offspring as numerous as the stars in the heavens, and I shall give your offspring all these regions, and all the nations on earth will bless

themselves by your offspring, [5]inasmuch as Abraham listened to my voice and kept my charge, my orders, my decrees and my instructions.'

[6]So Yitshaq lived in Gerar. [7]The people in the place asked about his wife, and he said 'She's my sister', because he was afraid to say 'my wife' in case 'the people in the place kill me because of Ribqah, because she's good-looking'. [8]But when he'd been there some time, Abimelek king of the Pelishtites looked out through the window and saw: there was Yitshaq playing about with Ribqah his wife.

Do we ever learn? – take two

[9]Abimelek called for Yitshaq and said, 'Here, really she's your wife! How did you come to say "She's my sister"?' Yitshaq said to him, 'Because I said, "So I don't die because of her."' [10]Abimelek said, 'What is this that you've done to us? Almost, someone from the people could have slept with your wife and brought liability upon us.' [11]Abimelek ordered the entire people: 'Anyone who touches this man or his wife will absolutely be put to death.'

[12]Yitshaq sowed in that country, and that year reaped a hundredfold. Yahweh blessed him. [13]The man got big, and went on doing so, until he got very big indeed. [14]He had livestock, flock and herd, and a large body of servants, and the Pelishtites were jealous of him. [15]All the wells that his father's servants had dug in the time of Abraham his father, the Pelishtites stopped up and filled with soil, [16]and Abimelek said to Yitshaq, 'Go away from us, because you're much too numerous for us.'

[17]So Yitshaq went from there, camped in Wadi Gerar and lived there. [18]Yitshaq again dug the water wells that they had dug in the time of Abraham his father and that the Pelishtites had stopped up after Abraham's death. He named them by the same names as his father had named them.

[19]Yitshaq's servants dug in the wadi and found there a well of spring water, [20]but the Gerar shepherds got into an argument with Yitshaq's shepherds, saying 'The water's ours.' He named the well Eseq ['Contention'] because they contended with him. [21]They dug another well and got into an argument over it, too, and he named it Sitnah ['Opposition']. [22]He went on from there and dug another well, and they didn't argue over it, so he named it Rehobot ['Wide Places'] and said, 'Now Yahweh has made it wide for us and we'll be fruitful in the region.' [23]From there he went up to Be'er Sheba.

We've seen clearly that Yahweh is with you

[24]Yahweh appeared to him that night and said, 'I am the God of Abraham your father. Don't be afraid, because I shall be with you, and I shall bless you and make your offspring numerous on account of Abraham my servant.' [25]He built an altar there, called in Yahweh's name and spread his tents there, and Yitshaq's servants dug out a well there.

[26]Now Abimelek went to him from Gerar with Ahuzzat his aide and Phikol his army officer. [27]Yitshaq said to them, 'Why have you come to me, when you were hostile to me and you sent me off from being with you?' [28]They said, 'We've seen clearly that Yahweh is with you, so we said, "There should please be a vow between us", between us and you. We want to solemnize a pact with you. [29]If you deal badly with us . . . ! – as we haven't touched you and as we've done only good with you, and sent you off in peace. You're now one blessed by Yahweh.'

[30]So Yitshaq made a banquet for them, and they ate and drank. [31]They started early in the morning and swore, each to the other. Yitshaq sent them off and they went from being with him in peace. [32]That day, Yitshaq's servants came and told him about the matter of a well that they'd dug, and said to him, 'We've found water.' [33]So he called it Shib'ah ['Sworn Oath']. That's why the name of the town is Be'er Sheba until this day.

[34]When Esaw was a man of forty years, he got as wife Yehudit daughter of Be'eri the Hittite, and Ba'semat daughter of Elon the Hittite, [35]but they became a source of bitterness in spirit to Yitshaq and Ribqah.

Parents take sides

27 When Yitshaq was old and his eyes had become too dim to see, he called Esaw his older son and said to him, 'Son!' He said to him, 'I'm here.' [2]He said, 'Here, please: I'm old. I don't know the day of my death. [3]So now, pick up your equipment, please, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the open country, and hunt game for me. [4]Make me a dish the way I like, and bring it to me so I can eat, and I will give you my personal blessing before I die.' [5]Ribqah was listening when Yitshaq was speaking to Esaw his son.

So Esaw went into the country to hunt game to bring, [6]and Ribqah said to Ya'aqob her son: 'Here, I heard your father speaking to Esaw your brother, saying [7]"Bring me game and make me a dish so I can eat, and I will bless you before Yahweh before I die." [8]So now, son, listen to my voice, to what I'm ordering you. [9]Please go to the flock and get me two choice kid goats from there, and I'll make them into a dish for your father, the way he likes, [10]and you can bring it to your father so he can eat, so he may bless you before he dies.'

[11]Ya'aqob said to Ribqah his mother, 'Here, my brother Esaw is a hairy man and I'm a smooth-skinned man. [12]Maybe my father will feel me and in his eyes I shall be like someone playing a trick, and I shall bring on myself slight and not blessing.' [13]His mother said to him, 'Your slight be on me, son. Just listen to what I say. Go and get them for me.' [14]So he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and his mother made a dish the way his father liked.

The trick

[15]Ribqah got herself the clothes of Esaw her older son, the best ones, which were with her in the house, and put them on

Ya'aqob her younger son. [16]The skin of the kid goats she put on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck, [17]and she put the dish, and the bread that she had made, into the hand of Ya'aqob her son.

[18]He came to his father and said, 'Father!' He said, 'I'm here. Who are you, son?' [19]Ya'aqob said to his father, 'I'm Esaw your firstborn. I've done as you spoke to me. Please get up, sit and eat some of my game, so you may give me your personal blessing.' [20]Yitshaq said to his son, 'How were you so quick in finding it, son?' He said, 'Because Yahweh your God brought it about for me.' [21]Yitshaq said to Ya'aqob, 'Please come up so I can feel you, son, whether you're really Esaw my son or not.' [22]Ya'aqob came up to Yitshaq his father, and he felt him and said, 'The voice is Ya'aqob's voice, but the hands are Esaw's hands.' [23]He didn't recognize him because his hands were like the hands of Esaw his brother, hairy.

So he blessed him. [24]He said, 'Are you really my son Esaw?' He said, 'I am.' [25]He said, 'Bring it up to me so I can eat some of my son's game, in order that I can give you my personal blessing.' He brought it up to him and he ate, and he brought him wine and he drank. [26]His father Yitshaq said to him, 'Please come up and kiss me, son.' [27]He came up and kissed him, and he smelled his clothes.

So he blessed him: 'See: my son's smell is like the smell of the open country that Yahweh has blessed. [28]God give you from the dew of the heavens and from the richness of the earth, a large quantity of grain and new wine. [29]Peoples are to serve you, nations to bow low to you. Be lord to your brothers; your mother's sons are to bow low to you. Cursed be the people who curse you, blessed be those who bless you.'

The alternative blessing

[30]When Yitshaq had finished blessing Ya'aqob and Ya'aqob had scarcely gone right out from the presence of Yitshaq his father, Esaw his brother came in from his hunting. [31]He, too, made a dish and brought it to his father and said to his father, 'May my father get up and eat some of his son's game, so you may give me your personal blessing.' [32]Yitshaq his father said to him, 'Who are you?' He said, 'I'm your son, your firstborn, Esaw.' [33]Yitshaq trembled, trembled with force, and said, 'Then who was that who hunted game and brought it to me and I ate of it all before you came, and I blessed him? Yes, he will come to be blessed.'

[34]When Esaw heard his father's words, he cried out with a very loud and bitter cry. He said to his father, 'Bless me, me as well, father!' [35]He said, 'Your brother came with guile and took your blessing.' [36]He said, 'He's called "Ya'aqob", isn't he? He's grabbed me [*aqab*] these two times. He took my birthright, and there, he's taken my blessing now.' And he said, 'Haven't you saved a blessing for me?'

[37]Yitshaq answered Esaw, 'There, I've made him lord in relation to you. I've given him all his brothers as servants and sustained him with grain and new wine. So what can I therefore do for you, son?' [38]Esaw said to his father, 'Do you have one blessing, father? Bless me, me as well, father!' Esaw lifted up his voice and cried.

[39]Yitshaq his father answered him, 'There, your settlement will be from the richness of the earth and from the dew of the heavens above. [40]By your sword you'll live, and you will serve your brother. But as you wander you'll break his yoke from your neck.'

[41]Esaw was antagonistic to Ya'aqob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esaw said to himself, 'When the time for grieving over my father arrives, I shall kill Ya'aqob my brother.'

Reasons to get out from here

[42]Ribqah was told the words of Esaw her older son, and she sent and called for Ya'aqob her younger son, and said to him, 'Here, Esaw your brother is going to console himself by killing you. [43]Now, son, listen to my voice. Set off, take flight to Harran to Laban my brother [44]and stay with him for some time till your brother's wrath turns away, [45]till your brother's anger with you turns away and he puts out of mind what you've done to him. And I'll send and get you from there. Why should I be bereaved of both of you in one day?'

[46]So Ribqah said to Yitshaq, 'I'm dismayed about my life because of the Hittite women. If Ya'aqob takes a wife from among the Hittite women like these, from the women of this country, what good will life be for me?'

28 So Yitshaq called for Ya'aqob, blessed him and ordered him, 'You're not to take a wife from among the Kena'anite women. [2]Set off for yourself to Paddan Aram to the house of Betu'el, your mother's father, and get yourself a wife from there from among the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother. [3]May God Shadday bless you and make you fruitful and make you numerous, so you become a congregation of peoples. [4]May he give you Abraham's blessing, you and your offspring with you, so you take possession of the country where you're residing, which God gave Abraham.'

[5]So Yitshaq sent Ya'aqob off and he went to Paddan Aram to Laban ben Betu'el, the Aramite, the brother of Ribqah, the mother of Ya'aqob and Esaw.

[6]Esaw saw that his father Yitshaq had blessed Ya'aqob and sent him off to Paddan Aram to get himself a wife from there, and in blessing him had ordered him: 'You're not to take a wife from among the Kena'anite women', [7]and Ya'aqob had listened to his father and mother and gone to Paddan Aram. [8]Esaw saw that the Kena'anite women were bad in the eyes of Yitshaq his father. [9]So Esaw went to Yishma'e'l and got himself as wife Mahalat daughter of Yishma'e'l, Abraham's son, sister of Nebayot, as an addition to his wives.

The stairway to heaven

[10]Ya'aqob left Be'er Sheba and went to Harran. [11]He came upon a site and stayed the night there because the sun had gone. He got one of the stones from the site and put it at his head and lay down in that site.

[12]He had a dream. There – a ramp was put up on the earth with its top reaching to the heavens, and there – God's envoys were going up and down on it. [13]And there – Yahweh was standing by him. He said, 'I am Yahweh, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Yitshaq. The ground that you're lying on, I shall give to you and to your offspring. [14]Your offspring will be like the earth's soil. You'll break out to the west, to the east, to the north and to the south. All the kin-groups on the earth will bless themselves by you, and by your offspring. [15]There, I shall be with you. I shall keep you wherever you go and bring you back to this land, because I won't abandon you until I've done what I've spoken to you of.'

[16]Ya'aqob woke up from his sleep and said, 'Yahweh is definitely here in this site, and I myself didn't know!' [17]He was in awe, and he said, 'How awe-inspiring is this site! This is none other than a house of God, and that is a gateway into the heavens!'

[18]Ya'aqob started early in the morning, took the stone where he had put his head, set it up as a column and poured oil on the top of it. [19]He named the site Bet-el [Bethel; 'House of God'] – Luz was the name of the town at first, however. [20]And Ya'aqob made a pledge: 'If God will be with me, and will keep me on this journey that I'm going on, and will give me bread to eat and clothes to wear, [21]and I come back to my father's house with things being well, then Yahweh will be God for me, [22]and this stone that I've set up as a column will be God's house, and of everything that you give me I will rigorously give a tenth to you.'

Ya'aqob shows his muscle

29 Ya'aqob took up his journey and went to the country of the Easterners. [2]He looked, and there – a well in the fields, and three herds of sheep lying there by it, because people used to water the herds from that well. The stone on the well's mouth was big; [3]all the herds would gather there, and people would roll the stone off the well's mouth and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the well's mouth.

[4]Ya'aqob said to them, 'Brothers, where are you from?' They said, 'We're from Harran.' [5]He said to them, 'Do you know Laban ben Nahor?' They said, 'We know him.' [6]He said to them, 'Are things well with him?' They said, 'They're well. There – Rahel [Rachel] his daughter is coming with the sheep.' [7]He said, 'Here, it's still the middle of the day. It's not time for the livestock to gather. Water the sheep and go pasture them.' [8]They said, 'We can't, till all the herds gather and people roll the stone from on the well's mouth and we water the sheep.'

[9]While he was still speaking with them, Rahel came with the sheep that belonged to her father, because she was a shepherd. [10]When Ya'aqob saw Rahel daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, and the flock of Laban, his mother's brother, Ya'aqob came up, rolled the stone from on the well's mouth and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother; [11]and Ya'aqob kissed Rahel and lifted his voice and cried. [12]Ya'aqob told Rahel that he was her father's brother and that he was Ribqah's son, and she ran and told her father. [13]When Laban heard the report of Ya'aqob, his sister's son, he ran to meet him, kissed him and hugged him, and brought him into his house. He told Laban all these things, [14]and Laban said to him, 'Certainly you're my own bone and flesh.' He stayed with him for a period of a month.

The deceiver deceived

[15]Laban said to Ya'aqob, 'Because you're my brother, are you to serve me for nothing? Tell me: what are your wages to be.' [16]Now Laban had two daughters. The name of the elder was Le'ah and the name of the younger Rahel. [17]Le'ah's eyes were soft, but Rahel was attractive in shape and attractive in appearance. [18]Ya'aqob loved Rahel. So he said, 'I'll serve you seven years for Rahel, your younger daughter.' [19]Laban said, 'For me to give her to you will be better than for me to give her to another man. Stay with me.' [20]So Ya'aqob served seven years for Rahel, but in his eyes they were like a few days because of his love for her. [21]Then Ya'aqob said to Laban, 'Give me my wife, since my time is complete, so I may have sex with her.' [22]Laban gathered all the people of the place and made a banquet, [23]but in the evening he got Le'ah his daughter and brought her to him, and he had sex with her. ([24]Laban gave her Zilpah his maidservant, to Le'ah his daughter as her maidservant.)

[25]So in the morning: there, it was Le'ah! He said to Laban, 'What's this that you've done to me? It was for Rahel that I served with you, wasn't it? Why have you beguiled me?' [26]Laban said, 'It's not done like that in our place, giving the younger one before the firstborn. [27]Complete the week for the one, and we'll give you the other as well, for the service that you'll give with me for another seven years more.' [28]Ya'aqob did so. He completed the week for the one, then he gave him Rahel his daughter as wife. ([29]Laban gave Rahel his daughter Bilhah his maidservant as her maidservant.)

[30]So Ya'aqob had sex with Rahel and also loved Rahel more than Le'ah, and he served with him another seven years more.

I want to know what love is

[31]Yahweh saw that Le'ah was disliked and he opened her womb; whereas Rahel was infertile. [32]So Le'ah got pregnant and gave birth to a son, and named him Re'uben, because (she said), 'Yahweh has seen [*ra'ah*] my humbling; now my husband will love me [*ye'ehabeni*].' [33]She got pregnant again and gave birth to a son, and said, 'Yahweh has heard [*shama*] that I'm disliked and has given me this one as well', so she named him Shim'on [Simeon]. [34]She got pregnant again and gave birth to a son, and said, 'Now this time my husband will become attached [*lava*] to me, because I've given birth to three sons for him.' That's why he named him Levi. [35]She got pregnant again and gave birth to a son and said, 'This time I shall confess [*yadah*] Yahweh.' That's why she named him Yehudah [Judah]. Then she stopped giving birth.

30 Rahel saw that she couldn't give birth for Ya'aqob. Rahel was jealous of her sister and she said to Ya'aqob, 'Give me children! Otherwise, I'm going to die!' [2]Ya'aqob's anger raged at Rahel. He said, 'Am I in the place of God, who has held back the fruit of the womb from you?' [3]She said, 'Here's my handmaid Bilhah. Have sex with her, so she can give birth on my knees and I can also be built up through her.'

[4]So she gave him Bilhah her maidservant as wife, and Ya'aqob had sex with her. [5]Bilhah got pregnant and gave birth to a son
for Ya'aqob. [6]Rahel said, 'God has given judgement [*dan*] for me; yes, he's listened to my voice and given me a son.' That's why
she named him Dan. [7]Bilhah, Rahel's maidservant, got pregnant again and gave birth to a second son for Ya'aqob. [8]Rahel said,
'An almighty wrestling match [*naphtulim*] I've fought with my sister; yes, I've won.' So she named him Naphtali.

Wives, sons and a daughter

[9]Le'ah saw that she had stopped giving birth, and she got Zilpah her maidservant and gave her to Ya'aqob as wife. [10]Zilpah,
Le'ah's maidservant, gave birth to a son for Ya'aqob, [11]and Le'ah said, 'Luck [*gad*] has come!' So she named him Gad. [12]Zilpah,
Le'ah's maidservant, gave birth to a second son for Ya'aqob, [13]and Le'ah said 'What good fortune [*oshri*] I have, because
daughters will call me fortunate.' So she named him Asher.
[14]In the days of the wheat harvest, Re'uben went and found love-plants in the fields and brought them to Le'ah his mother.
Rahel said to Le'ah, 'Please give me some of your son's love-plants.' [15]She said to her, 'Was it a small thing, your taking my
husband, and you're also going to take my son's love-plants?' Rahel said, 'Therefore he can sleep with you tonight in return for
your son's love-plants.'
[16]In the evening Ya'aqob came from the fields, and Le'ah went out to meet him and said, 'I'm the one you're to have sex with,
because I've paid a hire charge for you, with my son's love-plants.' So he slept with her that night, [17]and God listened to Le'ah.
She got pregnant and gave birth to a fifth son for Ya'aqob. [18]Le'ah said, 'God gave me my hire charge [*sakar*], because I gave my
maidservant to my husband.' So she named him Yissakar [Issachar].
[19]Le'ah got pregnant again, and gave birth to a sixth son for Ya'aqob. [20]Le'ah said, 'God has given me a good endowment
[*zebed*]; this time my husband will elevate me [*yizbeleni*], because I've given birth to six sons for him.' So she named him
Zebulun. [21]Later, she gave birth to a daughter, and named her Dinah.
[22]But God was mindful of Rahel. God listened to her and opened her womb, [23]and she got pregnant and gave birth to a son, and
said, 'God has gathered up [*asaph*] my reviling.' [24]So she named him Yoseph [Joseph], saying 'May Yahweh add [*yoseph*]
another son to me!'

The competition to be the shrewdest sheep farmer

[25]When Rahel had given birth to Yoseph, Ya'aqob said to Laban, 'Send me off, so I may go to my place, to my country. [26]Give
me my wives and my children for whom I've served you so I may go, because you yourself know the service that I've given you.'
[27]Laban said to him, 'Please, if I've found grace in your eyes: I've divined that Yahweh has blessed me because of you.' [28]So he
said, 'Specify your wages with me and I'll give it to you.' [29]He said to him, 'You yourself know how I've served you and how
your livestock have been with me, [30]because the little that you had before me has broken out so as to become a large number.
Yahweh has blessed you wherever I've been. But now, when am I myself also to do something for my household?'
[31]He said, 'What could I give you?' Ya'aqob said, 'You won't give me anything. If you'll do this thing for me, I'll pasture your
flock again, I'll keep them. [32]I'll pass through your entire flock today, removing from there every speckled and spotted sheep, and
every dark sheep among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats. It will be my wages. [33]My faithfulness will
avow for me on the future day when you come to look at my wages before you. Every one with me that's not speckled or spotted
among the goats or dark among the lambs: that one with me will have been stolen.'
[34]Laban said, 'There, yes, let it be in accordance with your word.' [35]But that day he removed the streaked and spotted he-goats
and all the speckled and spotted she-goats, every one that had white on it, and every dark one among the lambs. He put them into
the care of his sons, [36]and put three days' journey between him and Ya'aqob while Ya'aqob was pasturing the rest of Laban's
flock.

Trouble follows

[37]Ya'aqob got for himself fresh canes of poplar, and almond and plane, and peeled white stripes in them, exposing the white
that was on the rods. [38]The canes that he had peeled he stationed in the troughs, in the water containers that the flock came to
drink from, in front of the flock. They were in heat and they came to drink, [39]so the flock were in heat by the canes, and the flock
gave birth to streaked, speckled and spotted young. [40]The lambs Ya'aqob divided off, and put the flock's faces towards the
streaked and the completely dark animals in Laban's flock. So he put herds for himself each on its own and didn't put them by
Laban's flock. [41]Every time the flock was in heat, the well-built females, Ya'aqob would put the canes in the troughs before the
eyes of the flock so they would be in heat by the canes. [42]But with the feebler in the flock, he didn't put them there. So the feeble
ones were Laban's and the well-built ones were Ya'aqob's.
[43]So the man broke out very greatly. He had a large flock, maidservants, servants, camels and donkeys.
31 But he heard the words of Laban's sons: 'Ya'aqob has taken everything that was our father's. It's from what was our father's
that he's made all this substance.' [2]And Ya'aqob saw Laban's face: there, it wasn't the same with him as it had been in
previous days.
[3]And Yahweh said to Ya'aqob, 'Go back to your ancestors' country, to your homeland. I will be with you.'

The divisiveness of stuff

[4]Ya'aqob sent and called Rahel and Le'ah to the fields, to his flock, [5]and said to them, 'I see your father's face, that it's not the

same towards me as it was in previous days, but my father's God has been with me.
[6]You yourselves know that I've served your father with all my energy, [7]but your father – he's played about with me and changed my wages ten times. But God didn't let him deal badly with me. [8]If he would say, "The speckled will be your wages", the entire flock would give birth to speckled. If he would say, "The streaked will be your wages", the entire flock would give birth to streaked. [9]God has taken away your father's livestock and given them to me.
[10]At the time of the flock's being in heat, in a dream I lifted my eyes and looked: there, the rams that were mounting the flock were streaked, speckled and mottled. [11]In the dream God's envoy said to me, "Ya'aqob!" I said "I'm here!" [12]He said, "There, please lift up your eyes and look. All the rams that are mounting the flock are streaked, speckled and mottled, because I've seen everything that Laban has been doing to you. [13]I am the God of Bet-el, where you anointed a column, where you made a pledge to me. Now, set off, get out of this country, go back to the country that is your homeland."'
[14]Rahel and Le'ah answered him, 'Do we still have a share, a domain, in our father's household? [15]Aren't we deemed outsiders by him, because he sold us and also totally consumed the silver paid for us? [16]Because all the wealth that God has rescued from our father: it belongs to us and to our children. So now, do everything that God has said to you.'

The secret leaving

[17]So Ya'aqob set off. He put his children and his wives on camels [18]and drove all his livestock and all his property that he had gained, the livestock he had acquired, which he had gained in Paddan Aram, to come to Yitshaq his father in the country of Kena'an.
[19]Now Laban had gone to shear his flock, and Rahel stole the effigies that belonged to her father. [20]Ya'aqob stole away without Laban the Aramite knowing, by not telling him that he was taking flight.
[21]So he took flight, he and all that he had. He set off and crossed the river and set his face towards the highland of Gil'ad. [22]It was told Laban on the third day that Ya'aqob had fled. [23]He took his brothers with him and pursued after him a seven days' journey, and caught up with him in the highland of Gil'ad. [24]But God came to Laban the Aramite in a dream by night and said to him, 'Keep watch over yourself so you don't speak anything with Ya'aqob, either good or bad.'
[25]Laban reached Ya'aqob when Ya'aqob had pitched his tent in the highland, and Laban had pitched, with his brothers, in the highland of Gil'ad. [26]Laban said to Ya'aqob, 'What have you done? You stole away without me knowing and you drove my daughters like captives of the sword. [27]Why did you secretly take flight and steal away from me and not tell me? I would have sent you off with rejoicing and with singing, with tambourine and with guitar. [28]You didn't give me leave to kiss my sons and my daughters. Now you've been idiotic in doing that. [29]It's in the almightiness of my hand to deal badly with you. But the God of your father said to me last night: "Keep watch over yourself to avoid speaking anything with Ya'aqob, either good or bad."
[30]So now: you have indeed gone because you were very keen for your father's household. Why have you stolen my gods?'

The ironic confrontation

[31]Ya'aqob answered Laban, 'Because I was afraid, because I said, "So that you don't seize your daughters from me." [32]The person with whom you find your gods will not live. In front of our brothers, examine for yourself what I have and take it for yourself.' Ya'aqob didn't know that Rahel had stolen them.
[33]Laban came into Ya'aqob's tent, into Le'ah's tent and into the two handmaids' tent, but didn't find them. He went out of Le'ah's tent and came into Rahel's tent. [34]Now Rahel had taken the effigies, put them in the camel saddle and sat on them. Laban felt through everything in the tent and didn't find them. [35]She said to her father, 'May it not cause rage in my lord's eyes that I cannot get up before you, because a woman's period is upon me.' So he searched but didn't find the effigies.
[36]It enraged Ya'aqob and he got into an argument with Laban. Ya'aqob avowed to Laban, 'What is my affront, what is my wrongdoing, that you chased after me, [37]that you felt through all my possessions? What did you find of all your household possessions? Put it here in front of my brothers and your brothers, so they can decide between the two of us.
[38]These twenty years I've been with you. Your ewes and your goats haven't miscarried. I haven't eaten rams from your flock. [39]I haven't brought you animals that had been killed; I myself dealt with the loss. From my hand you would look for what was stolen by day and what was stolen by night. [40]I became: by day heat consumed me and by night frost. My sleep fled from my eyes. [41]I've had these twenty years in your household; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters and six years for your flock, and you changed my wages ten times. [42]If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Reverence of Yitshaq, had not been mine, now you would have sent me off empty-handed. But God saw my humbling and the weariness of the palms of my hands, and he decided last night.'

A family divided by miles

43Laban answered Ya'aqob, 'The daughters are my daughters, the children are my children, the flock is my flock. All that you
see is mine. But about my daughters: what can I do today about them or about their children to whom they have given birth? 44So
now, come, let's solemnize a pact, you and I, and it will be a witness between you and me.'
45So Ya'aqob took a stone and set it up as a column, 46and Ya'aqob said to his brothers, 'Collect stones.' They got stones and
made a heap, and they ate there by the heap. 47Laban called it Yegar Sahaduta, while Ya'aqob called it Gal'ed ['Witness Mound'
in Aramaic and Hebrew]. 48Laban said, 'This heap is a witness between me and you today.' That's why he named it Gal'ed, 49and
'The Watchtower' [*hammitspah*], because (he said), 'May Yahweh watch between me and you when one is hidden from the other.
50If you humble my daughters or take wives on top of my daughters: when there's no one with us, see, God will be a witness
between me and you.'
51And Laban said to Ya'aqob, 'Here is this heap and here is the column that I have thrown up between me and you. 52This heap
will be a witness and the column will be a witness that I will not go past this heap to you and you will not go past this heap to me,
or this column, to act badly. 53The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor (the God of their ancestor) decide between us.'
Ya'aqob swore by the Reverence of his father Yitshaq, 54and Ya'aqob offered a sacrifice at the mountain and invited his
brothers to eat bread. They ate bread and stayed the night at the mountain. 55Laban started early in the morning, kissed his
children and his daughters, and blessed them. Then Laban set off and went back to his place.

Ya'aqob scared

32 As Ya'aqob went on his way, God's envoys came upon him. 2When he saw them, Ya'aqob said, 'This is God's camp', and
he named that place Mahanayim ['Two Camps']. 3Ya'aqob sent envoys before him to Esaw his brother in the country of
Se'ir, in Edom's region. 4He ordered them: 'You're to say this to my lord, to Esaw: "Your servant Ya'aqob has said this: 'While
I've resided with Laban and remained till now, 5oxen, donkeys and flock, and servants and maidservants, have come to belong to
me. I've sent to tell my lord so as to find grace in your eyes.'"'
6The envoys came back to Ya'aqob, saying, 'We came to your brother, to Esaw, and yes, he's coming to meet you, and 400
men with him.' 7Ya'aqob was very fearful. It put pressure on him. He divided the people that were with him, the flock, the herd
and the camels into two camps, 8and said 'If Esaw comes to the one camp and strikes it down, the remaining camp will escape.'
9Ya'aqob said, 'God of my father Abraham, God of my father Yitshaq, Yahweh, you who said to me, "Go back to your
country, to your homeland, and I shall do good things with you", 10I'm too small for all the acts of commitment and all the
truthfulness with which you've acted towards your servant. With my cane I crossed this Yarden and now I've become two camps.
11Save me from the hand of my brother, please, from the hand of Esaw, because I'm frightened of him, in case he comes and
strikes me down, mother with children. 12You yourself said, "I shall definitely do good things with you and make your offspring
like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted because of the large number."'

Buying off a brother

13He stayed the night there that night, then got an offering for Esaw his brother from what had come into his care: 14two
hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, 15thirty milch camels and their young, forty cows and
ten bulls, and twenty she-donkeys and ten he-donkeys. 16He put them into the care of his servants, herd by herd on its own, and
said to his servants, 'Cross over before me, but put a space between herd and herd.'
17He ordered the first: 'Esaw my brother will meet you and ask you, "To whom do you belong? Where are you going? To
whom do these belong, before you?" 18You're to say, "They're your servant Ya'aqob's. They're an offering sent to my lord, to
Esaw. Here, he himself is behind us as well."' 19He ordered both the second and the third and also all the ones who were going
behind the herds: 'You're to speak these very words to Esaw when you reach him. 20You're also to say, "Here, your servant
Ya'aqob is behind us"', because (he said), 'I'll mollify his face with an offering that goes ahead of my face, then afterwards I'll
face him, and maybe he'll welcome my face.' 21Thus the offering crossed ahead of his face, while he stayed that night in the
camp.
22So he set off that night and took his two wives, his two maidservants and his eleven children, and crossed the Yabboq
crossing. 23He took them and got them to cross the wadi and got what belonged to him across.

God struggles

24Ya'aqob was left on his own, and a man wrestled [*aboq*] with him until dawn rose. 25He saw that he had not overcome him,
so he touched him at his hip socket, and Ya'aqob's hip socket was put out as he wrestled with him. 26He said, 'Let me go off,
because the dawn has risen.' He said, 'I won't let you go off unless you bless me.' 27He said to him, 'What is your name?' He
said, 'Ya'aqob'. 28He said, 'You will no longer be named Ya'aqob, but Yisra'el [Israel], because you have striven [*sarah*] with
God and with human beings and have prevailed.' 29Ya'aqob asked, 'Tell me your name, please.' He said, 'Why is it that you ask
my name?' But he blessed him there.
30Ya'aqob named the place Peni'el ['God's Face'], 'because I saw God face to face, but my life was rescued.' 31The sun rose
on him as he crossed by Penu'el. He was limping because of his hip. 32That's why the Israelites don't eat the thigh muscle that's
on the hip socket until this day, because he touched Ya'aqob at the hip socket, at the thigh muscle.

33 Ya'aqob lifted his eyes and looked: there, Esaw was coming, and with him 400 men. He divided the children among Le'ah, R
and the two maidservants, [2]and put the maidservants and their children first, Le'ah and her children after them, and Rahel
and Yoseph last. [3]He himself passed on before them and bowed to the ground seven times until he came right up to his brother.
[4]Esaw ran to meet him, embraced him, threw his arms round his neck and kissed him, and they cried.

An amicable parting

[5]He lifted his eyes and saw the women and the children, and said 'Who are these of yours?' He said, 'The children with whom God has graced your servant.' [6]The maidservants came up, they and their children, and bowed low. [7]Le'ah also came up, she and her children, and bowed low. Last, Yoseph came up, he and Rahel, and they bowed low. [8]He said, 'What do you mean by this entire camp that I've met?' Ya'aqob said, 'To find grace in my lord's eyes.'

[9]Esaw said, 'I have much, brother. What you have must remain yours.' [10]Ya'aqob said, 'No, please. If I've found grace in your eyes, please, take my offering from my hand, because on account of this I have seen your face, like seeing God's face, and you accepted me. [11]Please take my blessing which has been brought to you, because God has graced me, and because I have everything.' So he urged him, and he took it.

[12]Then he said, 'Let's move on and go. I'll go in front of you.' [13]But he said to him, 'My lord knows that the children are frail and the flock and herd are suckling with me. Should they drive them hard for one day, all the flock will die. [14]My lord should please pass on before his servant. I myself will lead on gently, at the pace of the cattle that are before me and at the pace of the children, until I come to my lord in Se'ir.' [15]Esaw said, 'May I please place with you some of the company that's with me?' He said, 'Why is this? I want to find grace in my lord's eyes.'

[16]So Esaw went back that day on his journey to Se'ir, [17]while Ya'aqob moved on to Sukkot, built himself a house there and made bivouacs [*sukkot*] for his livestock. That's why they named the place Sukkot.

The seduction

[18]Ya'aqob came with things being well to the town of Shekem, which was in the country of Kena'an, when he came from Paddan Aram, and he camped facing the town. [19]He acquired the plot in the fields where he spread his tent from the sons of Hamor, Shekem's father, for a hundred qesitas. [20]He put up an altar there and called it 'God, the God of Yisra'el'.

34 Dinah daughter of Le'ah, to whom she had given birth for Ya'aqob, went out to see the daughters of the region. [2]Shekem ben
Hamor, the Hivvite, the leader of the region, saw her, took her and slept with her. He forced her, [3]but he himself was
attached to Dinah, Ya'aqob's daughter. He loved the girl, and tried to reassure the girl. [4]Shekem said to Hamor his father: 'Get me this young woman as wife.'

[5]When Ya'aqob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter, his sons were with his livestock in the fields, so Ya'aqob remained silent until they came. [6]Hamor, Shekem's father, went out to Ya'aqob to speak with him. [7]When Ya'aqob's sons came from the fields, the men were pained when they heard. It deeply enraged them, because he had done something villainous in Yisra'el in sleeping with Ya'aqob's daughter. Such a thing is not done.

[8]Hamor spoke with them: 'Shekem my son, he got attracted to your daughter. Please give her to him as wife. [9]Make marriages with us: give your daughters to us and take our daughters for yourselves. [10]You can live with us and the region will be before you. Live and move about in it, acquire holdings in it.' [11]Shekem said to her father and to her brothers, 'May I find grace in your eyes: what you say to me, I will give. [12]Set a very large marriage payment and gift upon me, and I will give as you say to me. But give me the girl as wife.'

The sign of a pact becomes a ploy

[13]Ya'aqob's sons answered Shekem and Hamor his father with guile when they spoke, because he'd defiled their sister Dinah. [14]They said to them, 'We can't do this thing, give our sister to a man who has a foreskin, because that would be a reviling to us. [15]Only on this basis could we consent to you: if you become like us by every male of yours being circumcised, [16]and we will give our daughters to you and take your daughters for ourselves and we will live with you, and we'll become one people. [17]But if you won't listen to us by being circumcised, we'll take our daughter and go.'

[18]Their words were good in the eyes of Hamor and in the eyes of Hamor's son Shekem, [19]and the boy didn't delay doing the thing, because he wanted Ya'aqob's daughter.

Now he was the most honoured person in his father's household. [20]So Hamor and his son Shekem came to the gateway of their town and spoke to the men of their town: [21]'These people are peaceable with us. They should live in the region and move about in it. This region – here, it's wide enough for them. We'll take their daughters for ourselves and give our daughters to them. [22]Only on this basis will the people consent to us to live with us, to become one people: by every male of ours being circumcised as they are circumcised. [23]Their livestock and their acquisitions and all their animals: will they not become ours? Let's just consent to them so they will live with us.' [24]They listened to Hamor and to Shekem his son, all the people who went out to the gateway of his town; and every male, all the people who went out to the gateway of his town, were circumcised.

Should our sister be treated like a whore?

[25]On the third day, when they were hurting, two of Ya'aqob's sons, Shim'on and Levi, Dinah's brothers, got each his sword, came to the town when it was confident, and killed every male. [26]Hamor and Shekem his son they killed with the mouth of the

sword. They got Dinah from Shekem's house and left, [27]while Ya'aqob's sons came on the men who had been run through and plundered the town because they had defiled their sister. [28]Their flock, their herd and their donkeys, what was in the town and what was in the fields, they took. [29]All their resources, all their little ones and all their women, they captured and plundered, with everything that was in the houses.

[30]Ya'aqob said to Shim'on and Levi, 'You've brought disaster on me, making me stink to the people who live in the country, the Kena'anite and the Perizzite. I'm few in number. They'll gather against me and strike me down and I'll be annihilated, I and my household.' [31]But they said, 'Should he treat our sister like a whore?'

35 God said to Ya'aqob, 'Set off and go up to Bet-el. Live there and make an altar there for the God who appeared to you when you were taking flight from your brother Esaw.' [2]Ya'aqob said to his household and to all who were with him, 'Remove the foreign gods that are among you. Purify yourselves. Change your clothes. [3]We shall set off to go up to Bet-el and make an altar there for the God who answered me on the day when I was under pressure and has been with me on the way that I've gone.' [4]They gave Ya'aqob all the foreign gods that were in their hand, and the rings that were in their ears, and Ya'aqob buried them under the oak that was near Shekem.

The passing of Ya'aqob's first love

[5]As they moved on, an almighty terror came over the towns that were round about them, and they didn't pursue after Ya'aqob's sons. [6]So Ya'aqob came to Luz, which is in the country of Kena'an (i.e. Bet-el), he and all the company that was with him. [7]He built an altar there and called the place 'God of Bet-el', because God had appeared to him there when he was taking flight from his brother. [8]Deborah, Ribqah's nanny, died, and was buried below Bet-el, beneath the oak. So they named it Wailing Oak.

[9]God appeared to Ya'aqob again when he had come from Paddan Aram, and he blessed him. [10]God said to him, 'Your name is Ya'aqob. You'll no longer be named Ya'aqob; rather, Yisra'el will be your name.' So he named him Yisra'el. [11]God said to him, 'I am God Shadday. Be fruitful and numerous. A nation and a congregation of nations will come into being from you. Kings will come out of your insides. [12]The country that I gave to Abraham and to Yitshaq I shall give to you, and I shall give the country to your offspring after you.' [13]God went up from him at the place where he spoke with him, [14]and Ya'aqob put up a column at the place where God had spoken with him, a stone column, and poured out a libation on it and poured oil on it. [15]Ya'aqob named the place where God spoke with him Bet-el.

[16]They moved on from Bet El, and there was still a distance in the country so as to come to Ephrat, but Rahel gave birth, and had a tough time in giving birth. [17]When she was having a tough time in giving birth, the midwife said to her, 'Don't be afraid, because this one is a son for you, too.' [18]As her breath was leaving her, because she was dying, she named him Ben-oni ['Son of My Trouble']; but his father called him Binyamin [Benjamin; 'Son of My Right Hand']. [19]So Rahel died and was buried on the road to Ephrat (i.e. Bet Lehem). [20]Ya'aqob put up a column over her grave (it's the column at Rahel's grave until today).

Ya'aqob and Yisra'el, Esaw and Edom

[21]Yisra'el moved on and spread his tent beyond Herd Tower. ([22]While Yisra'el was dwelling in that region, Re'uben went and slept with Bilhah, his father's secondary wife; and Yisra'el heard.)

Ya'aqob's sons were twelve:

[23]the sons of Le'ah: Ya'aqob's firstborn, Re'uben; Shim'on; Levi; Yehudah; Yissakar; and Zebulun;
[24]the sons of Rahel: Yoseph and Binyamin;
[25]the sons of Bilhah, Rahel's maidservant: Dan and Naphtali;
[26]the sons of Zilpah, Le'ah's maidservant: Gad and Asher.

These were Ya'aqob's sons who were born to him in Paddan Aram.

[27]Ya'aqob came to Yitshaq his father at Mamre at Arba Township (i.e. Hebron), where Abraham and Yitshaq resided. [28]Yitshaq was a man of 180 years. [29]Yitshaq breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his kin, old and full of years. Esaw and Ya'aqob, his sons, buried him.

36 This is the line of Esaw (i.e. Edom). [2]Esaw got his wives from the daughters of Kena'an: Adah daughter of Elon the Hittite, Oholibamah daughter of Anah, the daughter of Tsib'on the Hivvite, [3]and Ba'semat daughter of Yishma'e'l, the sister of Nebayot. [4]Adah gave birth to Eliphaz for Esaw, Ba'semat gave birth to Re'u'el, [5]and Oholibamah gave birth to Ye'ush, Yalam and Qorah.

These are the sons of Esaw who were born to him in the country of Kena'an. [6]Esaw took his wives, his sons and his daughters, and the people in his household, his livestock, all his animals and all his acquisitions that he had gained in the country of Kena'an, and went to a country away from Ya'aqob his brother, [7]because their property was too big for them to live together and the country where they were residing couldn't support them because of their livestock. [8]So Esaw lived in the highland of Se'ir (Esaw is Edom).

Excluded but not forgotten

[9]This is the line of Esaw, the ancestor of Edom, in the highland of Se'ir. [10]These are the names of Esaw's sons:

Eliphaz, son of Esaw's wife Adah;
Re'u'el, son of Esaw's wife Ba'semat.

[11]The sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Tsepho, Ga'tam and Qenaz.
[12]Timna was a secondary wife to Esaw's son Eliphaz; she gave birth to Amaleq for Eliphaz.
These were the descendants of Esaw's wife Adah.
[13]These were the sons of Re'u'el: Nahat, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah.
These were the descendants of Esaw's wife Ba'semat.
[14]These were the sons of Esaw's wife Oholibamah daughter of Anah, the daughter of Tsib'on: she gave birth to Ye'ush, Yalam and Qorah for Esaw.

[15]These are the clans among Esaw's descendants.
The descendants of Eliphaz, Esaw's firstborn:

the Teman clan
the Omar clan
the Tsepho clan
the Qenaz clan
[16]the Qorah clan
the Ga'tam clan
the Amaleq clan

These are the clans of Eliphaz in the country of Edom; these are the descendants of Adah.

[17]These are the descendants of Re'u'el, Esaw's son:

the Nahat clan
the Zerah clan
the Shammah clan
the Mizzah clan

These are the clans of Re'u'el in the country of Edom; these are the descendants of Ba'semat, Esaw's wife.

[18]These are the descendants of Oholibamah, Esaw's wife:

the Ye'ush clan
the Qorah clan
the Ya'lam clan

These are the clans of Oholibamah daughter of Anah, Esaw's wife.

[19]These are the descendants of Esaw and these are their clans (i.e. Edom).

Kings in Edom

[20]These are the sons of Se'ir the Horite, the people living in the country: Lotan, Shobal, Tsib'on, Anah, [21]Dishon, Etser and Dishan. These are the Horites' clans, Se'ir's descendants, in the country of Edom.
[22]The sons of Lotan were Hori and Hemam; Lotan's sister was Timna.
[23]These are the sons of Shobal: Alvan, Mahanat, Ebal, Shepho and Onam.
[24]These are the sons of Tsib'on: both Ayyah and Anah (he was the Anah who found the hot springs in the wilderness when he was pasturing the donkeys of Tsib'on his father).
[25]These are the children of Anah: Dishon and Oholibamah, Anah's daughter.
[26]These are the sons of Dishan: Hemdan, Eshban, Itran and Keran.
[27]These are the sons of Etser: Bilhan, Za'avan and Aqan.
[28]These are the sons of Dishan: Uts and Aran.
[29]These are the Horites' clans: the clans Lotan, Shobal, Tsib'on, Anah, [30]Dishon, Etser and Dishan. These are the Horites' clans by their clans in the country of Se'ir.

[31]These are the kings who reigned in the country of Edom before a king reigned among the Yisra'elites:
[32]Bela ben Be'or reigned in Edom; his town's name was Dinhabah.
[33]Bela died and Yobab ben Zerah from Botsrah reigned in his place.
[34]Yobab died and Husham from the Temanites' country reigned in his place.
[35]Husham died and Hadad ben Bedad, who struck down Midyan in Mo'ab's region, reigned in his place; his town's name was Avit.
[36]Hadad died and Samlah from Masrekah reigned in his place.
[37]Samlah died and Sha'ul from Broads on the River reigned in his place.
[38]Sha'ul died and Ba'al ben Akbor reigned in his place.
[39]Ba'al Hanan ben Akbor died and Hadar reigned in his place; his town's name was Pa'u, and his wife's name was Mehetabel daughter of Matred, the daughter of Gold Water.
[40]These are the names of Esaw's clans by their kin-groups, by their places, with their names:

the Timna clan
the Pinon clan

the Alvah clan
the Yetet clan
[41]the Oholibamah clan
the Elah clan
[42]the Qenaz clan
the Teman clan
the Mibtsar clan
[43]the Magdi'el clan
the Iram clan

These are the clans of Edom, by their settlements in the country that is their holding (i.e. Esaw, Edom's ancestor).

The dreamer

37 Ya'aqob lived in the country where his father had resided, the country of Kena'an. [2]This is Ya'aqob's line.
Yoseph, when he was seventeen years of age, was pasturing the flock with his brothers; he was a boy with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. Yoseph brought bad criticism of them to their father. [3]Now Yisra'el loved Yoseph above all his sons, because he was the son of his old age. He made an ornamented coat for him. [4]His brothers saw that their father loved him above all his brothers, and they became hostile to him and couldn't speak peaceably to him.
[5]Yoseph had a dream and told his brothers, and they were yet more hostile to him. [6]He said to them, 'Please listen to this dream that I've had. [7]There – we were binding sheaves in the middle of the fields. There – my sheaf got up, yes, stood. And there – your sheaves were gathering round and bowing low to my sheaf.' [8]His brothers said to him, 'Are you really to reign over us? Or are you really to rule over us?' They were yet more hostile to him because of his dreams and because of his words.
[9]He had another dream and recounted it to his brothers. 'Here – I had another dream. There – the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.' [10]He recounted it to his father and to his brothers, and his father reprimanded him and said to him, 'What's this dream that you've had? Are we really to come, I and your mother and your brothers, to bow low to the ground to you?' [11]So his brothers were jealous of him, while his father kept the thing in mind.
[12]His brothers went to pasture their father's flock at Shekem. [13]Yisra'el said to Yoseph, 'Your brothers are pasturing at Shekem, aren't they. Come on, I'll send you to them.' He said to him, 'Here I am.'

The dreamer walks into a trap

[14]So he said to him, 'Go and see if things are well with your brothers, and if things are well with the flock, please, and bring back word to me.' He sent him from the Hebron Vale and he came to Shekem. [15]A man found him: there, he was wandering about in the fields. The man asked him, 'What are you looking for?' [16]He said, 'I'm looking for my brothers. Do tell me, please, where they're pasturing.' [17]The man said, 'They've moved on from here, because I heard them say, "Let's go to Dotan."'
Yoseph followed his brothers and found them at Dotan. [18]They saw him from a distance, and before he got near them they plotted to put him to death. [19]They said one to another, 'Here, that master of dreams is coming! [20]So now, come on, let's kill him and throw him into one of the cisterns. We'll say a bad animal ate him. We'll see what will become of his dreams.'
[21]But Re'uben heard them and rescued him from their hand. He said, 'We won't take his life.' [22]Re'uben said to them, 'Don't shed his blood. Throw him into this cistern that's in the wilderness. Don't lay a hand on him' (in order that he might rescue him from their hand and give him back to his father). [23]So when Yoseph came to his brothers, they stripped Yoseph of his coat, the ornamented coat that was on him, [24]and took him and threw him into the cistern. (The cistern was empty; there was no water in it.)
[25]They sat down to eat bread, but lifted their eyes and looked: there, a caravan of Yishma'e'lites coming from Gil'ad, their camels carrying spices, balm and myrrh, going to take them down to Misrayim. [26]Yehudah said to his brothers, 'What's the gain when we kill our brother and cover up his blood? [27]Come on, let's sell him to the Yishma'e'lites. Our hands – they shouldn't be on him, because he's our brother, our flesh.' His brothers listened.

The fate of the famous coat

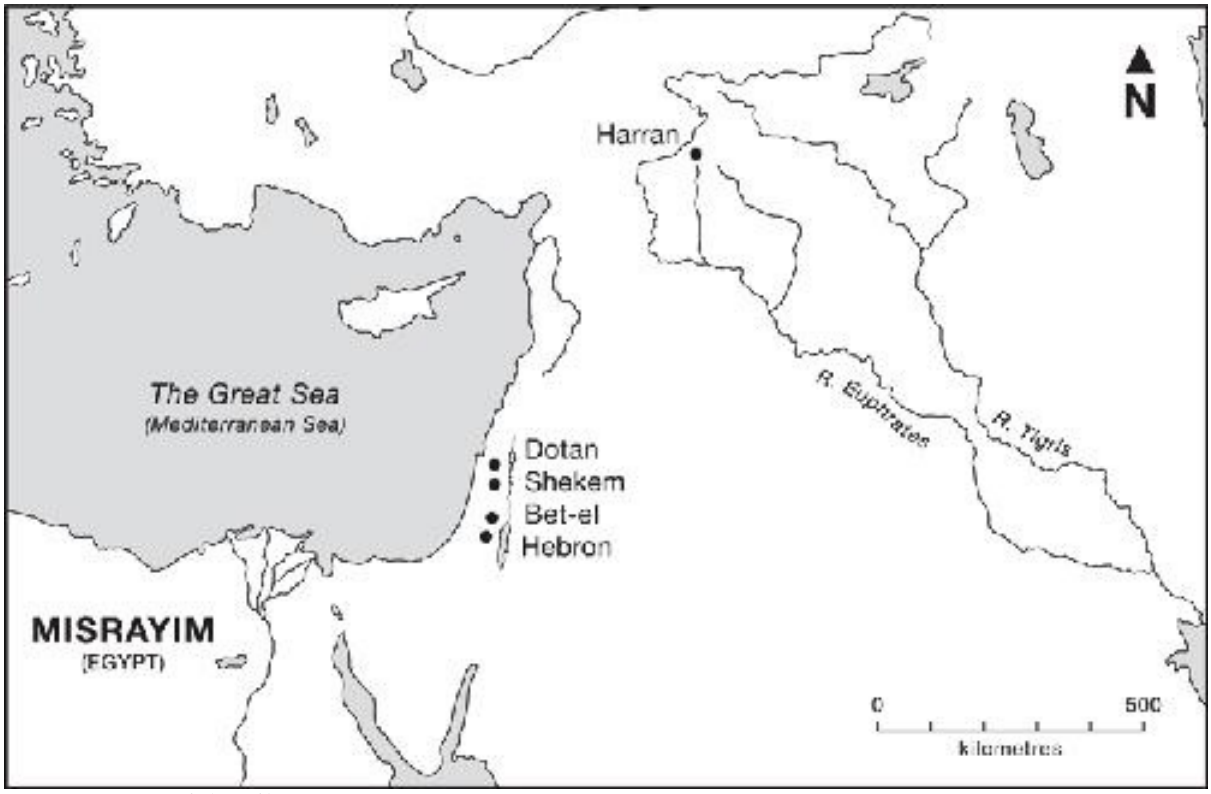
[28]So Midyanite men, traders, passed by, and they pulled and got Yoseph up out of the cistern. They sold Yoseph to the Yishma'e'lites for twenty silver pieces, and they brought Yoseph to Misrayim.
[29]Re'uben went back to the cistern, and there – Yoseph wasn't in the cistern. He tore his clothes [30]and went back to his brothers and said, 'The child isn't there! And I – where am I going to go?'
[31]They got Yoseph's coat, slaughtered a goat, dipped the coat in the blood [32]and sent off the ornamented coat so they might bring it to their father, and they said, 'We found this. Please recognize: is it your son's coat, or not?' [33]He recognized it and said, 'My son's coat! A bad animal has devoured him! Yoseph has been torn to pieces!' [34]Ya'aqob tore his clothes, put sack round his hips and took up grieving for his son for a long time. [35]All his sons and daughters set about consoling him, but he refused to be consoled and said, 'I shall go down to She'ol to my son grieving.' So his father bewailed him.
[36]Meanwhile the Midyanites sold him into Misrayim, to Potiphar, Par'oh's courtier, the guards officer.
38 At that time Yehudah went down from his brothers and turned aside near an Adullamite man; his name was Hirah. [2]Yehudah saw there the daughter of a Kena'anite man, whose name was Shua, and he took her. He had sex with her, [3]she got pregnant, and she gave birth to a son and named him Er. [4]She got pregnant again and gave birth to a son, and named him Onan. [5]Once more she got pregnant and gave birth to a son, and named him Shelah. He was at Kezib when she gave birth to him.

A daughter-in-law betrayed

[6]Yehudah got a wife for his firstborn, Er. Her name was Tamar. [7]But Er, Yehudah's firstborn, did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes, and Yahweh let him die. [8]Yehudah said to Onan, 'Have sex with your brother's wife. Be a brother-in-law to her. Set up offspring for your brother.' [9]But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his, and when he had sex with his brother's wife he would let it be lost on the ground so he wouldn't give offspring to his brother. [10]But what he did was bad in Yahweh's eyes, and Yahweh also let him die. [11]Yehudah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, 'Live as a widow in your father's household till my son Shelah grows up', because (he said), 'So he doesn't also die, like his brothers.' So Tamar went and lived in her father's household.

[12]Time went on, and Shua's daughter, Yehudah's wife, died. Yehudah was consoled, and went up to the men who were shearing his flock, he and his neighbour Hirah the Adullamite, to Timnah. [13]It was told Tamar: 'Here, your father-in-law is coming up to Timnah for the shearing of his flock.' [14]Tamar removed her widow's clothes from upon her, covered herself with a veil and wrapped herself up, and sat at the entrance to Two Wells, which is on the road to Timnah, because she saw that Shelah had grown up but she had not been given to him as wife.

[15]Yehudah saw her and thought she was a whore, because she had covered her face. [16]He turned aside to her by the road and said 'Come on, can I have sex with you?' because he didn't know that it was his daughter-in-law. She said, 'What will you give me when you have sex with me?' [17]He said, 'I myself will send a kid goat from the flock.' She said, 'If you give me a pledge till you send it.' [18]He said, 'What's the pledge that I should give you?' She said, 'Your seal and your cord, and the staff that's in your hand.' He gave them to her and he had sex with her, and she got pregnant by him.



Genesis 38: Ya'aqob (Jacob)

Another deceiver deceived

[19]She set off and went, and removed her veil from upon her and put on her widow's clothes. [20]Yehudah sent the kid goat by the hand of the Adullamite, his neighbour, to get the pledge from the woman's hand, but he couldn't find her. [21]He asked the people of her place: 'Where's that hierodule, the one at Two Wells, by the road?' They said, 'There's been no hierodule here.' [22]He went back to Yehudah and said, 'I couldn't find her. Furthermore, the people of the place said, "There's been no hierodule here."' [23]Yehudah said, 'She can have it for herself, so that we don't become an object of contempt. Here, I sent her this kid goat, but you couldn't find her.'

[24]Some three months later, it was told Yehudah: 'Tamar your daughter-in-law has been whoring. Indeed, there, she's pregnant through whoring.' Yehudah said, 'Bring her out. She should be burned.' [25]As she was being brought out, she sent to her father-in-law, saying: 'It's by the man to whom these belong that I'm pregnant.' So she said, 'Please recognize: who's the one to whom these seal and cord and staff belong?' [26]Yehudah recognized them and said, 'She is more in the right than me, because of the fact that I didn't give her to my son Shelah.' He didn't have sex with her again.

[27]At the time of her giving birth, there – twins were in her womb. [28]When she was giving birth, one put out a hand, and the midwife took a red thread and tied it on his hand, saying 'This one came out first.' [29]But when he took back his hand, his brother came out, and she said, 'What a breakout you've made for yourself!' So they named him Perets ['Breakout']. [30]Afterwards his

brother, on whose hand was the red thread, came out. They named him Zerah [‘Shining’].

But Yahweh was with Yoseph

39 So Yoseph had been taken down to Misrayim and a Misrayimite, Potiphar, Par’oh’s courtier, the guards officer, had acquired him from the hand of the Yishma’e’lites who had taken him down there. [2]But Yahweh was with Yoseph and he became a successful man. He was in the household of his Misrayimite lord, [3]and his lord saw that Yahweh was with him and that everything that he was doing, Yahweh made succeed in his hand. [4]So Yoseph found grace in his eyes. He ministered to him, and he appointed him over his household and put into his hand everything that belonged to him.

[5]From the time that he appointed him over his household and over everything that belonged to him, Yahweh blessed the Misrayimite’s household because of Yoseph. Yahweh’s blessing was on everything that belonged to him, in the house and in the fields. [6]He abandoned everything that he had into Yoseph’s hands, and with him he didn’t know about anything except the bread that he was eating.

Yoseph was attractive in shape and attractive in appearance, [7]and subsequently his lord’s wife set her eyes on Yoseph and said, ‘Sleep with me.’ [8]He refused, and said to his lord’s wife, ‘Here, with me, my lord doesn’t know about what’s in the house. Everything that belongs to him he’s put into my hand. [9]There’s no one bigger in this household than me. He hasn’t held back anything from me except you, because you’re his wife. How could I do this massively bad thing, and do wrong in relation to God?’ [10]When she spoke to Yoseph day after day he didn’t listen to her about sleeping beside her or being with her.

[11]On such a day he came into the house to do his work. None of the people of the household was there in the house. [12]She caught hold of him by his coat, saying ‘Sleep with me.’ He abandoned his coat in her hand, fled and went outside.

The false allegation

[13]When she saw that he had abandoned his coat in her hand and fled outside, [14]she called the people of the household and said to them: ‘Look, he brought us a Hebrew man to fool about with us! He came to me in order to sleep with me and I called out in a loud voice, [15]and when he heard that I raised my voice and called out, he abandoned his coat beside me and fled, and went outside.’ [16]She set his coat down beside her until his lord came home, [17]and she spoke to him in the same words: ‘The Hebrew servant that you brought to us came to me in order to fool about with me, [18]and when I raised my voice and called out he abandoned his coat beside me and fled outside.’

[19]When his lord heard his wife’s words that she spoke to him, ‘These very things your servant did to me’, his anger raged. [20]Yoseph’s lord took him and put him in the jailhouse, the place where the king’s prisoners were imprisoned. So he was there in the jailhouse, [21]but Yahweh was with Yoseph and he extended commitment to him, and gave him grace in the eyes of the jailhouse officer.

[22]The jailhouse officer put into Yoseph’s care all the prisoners who were in the jailhouse. Everything that they were doing there, he was the one doing it. [23]The jailhouse official didn’t look at any matter that was in his care, because Yahweh was with him and whatever he was doing Yahweh made succeed.

40 Subsequently, the king of Misrayim’s wine waiter and baker did wrong in relation to their lord the king of Misrayim. [2]Par’oh was furious with his two courtiers, with the chief wine waiter and with the chief baker, [3]and he put them in the keep at the guards officer’s house, in the jailhouse, the place where Yoseph was confined.

Interpretations belong to God

[4]The guards officer appointed Yoseph to them and he ministered to them. They had been some time in the keep, [5]and the two of them had a dream, each his own dream the same night, each in accordance with the interpretation of his dream – the king of Misrayim’s wine waiter and baker, who were confined in the jailhouse. [6]Yoseph came to them in the morning and saw that they were vexed. [7]He asked Par’oh’s courtiers who were with him in the keep in his lord’s house, ‘Why are your faces looking bad today?’ [8]They said to him, ‘We had a dream, and there’s no one to interpret it.’ Yoseph said to them, ‘Interpretations belong to God, don’t they. Please recount them to me.’

[9]The chief wine waiter recounted his dream to Yoseph: ‘In my dream: there, a vine before me. [10]On the vine were three branches. Even as it was budding, its blossom came out and its clusters ripened as grapes. [11]Now Par’oh’s cup was in my hand, and I got the grapes, pressed them into Par’oh’s cup and placed the cup into Par’oh’s palm.’

[12]Yoseph said to him, ‘This is the interpretation. The three branches are three days. [13]In yet three days Par’oh will lift up your head and put you back in your position. You’ll place Par’oh’s cup in his hand in accordance with the former rule when you were his wine waiter.

[14]But be mindful of me with you, when things are good for you. Act in commitment with me, please, and make mention of me to Par’oh so you get me out of this house. [15]Because I was actually stolen from the country of the Hebrews, and also I’ve done nothing here that they should have put me in the cistern.’

The interpreter forgotten

[16]The chief baker saw that he had interpreted it as something good, and he said to Yoseph, ‘In my dream, also: there, three wicker baskets on my head, [17]and in the top basket, all kinds of food for Par’oh, the work of a baker. But the birds were eating them from the basket, from on my head.’ [18]Yoseph answered, ‘This is the interpretation. The three baskets are three days. [19]In yet three days, Par’oh will lift up your head from on you and hang you on a tree, and the birds will eat your flesh from on you.’

[20]On the third day, Par'oh's birthday, he made a banquet for all his servants, and lifted up the head of the chief wine waiter and the head of the chief baker among his servants. [21]He put the chief wine waiter back into his wine-waiting so that he placed the cup in Par'oh's palm [22]and the chief baker he hanged, as Yoseph had interpreted to them. [23]But the chief wine waiter was not mindful of Yoseph. He put him out of mind.

41 At the end of two years, Par'oh himself was dreaming, and there, he was standing by the Ye'or [Nile]. [2]There, from the Ye'or seven cows going up, attractive in appearance and sturdy in body, and they pastured among the reeds. [3]And there, seven more cows going up from the Ye'or after them, bad-looking in appearance and thin in body, and they stood beside the cows on the bank of the Ye'or. [4]The cows that were bad-looking in appearance and thin in body ate the seven cows that were attractive in appearance and sturdy.

Par'oh woke up, [5]went to sleep and dreamt a second time. There, seven ears of grain growing up on a single stalk, sturdy and good-quality. [6]And there, seven ears that were thin and scorched by the east wind springing up after them. [7]The thin ears swallowed the seven sturdy, full ears. Par'oh woke up. There, it was a dream.

[8]In the morning his spirit was agitated, and he sent and called for all Misrayim's diviners and all its experts. Par'oh recounted his dream to them. But no one could interpret them for Par'oh.

The interpreter remembered

[9]The chief wine waiter spoke with Par'oh: 'I'm going to make mention of my wrongdoings today. [10]When Par'oh was furious with his servants and put me in the keep in the guards officer's house, me and the chief baker, [11]we had a dream the same night, I and he. We each dreamt in accordance with the interpretation of his dream. [12]There with us was a Hebrew boy, a servant of the guards officer. We recounted them to him and he interpreted our dreams for us. Each one in accordance with his dream he interpreted. [13]As he interpreted it for us, so it happened. I was put back into my position and him they hanged.'

[14]So Par'oh sent and called for Yoseph. They got him to run from the cistern, he shaved and changed his clothes, and he came to Par'oh. [15]Par'oh said to Yoseph, 'I had a dream and there is no one to interpret it. I've heard it said about you, that you can listen to a dream and interpret it.' [16]Yoseph answered Par'oh: 'Not me. God is the one who will answer with things that will be well for Par'oh.'

[17]Par'oh spoke with Yoseph. 'In my dream: there was I, standing by the bank of the Ye'or. [18]There, from the Ye'or seven cows going up, sturdy in body and attractive in appearance, and they pastured among the reeds. [19]And there, seven more cows going up after them, poor and very bad-looking in appearance, thin in body. I haven't seen the like of them in the entire country of Misrayim for bad quality. [20]The thin, bad-looking cows ate the first seven sturdy cows. [21]So they came inside them, but it wouldn't have been known that they'd come inside them. Their appearance was as bad as it was at the beginning. And I woke up. [22]Then I saw in my dream, there, seven ears of grain growing up on one stalk, full and good-quality; [23]and there, seven ears of grain springing up after them, withered, thin, scorched by the east wind. [24]The seven thin ears swallowed the seven good ears.

I said it to the diviners but there was no one to tell me.'

Save first, spend afterwards

[25]Yoseph said to Par'oh, 'Par'oh's dream is one. God has told Par'oh what he's going to do. [26]The seven good cows are seven years and the seven good ears are seven years. It's one dream. [27]The seven empty, bad-quality cows that were going up after them are seven years, as are the seven thin ears of grain, scorched by the east wind. There will be seven years of famine. [28]That's the word that I've spoken to Par'oh.

God has let Par'oh see what he's going to do. [29]There, seven years are coming, great abundance in the entire country of Misrayim, [30]but seven years of famine will arise after them, and the entire abundance in the country of Misrayim will be put out of mind. The famine will finish off the country. [31]The abundance in the country won't be acknowledged in the face of that famine afterwards, because it will be very heavy.

[32]And concerning the repeating of the dream to Par'oh, twice: the thing is established by God. God is hurrying to do it.

[33]So now, Par'oh should look for a discerning, smart man and set him over the country of Misrayim. [34]Par'oh should act and set appointees over the country and take a fifth of the country of Misrayim in the seven years of abundance. [35]They should collect all food in these good years that are coming and lay up grain in the towns as food, under Par'oh's care, and keep it. [36]The food will be for appointing for the country for the seven years of famine that are going to happen in the country of Misrayim, so the country is not cut off by the famine.'

[37]The thing was good in the eyes of Par'oh and in the eyes of all his servants, [38]and Par'oh said to his servants, 'Shall we find a man like this man, in whom is the spirit of God?'

Yoseph as prime minister

[39]So Par'oh said to Yoseph, 'Given that God has let you know all this, there's no one smart and discerning like you. [40]You – you will be in charge of my household, and to your bidding all my people will acquiesce. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.' [41]So Par'oh said to Yoseph, 'See, I'm putting you in charge of the entire country of Misrayim.' [42]Par'oh removed his signet ring from on his hand and put it on Yoseph's hand, had him clothed in linen robes and put a gold chain on his neck. [43]He had him ride in the chariot of his second-in-command, and they called out before him, 'Bow down!' So he put him in charge of the entire country of Misrayim. [44]Par'oh said to Yoseph, 'I'm Par'oh, but without you no one will raise his hand or his foot in the entire country of Misrayim.'

[45]Par'oh named Yoseph Tsaphenat Pane'ah and gave him Asenat, the daughter of Potiphera, priest in On [Heliopolis], as wife. So Yoseph went out in charge of the country of Misrayim.

[46]Yoseph was a man of thirty years when he stood before Par'oh, the king of Misrayim. Yoseph went out from before Par'oh and passed through the entire country of Misrayim. [47]In the seven years of abundance, the country produced by fistfuls, [48]and he collected all the food of the seven years that passed in the country of Misrayim and put food in the towns; the food of a town's fields that was round it he put in the middle of it. [49]Yoseph laid up the grain like the sand of the sea in vast quantities until he left off from counting, because counting was impossible.

[50]Two sons were born to Yoseph before the famine year came; Asenat, the daughter of Potiphera, priest in On, gave birth to them for him. [51]Yoseph named the firstborn Menashsheh [Manasseh], because 'God has made me forget [*nasha*] all my oppression and my father's entire household.' [52]The second he named Ephrayim, because 'God has made me fruitful [*pharah*] in the country of my humbling.'

Grain in Misrayim

[53]The seven years of abundance that passed in the country of Misrayim finished [54]and the seven years of famine started to come, as Yoseph had said. The famine happened in all the countries, but in the entire country of Misrayim there was bread. [55]When the entire country of Misrayim was hungry and the people cried out to Par'oh for bread, Par'oh said to all Misrayim, 'Go to Yoseph, do what he says to you.'

[56]When the famine was over the entire face of the earth, Yoseph opened all that was in them and sold grain to the Misrayimites.

So the famine became strong in the country of Misrayim, [57]while the entire world came to Misrayim to Yoseph to buy grain because the famine was heavy in the entire world,

42 and Ya'aqob saw that there was grain in Misrayim. So Ya'aqob said to his sons, 'Why do you look at one another?' [2]He said, 'Here, I've heard that there's grain in Misrayim. Go down there and buy us grain from there, so we may live and not die.' [3]So Yoseph's ten brothers went down to buy grain from Misrayim. [4]Binyamin, Yoseph's brother, Ya'aqob didn't send with his brothers, because (he said) 'in case harm comes to him'.

[5]So Yisra'el's sons came to buy grain among the people who came, because the famine happened to the country of Kena'an. [6]Now Yoseph was the prime minister over the country, the one who sold grain to all the people of the country. So Yoseph's brothers came and bowed low to him, their faces to the ground. [7]Yoseph looked at his brothers and recognized them, but he acted like a stranger to them and spoke toughly with them. He said to them, 'Where have you come from?' They said, 'From the country of Kena'an, to buy food.'

Yoseph remembers his dream

[8]So Yoseph recognized his brothers but they didn't recognize him. [9]Yoseph brought to mind the dreams that he had about them. He said to them, 'You're investigating; you've come to see the country's vulnerability.' [10]They said to him, 'No, my lord! Your servants – they've come to buy grain. [11]We're all of us sons of one man. We're honest men. Your servants haven't been investigating.' [12]He said to them, 'No, you came to see the country's vulnerability.' [13]They said, 'Your servants, we were twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the country of Kena'an, but there, the youngest is with our father at the moment, and one is no more.'

[14]Yoseph said to them, 'It's as I spoke to you: "You're investigating." [15]By this you'll be tested: by the life of Par'oh, you won't leave here unless your youngest brother comes here. [16]Send one of you so he can get your brother. You, be imprisoned, so your words will be tested, whether there is truthfulness in you. And if not, by the life of Par'oh, you're investigating.'

[17]He gathered them in the keep for three days. [18]On the third day, Yoseph said to them, 'Do this and you'll live; I am in awe of God. [19]If you're honest, one of your brothers must be imprisoned in the house where you're kept while you go and bring grain for the famine in your households, [20]and your youngest brother you're to bring to me so your words may be shown to be trustworthy and you don't die.'

So they did so, [21]and said to one another, 'Well, we're paying the penalty for our brother. We saw the pressure in his spirit when he pleaded for grace with us and we didn't listen. That's why this pressure has come to us.' [22]And Re'uben answered them: 'I spoke to you, saying: "Don't do wrong in relation to the child", didn't I, and you didn't listen. Yes, his blood – there, it's being required.'

What game is Yoseph playing?

[23]Now they didn't know that Yoseph was listening, because there was an interpreter between them. [24]He turned away from them and cried, then came back to them and spoke to them, and took Shim'on from among them and imprisoned him before their eyes. [25]But Yoseph ordered that they should fill their containers with grain, put back their silver, each man, into his sack and give them provisions for the journey.

So he did this for them, [26]they loaded their grain on to their donkeys, and they went from there. [27]One of them opened his sack to give feed to his donkey at the lodging and he saw his silver. There it was, in the mouth of his bag. [28]He said to his brothers, 'My silver has been put back! Really, here it is, in my bag!' Their heart sank. They turned trembling to one another, saying: 'What is this that God has done to us?'

[29]They came to Ya'aqob their father in the country of Kena'an and told him all that had happened to them: [30]'The man who is lord of the country spoke toughly with us and treated us as people who were investigating the country. [31]We said to him, "We're honest. We haven't been investigating. [32]We were twelve brothers, the sons of our father; one is no more and the youngest is with

our father in the country of Kena'an at the moment." [33]But the man who is lord of the country said to us, "By this I shall know that you're honest. Leave one of your brothers with me, take something for the famine in your households and go, [34]and bring your youngest brother to me, so I may know that you're not people investigating but are honest. I'll give your brother to you and you can move about in the country."'

[35]Then, as they were emptying their sacks, there – each man's silver pouch was in his sack. They looked at their silver pouches, they and their father, and they were afraid.

There's no alternative

[36]Ya'aqob their father said to them, 'I'm the one you've bereaved of children. Yoseph is no more and Shim'on is no more and you will take Binyamin. It's all happened to me.' [37]But Re'uben said to his father: 'You may put my two sons to death if I don't bring him back to you. Put him into my care and I myself will bring him back to you.' [38]But he said, 'My son is not to go down with you, because his brother is dead and he alone remains. If harm comes to him on the journey you're going on, you'll send my grey hair down to She'ol with sadness.'

43 But because the famine in the country was heavy, [2]when they'd finished eating the grain that they'd brought from Misrayim, their father said to them, 'Go back and buy us a little food.' [3]Yehudah said to him: 'The man solemnly testified against us: "You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you." [4]If you do send our brother with us, we'll go down and buy food for you. [5]But if you don't send him, we won't go down, because the man said to us, "You will not see my face unless your brother is with you."'

[6]Yisra'el said, 'Why did you deal badly with me by telling the man you had another brother?' [7]They said, 'The man asked and asked about us and about our homeland, saying "Is your father still alive? Do you have a brother?" and we told him these things at his bidding. Could we possibly know that he would say, "Bring your brother down"?'

When I am bereaved, I am bereaved

[8]Yehudah said to Yisra'el his father, 'Send the boy with me so we can set off and go, and live and not die, both we and you and also our little ones. [9]I personally guarantee him. From my hand you can look for him. If I don't bring him back to you and set him before you, I shall have done wrong in relation to you for all time. [10]Because if we had not delayed, by now we could have got back here twice.'

[11]Yisra'el their father said to them, 'If it's to be so, then, do this. Get some of the country's products in your containers and take them down to the man as an offering: a little balm and a little syrup, spices and myrrh, pistachios and almonds. [12]And take twice the silver in your hand. Take back in your hand the silver that was put back in the mouth of your bags. Maybe it was a mistake. [13]And your brother: take him and set off and go back to the man. [14]May God Shadday himself give you compassion before the man so he may release your other brother to you, and Binyamin. And me – when I'm bereaved, I'm bereaved.' [15]So the men took this offering and took twice the silver in their hand, and Binyamin, and they set off and went down to Misrayim and stood before Yoseph.

[16]Yoseph saw Binyamin with them and said to the person in charge of his household, 'Bring the men into the house and slaughter an animal and prepare it, because the men will eat with me at noon.' [17]The man did as Yoseph said. The man brought the men into Yoseph's house, [18]but the men were afraid because they were brought into Yoseph's house. They said, 'It's because of the silver that was put back in our bags the first time that we have been brought in, to overwhelm us and fall on us and take us as servants, with our donkeys.'

Yoseph can hardly control himself

[19]So they came up to the man who was in charge of Yoseph's household and spoke to him at the entrance of the house. [20]They said, 'Pardon me, my lord, we only came down the first time to buy food. [21]But when we came to the lodging, we opened our bags and there, each man's silver was in the mouth of his bag, our silver by its weight. We have brought it back in our hand, [22]while we have brought down other silver with us to buy food. We don't know who put our silver in our bags.'

[23]He said, 'Things are well with you. Don't be afraid. Your God, the God of your father, gave you the treasure in your bags, as your silver came to me.' And he brought Shim'on out to them. [24]So the man took the men into Yoseph's house, gave them water and they washed their feet, and gave them feed for their donkeys. [25]They prepared the offering for when Yoseph came at noon, because they had heard that they were to eat a meal there.

[26]Yoseph came home and they brought him the offering that was in their hand in the house, and they bowed low to him to the ground. [27]He asked them whether things were well: 'Are things well with your aged father of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?' [28]They said, 'Things are well with your servant our father. He's still alive', and they bent their head and bowed low. [29]He lifted his eyes and saw Binyamin his brother, his mother's son, and said, 'Is this your youngest brother of whom you spoke to me?' And he said, 'God show grace to you, my son.' [30]Then Yoseph hurried because his insides burned for his brother and looked for somewhere to cry, and came to a room and cried there.

Another pressure

[31]He washed his face and went out and controlled himself and said, 'Serve the meal.' [32]They served him on his own and them on their own and the Misrayimites who were eating with him on their own, because Misrayimites couldn't eat a meal with the Hebrews because this would be an offence to Misrayimites. [33]But they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and

the youngest according to his being the youngest, while the men looked in astonishment each at his neighbour. [34]People carried loads to them from before him, and Binyamin's load was five times bigger than all their loads. They drank and were merry with him.

44 He ordered the person in charge of his household: 'Fill the men's bags with food, as much as they can carry, and put each person's silver in the mouth of his bag. [2]And my chalice, the silver chalice, put in the mouth of the bag belonging to the youngest, with the silver for his grain.' He acted in accordance with the word that Yoseph spoke.

[3]When morning dawned and the men had been sent off, they and their donkeys, [4]though they had left the town, they had not gone far when Yoseph said to the person in charge of his household, 'Set off and pursue after the men. Catch up with them and say to them, "Why have you made good with bad for good? [5]Isn't this the one that my lord drinks from and practises divination with? You've acted badly in what you did."'

[6]He caught up with them and spoke these words to them. [7]They said to him, 'Why does my lord speak words such as these? Far be it from your servants to do such a thing as this. [8]Here, the silver that we found in the mouth of our bags we brought back to you from the country of Kena'an. So how would we steal silver or gold from your lord's house? [9]With whichever of your servants it's found, he will die, and also we will become servants to my lord.'

Yehudah pleads

[10]He said, 'Indeed, now, in accordance with your words, so it will be. The one with whom it's found shall be my servant. You will be free of guilt.' [11]So they hurried, each man, and lowered his bag to the ground, and they opened, each man, his bag. [12]He searched, beginning with the eldest and finishing with the youngest, and the chalice was found in Binyamin's bag. [13]They tore their clothes, and loaded, each man, his donkey and went back to the town.

[14]Yehudah and his brothers came to Yoseph's house. He was still there. They fell on the ground before him. [15]Yoseph said to them, 'What is this deed that you've done? Didn't you know that a man like me practises divination?' [16]Yehudah said, 'What could we say to my lord? What could we speak? How could we show we are in the right? God has found out your servants' waywardness. Here we are, servants to my lord, both we and the one in whose hand the chalice was found.' [17]But he said, 'Far be it from me to do this. The man in whose hand the chalice was found: he will become my servant. You: go up with things being well to your father.'

[18]Yehudah came up to him and said, 'Pardon me, my lord, can your servant speak a word in my lord's ear and your anger not rage at your servant, because you are like Par'oh. [19]My lord asked his servants, "Do you have a father or brother?" [20]and we said to my lord, "We have an aged father and the child of his old age, the youngest. Since his brother is dead, he alone remains of his mother's, and his father loves him." [21]You said to your servants, "Bring him down to me so I can set my eye on him." [22]We said to my lord, "The boy cannot abandon his father. If he abandons his father, he will die." [23]But you said to your servants, "If your youngest brother doesn't come down with you, you will not see my face again."

You will send my grey hair down to Sheol with grief

[24]When we went up to your servant my father, we told him my lord's words. [25]Our father said, "Go back, get a little food for us", [26]and we said, "We can't go down. If our youngest brother is with us we can go down, because we won't be able to see the man's face with our youngest brother not being with us."

[27]Your servant my father said to us, "You yourselves know that my wife gave birth to two sons for me. [28]The one went away from me, and I said, 'Yes, he's been torn to pieces.' I haven't seen him until now. [29]Should you take this one from being with me as well, and harm comes, you will send my grey hair down to She'ol with the bad fortune."

[30]When I now come to your servant my father and the boy is not with us, given that his life is bound up with his life, [31]when he sees the boy is not there, he'll die. Your servants will send your servant our father's grey hair down to She'ol with sadness. [32]Because your servant pledged the boy with my father, saying: "If I don't bring him back to you, I shall have done wrong in relation to my father permanently." [33]So your servant will please now stay as my lord's servant in place of the boy. The boy must go up with his brothers. [34]Because how can I go up to my father with the boy not with me, or I will see the bad fortune that will come on my father.'

Not you but God

45 Yoseph couldn't control himself in front of all the people who were stationed by him. He called, 'Get everyone out from being with me!' So no one stood with him when Yoseph made himself known to his brothers. [2]But he raised his voice in crying, and the Misrayimites heard and Par'oh's household heard. [3]Yoseph said to his brothers, 'I'm Yoseph! Is my father still alive?' His brothers couldn't answer him because they were fearful at his presence.

[4]Yoseph said to his brothers, 'Please come up to me', and they came up. He said, 'I'm Yoseph your brother, whom you sold into Misrayim. [5]But now: don't be pained, don't let it make you rage at yourselves because you sold me here, because it was to save life that God sent me before you. [6]Because this has been two years of famine within the country, and there will be five more years in which there will be no ploughing or reaping. [7]But God sent me before you to put in place for you a group remaining on the earth, to keep it alive for you as a big escape group. [8]So now it was not you who sent me here but God. He's made me a father for Par'oh and lord of all his household, and ruling over the entire country of Misrayim.

[9]Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, "Your son Yoseph has said this: 'God has made me into lord of all Misrayim. Come down to me, don't stand waiting. [10]You will live in the Goshen region and be near me, you and your children and your

grandchildren, your flock, your herd and all that's yours. [11]I shall provide for you there because there will be five more years of famine, so you and your household and all that's yours doesn't become dispossessed.'"

'Yoseph's brothers have come'

[12]Here, your eyes can see and my brother Binyamin's eyes can see that it's my mouth that's speaking to you. [13]You're to tell my father about all my splendour in Misrayim and all that you've seen, and hurry and bring my father down here.' [14]He fell on his brother Binyamin's neck and cried, and Binyamin cried on his neck, [15]and he kissed all his brothers and cried on them, and after that his brothers spoke with him.

[16]When the announcement made itself heard in Par'oh's household, 'Yoseph's brothers have come', it was good in the eyes of Par'oh and in the eyes of his servants. [17]Par'oh said to Yoseph, 'Say to your brothers, "Do this: load your animals and go, come to the country of Kena'an. [18]Get your father and your households and come to me. I shall give you the best of the country of Misrayim and you will eat the fat of the country. [19]You yourself are ordered, do this: get yourselves from the country of Misrayim wagons for your little ones and your wives, and carry your father and come. [20]Your eye is not to feel pity about your stuff, because the best of the entire country of Misrayim will be yours."'

[21]Yisra'el's sons did so. Yoseph gave them wagons at Par'oh's bidding and gave them provisions for the journey. [22]To them all he gave changes of clothing for each individual. To Binyamin he gave 300 pieces of silver and five changes of clothing. [23]To his father he sent as follows: ten donkeys carrying some of the good things of Misrayim, and ten she-donkeys carrying grain, bread and provisions for his father for the journey. [24]So he sent his brothers off, and as they went, he said to them, 'Don't be agitated on the way.'

'My son Yoseph is still alive!'

[25]So they went up from Misrayim and came to the country of Kena'an to Ya'aqob their father [26]and told him: 'Yoseph is still alive, and actually he's ruling over the entire country of Misrayim.' His heart went numb, because he didn't trust them. [27]But they spoke to him all Yoseph's words that he had spoken to them, and he saw the wagons that Yoseph sent to carry him, and the spirit of Ya'aqob their father came alive. [28]Yisra'el said, 'Great! My son Yoseph is still alive! I must go and see him before I die!'

46 So Yisra'el moved with all that was his and came to Be'er Sheba. He offered sacrifices to the God of his father Yitshaq, [2]and God said to Yisra'el in a great vision at night, 'Ya'aqob, Ya'aqob!' He said, 'I'm here.' [3]He said, 'I am God, the God of your father. Don't be afraid of going down to Misrayim, because I shall make you into a big nation there. [4]I myself will go down with you to Misrayim and I myself will also definitely bring you up from there. Yoseph is the one who will place his hand on your eyes.'

[5]So Ya'aqob set off from Be'er Sheba. Yisra'el's sons carried Ya'aqob their father, their little ones and their wives in the wagons that Par'oh had sent to carry him, [6]they got their livestock and the property that they had acquired in the country of Kena'an, and Ya'aqob and all his offspring with him came to Misrayim. [7]His sons and his grandsons with him, his daughters and his granddaughters – all his offspring he brought with him to Misrayim.

The Seventy

[8]These are the names of the descendants of Yisra'el who came to Misrayim, Ya'aqob and his descendants.
Ya'aqob's firstborn, Re'uben; [9]Re'uben's sons: Hanok, Pallu, Hetsron and Karmi.
[10]Shim'on's sons: Yemu'el, Yamin, Ohad, Yakin, Tsohar and Sha'ul, the son of a Kena'anite woman.
[11]Levi's sons: Gershon, Qehat and Merari.
[12]Yehudah's sons: Er, Onan, Shelah, Perets and Zerah (but Er and Onan had died in the country of Kena'an); Perets's sons were Hetsron and Hamul.
[13]Yissakar's sons: Tolah, Puvvah, Yob and Shimron.
[14]Zebulun's sons: Sered, Elon and Yahle'el.
[15]These are the sons of Le'ah, to whom she gave birth for Ya'aqob in Paddan Aram, and his daughter Dinah. Every person, his sons and his daughters: thirty-three.

[16]Gad's sons: Tsiphyon, Haggi, Shuni, Etsbon, Eri, Arodi and Ar'eli.
[17]Asher's sons: Yimnah, Yishvah, Yishvi and Beri'ah, with Serah their sister. Beri'ah's sons: Heber and Malki'el.
[18]These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to his daughter Le'ah. She gave birth to these for Ya'aqob: sixteen persons.

[19]The sons of Ya'aqob's wife Rahel: Yoseph and Binyamin. [20]To Yoseph were born in the country of Misrayim Menashsheh and Ephrayim, to whom Asenat, the daughter of Potiphera, priest in On, gave birth for him.
[21]Binyamin's sons: Bela, Beker, Ashbel, Gera, Na'aman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim and Ard.
[22]These are the sons of Rahel who were born to Ya'aqob. Every person: fourteen.

[23]Dan's sons: Hushim.
[24]Naphtali's sons: Yahtse'el, Guni, Yetser and Shillem.
[25]These are the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to his daughter Rahel. She gave birth to these for Ya'aqob. Every person: seven.

[26]Every person belonging to Ya'aqob who came to Misrayim, the people who went out of his loins, apart from the wives of Ya'aqob's sons, every person: sixty-six. [27]Yoseph's sons who were born to him in Misrayim, the persons: two. Every person belonging to Ya'aqob's household who came to Misrayim: seventy.

I can die now

[28]He had sent Yehudah before him to Yoseph, to give directions before him to Goshen. So they came to the Goshen region, [29]and Yoseph harnessed his chariot and went up to meet Yisra'el his father in Goshen. He appeared to him, and he fell on his neck and cried on his neck again and again. [30]Yisra'el said to Yoseph, 'I can die now, after I've seen your face, that you're still alive.'
[31]Yoseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, 'I'll go up and tell Par'oh: "My brothers and my father's household, who were in the country of Kena'an – they have come to me. [32]The men are shepherds of a flock, because they've been livestock men, and their flock and their herd and all that's theirs – they've brought them." [33]So when Par'oh calls for you and says, "What's your work?" [34]say "Your servants have been livestock men from our youth till now, both we and our ancestors", so that you may live in the Goshen region, because every shepherd of a flock is an offence to Misrayimites.'
47 So Yoseph came and told Par'oh, 'My father and my brothers, their flock and their herd and all that's theirs – they've come from the country of Kena'an. There, they're in the Goshen region.' [2]He took some of the total number of his brothers, five of them, and presented them before Par'oh. [3]Par'oh said to his brothers, 'What is your work?' They said to Par'oh, 'Your servants are shepherds of a flock, both we and our ancestors.' [4]They said to Par'oh, 'We have come to reside in the country because there's no pasture for your servants' flock, because the famine is heavy in the country of Kena'an. So now may your servants please live in the Goshen region.' [5]Par'oh said to Yoseph: 'Given that your father and your brothers have come to you, [6]the country of Misrayim is before you. Get your father and your brothers to live in the best part of the country. They should live in the Goshen region, and if you know that there are capable men among them, make them livestock officials over all that's mine.'

State provision

[7]Yoseph brought Ya'aqob his father and got him to stand before Par'oh, and Ya'aqob blessed Par'oh. [8]Par'oh said to Ya'aqob, 'What is the span of the years of your life?' [9]Ya'aqob said to Par'oh, 'The span of the years of my residing is 130 years. Small and bad has been the span of the years of my life. They haven't reached the span of the years of my ancestors' lives by the span of their residing.'
[10]Ya'aqob blessed Par'oh and left Par'oh's presence, [11]and Yoseph got his father and his brothers to live and gave them a holding in the country of Misrayim, in the best part of the country, in the Ra'meses region, as Par'oh had ordered. [12]Yoseph provided his father, his brothers and his father's entire household with bread by the number of the little ones.
[13]But bread: there was none in the entire country, because the famine was very heavy. The country of Misrayim and the country of Kena'an withered because of the famine. [14]Yoseph collected all the silver that was to be found in the country of Misrayim and in the country of Kena'an in payment for the grain that they were buying. Yoseph brought the silver into Par'oh's house.
[15]When the silver from the country of Misrayim and from the country of Kena'an came to an end, all Misrayim came to Yoseph, saying, 'Give us bread: why should we die in front of you, because the silver has gone.' [16]Yoseph said, 'Bring your livestock, and I'll give it to you in exchange for your livestock, if the silver's gone.' [17]So they brought their livestock to Yoseph and Yoseph gave them bread in exchange for the horses, for the livestock in the flock, for the livestock in the herd and for the donkeys. He sustained them with bread in exchange for all their livestock that year.

The nationalization of land

[18]When that year came to an end, they came to him the next year and said to him, 'We won't hide from my lord that the silver has come to an end, and the animal stocks belong to my lord: nothing remains before my lord except our bodies and our land. [19]Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Acquire us and our land in exchange for bread. We ourselves and our land will become serfs to Par'oh. Give seed, so we may live and not die, and the land not become a waste.'
[20]So Yoseph acquired all the land in Misrayim for Par'oh, because the Misrayimites, each of them, sold his fields because the famine was so hard on them, and the country came to belong to Par'oh. [21]The people: he got them to pass over into the towns from one end of Misrayim's border to its other end. [22]He only didn't acquire the priests' land, because the priests had a statutory allotment from Par'oh and they ate their allotment that Par'oh gave them. Therefore they didn't sell their land.
[23]Yoseph said to the people, 'Here, today I've acquired you and your land for Par'oh. Here's seed for you. You are to sow the land, [24]and with the yield you are to give a fifth to Par'oh, but four-fifths will be yours, as seed for the fields and as food for you and for those in your households, and for eating by your little ones.' [25]They said, 'You've kept us alive. May we find grace in the eyes of my lord. We will become serfs to Par'oh.'
[26]Yoseph made it a decree, until this day, for the land in Misrayim: a fifth is Par'oh's. Only the land of the priests on their own didn't become Par'oh's.

Still remembering his first love

[27]So Yisra'el lived in the country of Misrayim in the Goshen region. They acquired holdings in it, they were fruitful and they became very numerous. [28]Ya'aqob lived seventeen years in the country of Misrayim. Ya'aqob's span, the years of his life, was 147 years.

[29]The days drew near for Yisra'el to die, and he called his son Yoseph and said to him, 'Please, if I've found grace in your eyes, put your hand under my thigh, please, and act in commitment and truthfulness with me. Please don't bury me in Misrayim. [30]I shall lie down with my ancestors and you're to carry me from Misrayim and bury me in their burial-place.' He said, 'I will act in accordance with your word.' [31]He said, 'Swear to me.' He swore to him, and Yisra'el bowed low at the head of the bed.

48 Subsequently, they said to Yoseph, 'Here, your father is ill', so he took his two sons with him, Menashsheh and Ephrayim. [2]They told Ya'aqob, 'Here, your son Yoseph is coming to you.' Yisra'el summoned up his strength and sat up on the bed. [3]Ya'aqob said to Yoseph, 'God Shadday, he appeared to me at Luz in the country of Kena'an and blessed me, [4]and said to me, "Here, I'm making you fruitful and numerous and making you a congregation of peoples and giving this country to your offspring after you as a permanent holding."

[5]Now, your two sons who were born to you in the country of Misrayim before my coming to you in Misrayim: they're mine. Like Re'uben and Shim'on, they are to be mine. [6]Your family that you father after them will be yours. As regards their domain they will be called with the name of their brothers. [7]I – when I was coming from Paddan, Rahel died, alas, in the country of Kena'an, on the journey, when there was still a distance so as to come to Ephrat, and I buried her there on the road to Ephrat' (i.e. Bet Lehem).

The younger again ahead of the elder

[8]So when Yisra'el saw Yoseph's sons, he said 'Who are these?' [9]Yoseph said to his father, 'They're my sons, whom God has given me here.' He said, 'Please get them to me, so I may bless them.' [10]Now Yisra'el's eyes were heavy because of age, and he couldn't see.

He brought them up to him, and he kissed them and hugged them. [11]Yisra'el said to Yoseph, 'To see your face! I didn't expect it. And here – God has let me see your offspring as well.' [12]Yoseph got them off his knees and bowed low, with his face to the ground. [13]Yoseph took the two of them, Ephrayim with his right hand to Yisra'el's left, and Menashsheh with his left hand to Yisra'el's right, and brought them up to him.

[14]Yisra'el put out his right hand and put it on Ephrayim's head (though he was the younger one) and his left hand on Menashsheh's head, crossing his hands, because Menashsheh was the firstborn, [15]and he blessed Yoseph: 'May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Yitshaq walked, the God who has been shepherding me from whenever until this day, [16]the envoy who has restored me from every bad fortune, bless the boys. May I be named through them, I and my ancestors Abraham and Yitshaq. May they abound so as to become a large number in the middle of the country.'

[17]Yoseph saw that his father was putting his right hand on Ephrayim's head and it was bad in his eyes. He took hold of his father's hand to remove it from on Ephrayim's head on to Menashsheh's head. [18]Yoseph said to his father, 'Not like that, father, because this one is the firstborn. Place your right hand on his head.' [19]But his father refused and said, 'I know, son, I know. He will become a people as well, he will become big as well, but nevertheless his younger brother will be bigger than him and his offspring will become a full number of nations.'

[20]So that day he blessed them: 'By you Yisra'el will bless, saying: "God make you like Ephrayim and Menashsheh."' But he put Ephrayim before Menashsheh.

Deathbed promises and predictions (1)

[21]Yisra'el said to Yoseph: 'Here, I'm going to die, but God will be with you and will take you back to the country of your ancestors. [22]I myself am giving you one shoulder [*shekem*] above your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and with my bow.'

49 Ya'aqob called his sons and said, 'Gather together and I shall tell you what is to befall you in a later time. [2]Collect together and listen, sons of Ya'aqob, listen to Yisra'el your father.'

[3]Re'uben, you're my firstborn,
my energy and the firstfruit of my strength.
Though excelling in dignity and excelling in vigour,
[4]turbulent as water, you are not to excel.
Because you climbed into your father's bed,
then profaned it; he climbed on to my mattress.

[5]Shim'on and Levi, brothers,
their pikes are instruments of violence.
[6]May I myself not come into their council,
may I myself not join in their congregation.
Because when they were angry, they killed people;
when it was acceptable to them, they hamstrung oxen.
[7]Cursed be their anger because it was vigorous,
their outburst because it was tough.
I will divide them in Ya'aqob,
scatter them in Yisra'el.

Deathbed promises and predictions (2)

[8]You are Yehudah;
your brothers will confess you.
With your hand on your enemies' neck,
your father's sons will bow low to you.
[9]Yehudah is a lion cub;
from the prey, son, you've gone up.
He's bent down, lain like a lion,
like a cougar – who will make him rise?
[10]The staff will not depart from Yehudah,
the sceptre from between his feet,
Until tribute comes to him
and the submission of the peoples is his.
[11]He ties his donkey to a vine,
the offspring of his she-donkey to a choice vine.

He washes his apparel in wine,
his garments in grape-blood.
[12]His eyes are darker than wine,
his teeth whiter than milk.

[13]Zebulun is to dwell by the sea shore
he's to be by the shore for ships;
his flank at Tsidon.

[14]Yissakar is a sturdy donkey
lying among the sheepfolds.
[15]He saw a place to settle down – how good it was,
and the country – how lovely.
He bent his shoulder to the labouring,
became a serf work force.

[16]Dan is to give judgement [*yadin*] for his people
as one of Yisra'el's clans.
[17]Dan is to be a snake by the road,
a viper by the path,
One that bites the horse's heels
so its rider falls backwards.

[18]For your deliverance I have waited, Yahweh.

[19]Gad: a raiding gang [*gedud*] will raid him,
but he himself will raid at its heel.

[20]From Asher: his bread will be rich,
and he will give a king's delicacies.

[21]Naphtali is a hind set free,
who gives lovely fawns.

Deathbed promises and predictions (3)

[22]Yoseph is a fruitful branch,
a fruitful branch by a spring,
branches that run over a wall.
[23]The archers were ferocious
and shot at him and assaulted him.
[24]But his bow stayed firm
and his arms and hands were agile,
Because of the hands of Ya'aqob's Champion,
because the Shepherd, Yisra'el's Stone, was there,
[25]Because of your father's God, he helps you,
and Shadday, he blesses you,
With the blessings of the heavens above,
the blessings of the deep lying below,
The blessings of the breasts and the womb,
[26]the blessings of your father.
They have been stronger than the blessings of the ancient mountains,

up to the bounty of the age-old hills.
May they come on Yoseph's head,
on the crown of the one who was consecrated from his brothers.

[27]Binyamin is a wolf who tears apart,
in the morning he eats prey,
at evening he shares out spoil.

[28]All these are the twelve Yisra'elite clans and this is what their father spoke to them. So he blessed them. Each of them according to his blessing he blessed them.
[29]He ordered them and said to them, 'I'm being gathered to my kin. Bury me with my ancestors in the cave that's in the field of Ephron the Hittite, [30]in the cave that's in the field at Makpelah which is east of Mamre, in the country of Kena'an, the field that Abraham acquired from Ephron the Hittite as a burial holding [31](there they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Yitshaq and Ribqah his wife, there I buried Le'ah), [32]an acquisition (the field and the cave that's in it) from the Hittites.'
[33]Ya'aqob finished giving orders to his sons, gathered his feet into the bed, breathed his last and was gathered to his kin.

The great mourning

50 Yoseph fell on his father's face and wailed over him and kissed him. [2]Yoseph ordered the physicians who were his servants to embalm his father. When the physicians embalmed Yisra'el, [3]they fulfilled forty days for him, because that's how they used to fulfil the days for embalming.
The Misrayimites bewailed him seventy days, [4]and when the days of bewailing him had passed, Yoseph spoke to Par'oh's household: 'Please, if I have found grace in your eyes, please speak in Par'oh's ears: [5]"My father himself got me to swear: 'Here, I'm dying; in the grave that I dug for myself in the country of Kena'an, there you're to bury me.' So I shall now go up, please, and bury my father, and come back."'
[6]Par'oh said, 'Go up and bury your father as he got you to swear.' [7]So Yoseph went up to bury his father. All Par'oh's servants went up with him, and the elders in his household, all the elders in the country of Misrayim, [8]Yoseph's entire household, his brothers and his father's household. Only the little ones, and their flock and their herd, did they abandon in the Goshen region. [9]Both chariotry and cavalry went up with him. It was a very substantial camp.
[10]They came to the Thorn Threshing Floor, which is across the Yarden, and held a very great and heavy lament there. He made seven days of grieving for his father. [11]The Kena'anite people living in the country saw the grieving at Thorn Threshing Floor and said, 'This is a heavy grieving on the part of the Misrayimites.' That's why it was named 'The Misrayimite Grieving', which is across the Yarden.
[12]His sons did thus for him, as he had ordered them, [13]and his sons carried him to the country of Kena'an and buried him in the cave in the field at Makpelah, the field that Abraham acquired as a burial holding from Ephron the Hittite, east of Mamre.

Am I in the place of God?

[14]Then Yoseph went back to Misrayim, he and his brothers and all the people who had gone up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father. [15]Yoseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, and said, 'What if Yoseph feels hostile to us and really gets back at us for all the bad fate that we dealt to him?' [16]So they gave order to Yoseph: 'Your father gave order before his death: [17]"Say this to Yoseph: 'Oh, please carry your brothers' affront and their wrongdoing, that they dealt a bad fate to you.'" So now please carry the affront of the servants of your father's God.' Yoseph cried when they spoke to him. [18]His brothers also came and fell before him and said, 'Here are we as servants to you.'
[19]Yoseph said to them, 'Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? [20]Whereas you yourselves thought up something bad for me, God thought it up for good, in order to act today to keep alive a numerous people. [21]So now, don't be afraid. I myself will provide for you and your little ones.' Thus he consoled them and reassured them.
[22]So Yoseph lived in Misrayim, he and his father's household. Yoseph lived 110 years [23]and saw the third generation of Ephrayim; the children of Makir ben Menashsheh were also born on Yoseph's knees. [24]Then Yoseph said to his brothers, 'I'm going to die, but God will definitely attend to you and take you up from this country to the country that he swore to Abraham, to Yitshaq and to Ya'aqob.' [25]Yoseph got Yisra'el's sons to swear, saying: 'God will definitely attend to you, and you're to take up my bones from here.' [26]Yoseph died, a man of 110 years. They embalmed him and put him in a coffin in Misrayim.

Exodus

Exodus tells the story of Israel's beginnings as a people. It starts off with the Israelites as state serfs in Egypt, and its first half recounts how Yahweh forces the Egyptian king to release them so they can go and hold a festival for Yahweh. After a further, final showdown between Yahweh and the king at the Reed Sea, they're able to get to the mountain where their leader, Moses, had earlier met with this God.

The second half relates the renewing of the pact or covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel and Israel's construction of the splendid portable sanctuary whose specifications Yahweh gives Moses. The book first provides all the specifications and then repeats them in its account of how Israel did as Yahweh said. The story ends with Yahweh coming to dwell among Israel in this sanctuary.

The bridge between the two halves of the book is Yahweh's initial meeting with Israel at Mount Sinai. Whereas in Genesis Yahweh didn't explicitly lay down much by way of expectations of his people, his getting Israel out of their serfdom provides a new basis for his laying down expectations of them. These begin with the Ten Commandments, which embody some basic principles for life. The list sums up a number of the concerns that underlie much of the expression of Yahweh's decrees for Israel's life that are expounded in the Old Testament as a whole. It combines some basic obligations that most cultures would accept (no murder, no theft, and so on) with some obligations that would raise eyebrows among other peoples (worship only Yahweh, don't make images, stop working one day a week), and it ends with a final *coup de grâce* that sends anyone away with their tail between their legs (no coveting). The further decrees that follow the Ten Commandments spell out these obligations in sample areas of life. Once again, other Middle Eastern peoples would not be surprised to find directives to avoid the ill-treatment of servants, or procedures for resolving conflicts in the community, but would notice the distinctiveness of instructions about Israel's worship of Yahweh alone.

Exodus is a narrative with a beginning, a middle and an end. Yet it's not self-contained. It continues the story begun in Genesis, and the background for Yahweh's getting Israel out of Egypt lies in things Yahweh had promised in Genesis. At the end, it leads into Leviticus, which relates more of what Yahweh told Moses at Sinai, and it leads on further into the subsequent books that will relate how God continued to pursue his project of settling Israel in Canaan.

As is the case with Genesis, we don't know who wrote Exodus or when it was written, but we can see how its story informed Israel over the centuries about what it was as a people, and what it was supposed to be. The fact that Yahweh rescued Israel from Egypt was a basis for continuing to trust him and for being the kind of community that protects people from harsh servitude rather than ill-treating them as servants. Yahweh's putting Pharaoh in his place provided reason for trusting in and submitting to Yahweh as King and not thinking that the imperial power of the day held the real power. The story of Yahweh's laying out the blueprint for a rather different kind of sanctuary from the temple that Israel later built would give food for thought to a people that liked to devise its own worship and its own worship buildings.

Like Genesis, Exodus is more like a movie based on fact than either a piece of pure fiction or a pure historical narrative. One aspect of its genius is the way it discusses complex theological questions as it tells its story. What is the relationship between God's sovereignty and the sovereignty of a political figure like the Pharaoh? What do we mean by talking about the presence of God? How does God cope with the rebelliousness of his own people in a way that does justice to his faithfulness and mercy and to his sacredness and integrity? In telling its story, Exodus walks round questions such as these, looks at them from various angles and thus resources its readers in thinking about them.

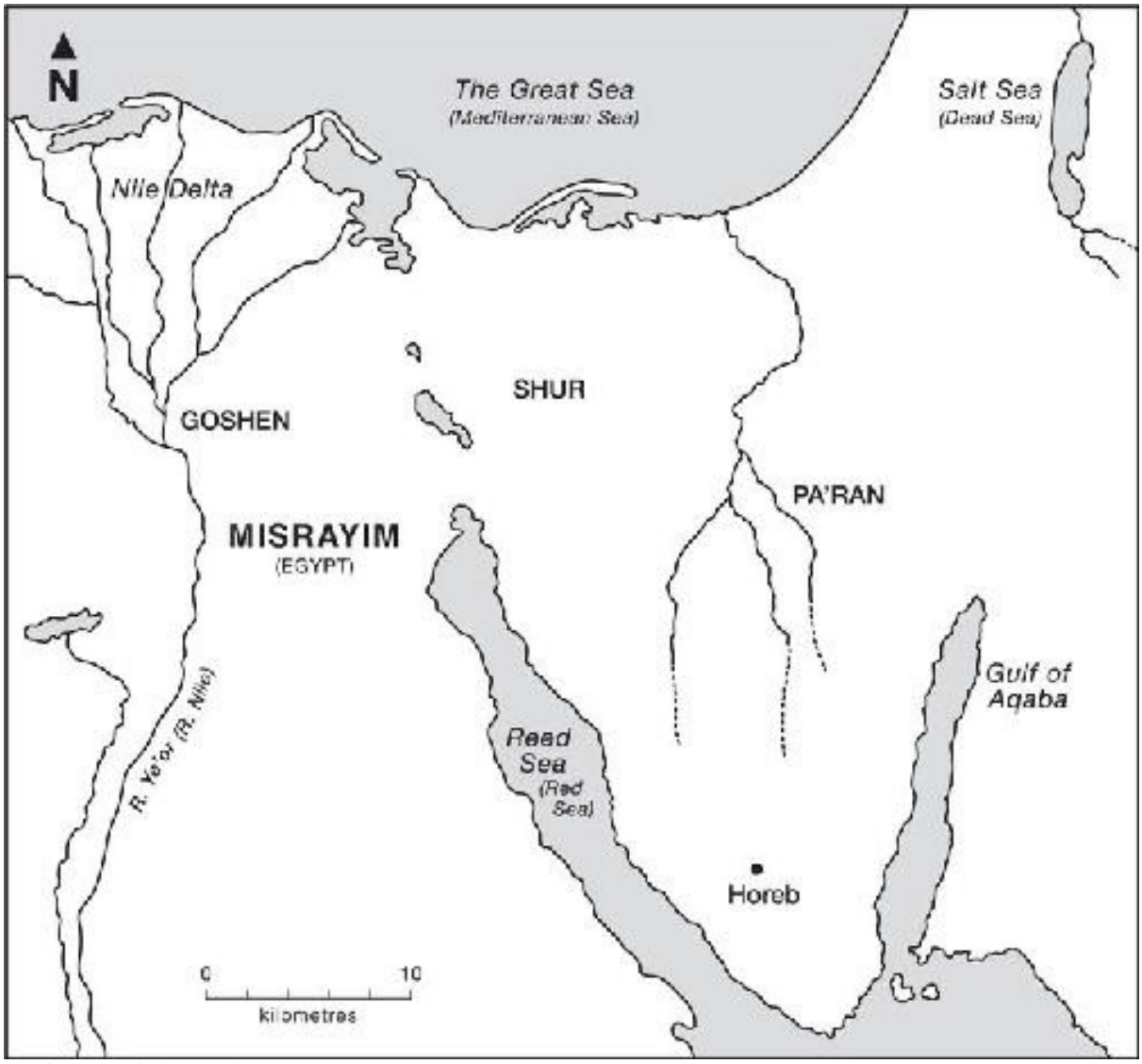
On not rendering to Caesar

1 So these are the names of the sons of Yisra'el [Israel] who came to Misrayim [Egypt] with Ya'aqob [Jacob] (each with his
household they came): [2]Re'uben, Shim'on [Simeon], Levi and Yehudah [Judah]; [3]Yissakar [Issachar], Zebulun and
Binyamin [Benjamin]; [4]Dan and Naphtali; Gad and Asher. [5]Every person of those who came out of Ya'aqob's loins, they were
seventy persons, Yoseph [Joseph] being in Misrayim. [6]Yoseph died, as did all his brothers, and all that generation, [7]but the
Yisra'elites – they were fruitful and they teemed, they became vast and very, very numerous. The country became full of them.

[8]A new king rose up over Misrayim who didn't acknowledge Yoseph. [9]He said to his people, 'Here, the people of the
Yisra'elites is vaster and more numerous than us. [10]Come on, let's act smart with it so it doesn't become so vast that when battle
comes, it even gathers together with our enemies and does battle against us, and goes up from the country.' [11]So they set
workforce officials over it in order to humble it by means of its labours. It built supply towns for Par'oh [Pharaoh], Pitom and
Ra'amses. [12]But as they would humble it, so it would become vaster and break out. They were dismayed about the Yisra'elites.

[13]So the Misrayimites made the Yisra'elites serve with harshness. [14]They made their lives hard with tough servitude, with
mortar, with bricks and with every form of servitude in the fields. Every form of the servitude that they had them undertake was
with harshness.

[15]The king of Misrayim said to the Hebrew midwives (one of whom was named Shiphrah, the second Pu'ah), [16]'When you're
delivering the Hebrew women, look at the stones. If it's a son, put him to death, but if it's a daughter, she may live.' [17]But the
midwives lived in awe of God and didn't do as the king of Misrayim had spoken to them. They let the boys live. [18]The king of
Misrayim called for the midwives and said to them, 'Why have you done this thing and let the boys live?' [19]The midwives said to
Par'oh, 'Because the Hebrew women are not like the Misrayimite women, because they're lively. Before the midwife comes to
them, they give birth.'



Exodus 1: Mosheh (Moses)

How some women continue to defeat Par'oh

20God was good to the midwives, and the people became vast and very numerous. 21Because the midwives lived in awe of God,
he made households for them. 22Then Par'oh ordered all his people, 'Every son who's born, you're to throw into the Ye'or [Nile],
but every daughter you can let live.'

2 A man from the household of Levi went and got a daughter of Levi. 2The woman got pregnant and gave birth to a son, and
she saw he was good-looking. She hid him for three months 3but she couldn't hide him any longer. So she got a papyrus
container for him, tarred it with tar and with bitumen, put the child in it and put it in the reeds by the bank of the Ye'or. 4His sister
took a stand at a distance so she would know what would be done to him.

5Par'oh's daughter went down to bathe in the Ye'or, while her girls were walking on the bank of the Ye'or. She saw the
container in the middle of the reeds and sent her handmaid, and she got it. 6She opened it and saw the child: there, a boy crying.
She felt pity for him, and said, 'This is one of the Hebrews' children.'

7His sister said to Par'oh's daughter, 'Shall I go and call for a woman from the Hebrew women who is nursing for you, so she
can nurse the child for you?' 8Par'oh's daughter said to her, 'Go!' The girl went and called for the child's mother. 9Par'oh's
daughter said to her, 'Take this child and nurse him for me. I myself will give you your wages.' So the woman took the child and
nursed him, 10and the child grew up. Then she brought him to Par'oh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Mosheh
[Moses]; she said, 'Because I pulled him out [*mashah*] from the water.'

From guerrilla to fugitive

11During that time, Mosheh grew up, and he went out to his brothers and saw their labours. He saw a Misrayimite man striking
down a Hebrew man, one of his brothers. 12He turned his face this way and that, saw that there was no one, and struck down the
Misrayimite and hid him in the sand.

[13]He went out the next day and there, two Hebrew men were fighting. He said to the one in the wrong, 'Why do you strike down your neighbour?' [14]He said, 'Who made you someone as an official and an authority over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Misrayimite?' Mosheh was afraid. He said, 'Then the thing has become known!' [15]And Par'oh heard about this thing and sought to kill Mosheh, but Mosheh took flight from before Par'oh and lived in the country of Midyan.

He lived by a well. [16]Now a Midyanite priest had seven daughters. They came and drew and filled the troughs to water their father's flock, [17]but shepherds came and drove them away. Mosheh got up and delivered them, and watered their flock.

[18]They came to Re'u'el their father, and he said, 'How have you been so quick in coming today?' [19]They said, 'A Misrayimite man rescued us from the hand of the shepherds. He actually drew water for us as well, and watered the flock.' [20]He said to his daughters, 'So where is he? Why did you abandon the man? Call him so he can eat a meal.'

[21]Mosheh resolved to live with the man, and he gave Tsipporah his daughter to Mosheh. [22]She gave birth to a son and he named him Gershom, because (he said) 'I've become a resident [*ger*] in a foreign country.'

It was an ordinary working day

[23]During that long time the king of Misrayim died, and the Yisra'elites groaned because of their servitude. They cried out, and their cry for help because of their servitude went up to God. [24]God listened to their groan, and God was mindful of his pact with Abraham, with Yitshaq [Isaac] and with Ya'aqob. [25]God saw the Yisra'elites. God acknowledged it.

3 Now Mosheh was shepherding the flock of Yitro [Jethro] his father-in-law, the Midyanite priest. He had driven the flock to the far side of the wilderness and come to God's mountain, to Horeb. [2]Yahweh's envoy appeared to him in a fiery flame out of the middle of a bush. He saw, and there, the bush was burning up with fire but the bush wasn't consumed. [3]Mosheh said, 'I must turn aside and see this great sight. Why doesn't the bush burn up?' [4]Yahweh saw that he turned aside to see.

God called to him out of the middle of the bush and said, 'Mosheh, Mosheh!' He said, 'I'm here.' [5]He said, 'Don't draw near here. Take your boots off your feet, because the place you're standing on is sacred ground.' [6]And he said, 'I'm the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Yitshaq and the God of Ya'aqob.' Mosheh hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

[7]Yahweh said, 'I really have seen my people's humbling in Misrayim, and I've listened to their outcry on account of their bosses, because I've acknowledged their sufferings. [8]I've come down to rescue it from the hand of Misrayim and take it up from that country to a good, wide country, a country flowing with milk and syrup, to the place of the Kena'anite [Canaanite], the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Hivvite and the Yebusite. [9]So now, here, the Yisra'elites' outcry has come to me, and I've also seen the affliction that the Misrayimites are imposing on them. [10]So now, go, and I'll send you to Par'oh to get my people, the Yisra'elites, out of Misrayim.'

Who God will be

[11]Mosheh said to God, 'Who am I, that I should go to Par'oh and get the Yisra'elites out of Misrayim?' [12]He said, 'Because I will be with you. This will be the sign for you that I've sent you. When you get the people out of Misrayim, you'll all serve God on this mountain.'

[13]Mosheh said to God, 'Here, I'm going to come to the Yisra'elites and say to them, "The God of your ancestors – he has sent me to you", and they will say to me, "What is his name?" What shall I say to them?' [14]God said to Mosheh, 'I will be what I will be.' He said, 'Say this to the Yisra'elites, "I will be" sent me to you.' [15]God said further to Mosheh, 'Say this to the Yisra'elites: "Yahweh, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Yitshaq, the God of Ya'aqob, sent me to you." This is my name permanently; this is my designation to all generations.

[16]Go, gather Yisra'el's elders, and say to them, "Yahweh, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, Yitshaq and Ya'aqob, has appeared to me, saying 'I really have attended to you and to what's being done to you in Misrayim. [17]I've said, I will take you up, out from humbling in Misrayim, to the country of the Kena'anite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Hivvite and the Yebusite, to a country flowing with milk and syrup.'"

[18]They will listen to your voice, and you are to come, you and Yisra'el's elders, to the king of Misrayim and say to him, "Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews – he's met with us. So now, we must please go three days' journey into the wilderness to sacrifice for Yahweh our God."

People will need evidence

[19]I myself acknowledge that the king of Misrayim won't allow you to go, not even because of a strong hand. [20]But I shall put out my hand and strike Misrayim down with all the extraordinary things that I shall do among them. After this he'll send you off, [21]and I shall give this people grace in the eyes of Misrayim. When you go, you won't go empty-handed. [22]A woman will ask from her neighbour, and from the woman residing in her house, for objects of silver and objects of gold and clothes, and you will put them on your sons and on your daughters. You will strip Misrayim.'

4 Mosheh answered: 'But there, they won't trust in me, they won't listen to my voice, because they'll say, "Yahweh didn't appear to you."'

[2]Yahweh said to him, 'What's this in your hand?' He said, 'A staff.' [3]He said, 'Throw it on the ground.' He threw it on the ground, and it became a snake. Mosheh fled from before it. [4]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Put out your hand and grasp it by its tail' (so he put out his hand and took strong hold of it, and it became a staff in his fist) [5]'in order that they may trust that Yahweh appeared to you – the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Yitshaq and the God of Ya'aqob.'

[6]Yahweh said to him further, 'Put your hand into the fold of your coat, please.' He put his hand into the fold of his coat, and

took it out, and there – his hand was scaly, like snow. [7]He said, 'Put your hand back into the fold of your coat' (so he put his hand back into the fold of his coat, then took it out of the fold of his coat – and there, it had gone back like his flesh) [8]'so if they don't trust you and listen to the voice of the first sign, they may listen to the voice of the later sign.

Some final attempts to say 'No'

[9]If they don't even trust in these two signs and listen to your voice, get some of the water of the Ye'or and pour it on the dry ground, and the water that you get from the Ye'or will become blood on the dry ground.'
[10]Mosheh said to Yahweh, 'Pardon me, Lord: I haven't been a man of words in previous days or since you've spoken to your servant, because I'm heavy of mouth, heavy of tongue.' [11]Yahweh said to him, 'Who made the mouth for human beings, or who makes someone dumb or deaf, seeing or blind? Isn't it me, Yahweh? [12]So now go, and I myself will be with your mouth, and I'll instruct you what you're to say.'
[13]He said, 'Pardon me, Lord: please send by the hand [of someone else] you can send.' [14]Yahweh's anger raged against Mosheh, but he said, 'Isn't there Aharon [Aaron] your brother, the Levite? I know that he can really speak. And also – there, he's going to come out to meet you. When he sees you, he'll rejoice in his heart. [15]You're to speak to him and put the words in his mouth. I myself be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I'll instruct you what you're to do. [16]But he's the one who will speak for you to the people. He – he'll be a mouth for you, and you – you'll be God for him. [17]But take in your hand this staff, with which you'll do the signs.'
[18]So Mosheh went and returned to Yitro his father-in-law and said to him, 'I must please go and return to my brothers in Misrayim and see whether they're still alive.' Yitro said to Mosheh, 'Go; may things be well.'

The migrant returns

[19]So Yahweh said to Mosheh in Midyan, 'Go, go back to Misrayim, because all the people who were seeking your life are dead.' [20]Mosheh took his wife and his sons, mounted them on a donkey and went back to the country of Misrayim.
Mosheh took God's staff in his hand. [21]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'When you go back to Misrayim, look at all the proofs that I put in your hand and do them before Par'oh. But I myself will make his mind adamant so he doesn't send the people off. [22]You're to say to Par'oh, "Yahweh has said this: 'Yisra'el is my son, my firstborn. [23]I have said to you, "Send my son off so he can serve me", but you've refused to send him off. Here, I'm going to kill your son, your firstborn.'"'
[24]On the way, at a lodging place, Yahweh met up with him and sought to put him to death, [25]but Tsipporah got a flint and cut off her son's foreskin, touched his feet with it and said, 'Because you're a bridegroom of shed blood to me!' [26]And he slackened his hold on him. (At that time she said 'a bridegroom of shed blood', regarding the circumcision.)
[27]Yahweh said to Aharon, 'Go and meet Mosheh in the wilderness.' He went and met up with him at God's mountain and kissed him. [28]Mosheh told Aharon all Yahweh's words that he had sent him with and all the signs that he had ordered him with, [29]and Mosheh and Aharon went and gathered all the elders of the Yisra'elites. [30]Aharon spoke all the words that Yahweh had spoken to Mosheh, he did the signs before the people's eyes, [31]and the people trusted. They heard that Yahweh had attended to the Yisra'elites and had seen their humbling, and they bent their heads and bowed low.

I don't acknowledge Yahweh

5 Afterwards, Mosheh and Aharon went and said to Par'oh, 'Yahweh has said this: "Send my people Yisra'el off so they may hold a festival for me in the wilderness."' [2]But Par'oh said, 'Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice about sending Yisra'el off? I don't acknowledge Yahweh and I won't send Yisra'el off, either.'
[3]So they said, 'In that the God of the Hebrews has met with us, we must please go a three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice for Yahweh our God so that he doesn't come on us with epidemic or with sword.' [4]The king of Misrayim said to them, 'Mosheh and Aharon, why should you release the people from their work? Get to your labours.' [5]And Par'oh said, 'Here, the people of the country are now vast, and you'll make them stop from their labours?'
[6]That day Par'oh ordered the bosses over the people and its overseers: [7]'You will not continue to give the people straw for making brick, as in previous days. They themselves can go and collect straw for themselves. [8]But you're to set for them the quantity of bricks that they were making in previous days. You will not cut it down, because they're slacking. That's why they're crying out, "Let's go and offer sacrifice for our God." [9]Service should weigh heavy on the men so they may do it and not listen to deceptive words.'
[10]So the people's bosses and its overseers went out and said to the people, 'Par'oh has said this: "I'm not giving you straw. [11]You go, get straw for yourselves from wherever you may find it, but not a thing is to be cut down from your service."'

Divide and rule

[12]The people dispersed through the entire country of Misrayim to gather stubble for straw, [13]while the bosses hounded them: 'Get your work finished, each day's requirement on its day, just like when there was the straw.' [14]The Yisra'elites' overseers, whom Par'oh's bosses had put over them, were struck down: 'Why have you not finished your decreed amount of brickmaking, as in previous days, either yesterday or today?'
[15]The Yisra'elites' overseers came and cried out to Par'oh, 'Why do you act like this towards your servants? [16]No straw is given to your servants but they're saying to us, "Bricks! Make them." Here, your servants are being struck down, but the

wrongdoing is your people's.' [17]But he said, 'You're slacking, slacking. That's why you're saying, "We want to go sacrifice for
Yahweh." [18]So now go, serve. Straw will not be given you, but you must give the tally of bricks.'
[19]The Yisra'elites' overseers saw that things were bad for them in his saying 'You're not to cut down your bricks, each day's
requirement on its day.' [20]They came upon Mosheh and Aharon taking their stand to meet them when they went out from Par'oh,
[21]and they said to them, 'May Yahweh look at you and exercise authority, because you made our smell stink in the eyes of Par'oh
and in the eyes of his servants, putting a sword in their hand to kill us.'
[22]Mosheh went back to Yahweh and said, 'Lord, why have you dealt badly with this people? Why is it that you sent me?
[23]From the time when I came to Par'oh to speak in your name, he's dealt badly with this people, and you haven't rescued your
people at all.'
6 Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Now you'll see what I shall do to Par'oh, because he will send them off by means of a strong hand.
By means of a strong hand he will drive them out of his country.'

My people – your God

[2]God spoke to Mosheh and said to him, 'I am Yahweh. [3]I appeared to Abraham, to Yitshaq and to Ya'aqob as God Shadday,
but by my name Yahweh I didn't make myself known to them. [4]I also implemented my pact with them to give them the country of
Kena'an, the country of their residing, in which they were residents. [5]I have also now personally listened to the groan of the
Yisra'elites, whom the Misrayimites are treating as serfs, and I've been mindful of my pact. [6]Therefore say to the Yisra'elites, "I
am Yahweh. I shall get you out from under the labours of Misrayim and rescue you from their servitude. I shall restore you by an
outstretched arm and by great acts of authority. [7]I shall take you for myself as a people and I shall be God for you, and you will
acknowledge that I am Yahweh your God, the one who got you out from under the labours of Misrayim. [8]I shall bring you to the
country that I swore to give to Abraham, to Yitshaq and to Ya'aqob. I shall give it to you as a possession. I am Yahweh."'
[9]Mosheh spoke in this way to the Yisra'elites but they didn't listen to Mosheh because of a worn-out spirit and because of
tough servitude.
[10]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [11]'Come speak to Par'oh king of Misrayim so he may send off the Yisra'elites from his country.'
[12]Mosheh spoke before Yahweh: 'Here, the Yisra'elites didn't listen to me, so how will Par'oh listen to me, when I'm foreskinned
of lips?' [13]But Yahweh spoke to Mosheh and Aharon and gave them orders about the Yisra'elites and about Par'oh king of
Misrayim, to get the Yisra'elites out of the country of Misrayim.

The family register

[14]These are the heads of their ancestral households:
The descendants of Re'uben, Yisra'el's firstborn: Hanok and Pallu, Hetsron and Karmi; these are Re'uben's kin-groups.
[15]The descendants of Shim'on: Yemu'el, Yamin, Ohad, Yakin, Tsohar, and Sha'ul, the son of a Kena'anite woman; these are
Shim'on's kin-groups.
[16]These are the names of Levi's descendants by their lines of descent: Gershon, Qehat and Merari (the span of Levi's life was
137 years).
[17]The descendants of Gershon: Libni and Shim'i, by their kin-groups.
[18]The descendants of Qehat: Amram, Itshar, Hebron and Uzzi'el (the span of Qehat's life was 133 years).
[19]The descendants of Merari: Mahli and Mushi.
These are Levi's kin-groups by their lines of descent:
[20]Amram got himself as wife Yokebed, his aunt. She gave birth to Aharon and Mosheh for him (the span of Amram's life was
137 years).
[21]The descendants of Itshar: Qorah, Nepheg and Zikri.
[22]The descendants of Uzzi'el: Misha'el, Eltsaphan and Sitri.
[23]Aharon got for himself as wife Elisheba, the daughter of Amminadab and sister of Nahshon; she gave birth to Nadab and
Abihu, El'azar and Itamar, for him.
[24]The descendants of Qorah: Assir, Elqanah and Abi'asaph; these are the kin-groups of the Qorahites.
[25]El'azar ben Aharon got for himself as wife one of Puti'el's daughters, and she gave birth to Pinhas for him.
These are the heads of the Levites' ancestral households by their kin-groups.
[26]That was Aharon and Mosheh to whom Yahweh said, 'Get the Yisra'elites out of the country of Misrayim by their armies.'
[27]They were the people who spoke to Par'oh king of Misrayim about getting the Yisra'elites out of Misrayim. That was Mosheh
and Aharon.

The stiffening of Par'oh's resolve

[28]On the day Yahweh spoke to Mosheh in the country of Misrayim, [29]and Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: 'I am Yahweh: speak to
Par'oh king of Misrayim all that I'm going to speak to you', [30]Mosheh said before Yahweh, 'Here, I am foreskinned of lips, so
how will Pharoah listen to me?'
7 But Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Look, I am making you God to Par'oh, and Aharon your brother will be your prophet. [2]You –
you are to speak all that I order you, and Aharon your brother is to speak to Par'oh so he may send off the Yisra'elites from
his country. [3]But I myself will toughen Par'oh's mind so I may do my many signs and proofs in the country of Misrayim. [4]Par'oh
won't listen to you, and I shall set my hand against Misrayim, and I shall get my armies, my people, the Yisra'elites, out of the

country of Misrayim, with great acts of authority. [5]So the Misrayimites will acknowledge that I am Yahweh when I stretch out my hand over Misrayim and get the Yisra'elites out from among them.'
[6]Mosheh and Aharon did as Yahweh ordered them; so they did. [7]Mosheh was a man of eighty years and Aharon a man of eighty-three years when they spoke to Par'oh.
[8]Yahweh said to Mosheh and to Aharon: [9]'When Par'oh speaks to you, "Give us a proof for yourselves", you're to say to Aharon, "Get your staff and throw it before Par'oh; it is to become a serpent."' [10]So Mosheh and Aharon came to Par'oh and did so, as Yahweh ordered. Aharon threw his staff before Par'oh and before his servants, and it became a serpent. [11]Par'oh, too, called for the experts and the sorcerers, and the Misrayimite wizards did so, too, with their spells. [12]They threw, each one, his staff and they became serpents. Then Aharon's staff swallowed their staffs. [13]But Par'oh's mind was adamant, and he didn't listen to them, as Yahweh had spoken.

The Ye'or becomes blood

[14]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Par'oh's mind is heavy. He refuses to send the people off. [15]Go to Par'oh in the morning. There, he'll be going out to the water. Take your stand to meet him at the edge of the Ye'or. The staff that turned into a snake – take it in your hand. [16]Say to him, "Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, has sent me to you to say, 'Send my people off so they may serve me in the wilderness.' But here, you haven't listened so far.
[17]Yahweh has said this: 'Because of this you'll acknowledge that I am Yahweh.' Here, I'm going to strike the water in the Ye'or with the staff that's in my hand, and it will turn into blood. [18]The fish that are in the Ye'or – they'll die. The Ye'or will stink. The Misrayimites will be loath to drink water from the Ye'or."'
[19]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Say to Aharon, "Get your staff and stretch out your hand over the water of Misrayim, over its rivers, over its canals, over its ponds, over every body of water, so they become blood. There'll be blood in the entire country of Misrayim, even in wood and stone [containers]."'
[20]Mosheh and Aharon did so, as Yahweh ordered. He lifted the staff and struck the water in the Ye'or before the eyes of Par'oh and before the eyes of his servants, and all the water that was in the Ye'or turned into blood. [21]The fish that were in the Ye'or – they died. The Ye'or stank. The Misrayimites couldn't drink water from the Ye'or. There was blood in the entire country of Misrayim.
[22]But Misrayimite experts did so with their spells, and Par'oh's mind was adamant and he didn't listen to them, as Yahweh had spoken. [23]Par'oh turned his face and came to his house. He didn't give his mind to this, either. [24]All Misrayim dug round the Ye'or for water to drink, because they couldn't drink from the Ye'or water.

Praying for the oppressor

[25]Seven days were fulfilled after Yahweh struck the Ye'or,
8 then Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Come to Par'oh and say to him, "Yahweh has said this: 'Send my people off so they may serve me. [2]If you're going to refuse to send them off: here, I'm going to hit your entire border with frogs. [3]The Ye'or will teem with frogs. They'll climb up and come into your house, into your bedroom and into your bed, and into your servants' house, and in among your people, and into your ovens and into your mixing bowls. [4]Yes, on to you and on to your people and on to all your servants the frogs will climb up.'"'
[5]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Say to Aharon, "Stretch out your hand with your staff over the rivers, over the canals and over the ponds, and get the frogs to climb up on to the country of Misrayim."' [6]Aharon stretched out his hand over the water in Misrayim, and the frogs came up and covered the country of Misrayim. [7]But the experts did so with their spells and got the frogs to climb up on to the country of Misrayim.
[8]Par'oh called for Mosheh and Aharon and said, 'Entreat Yahweh to remove the frogs from me and from my people, and I'll send the people off so they may sacrifice for Yahweh.' [9]Mosheh said to Par'oh, 'You may have the honour over me about when I entreat for you, for your servants and for your people, to cut off the frogs from you and from your houses. Only in the Ye'or will they remain.' [10]He said, 'Tomorrow'. He said, 'According to your word, in order that you may acknowledge that there's no one like Yahweh our God. [11]The frogs will depart from you, from your houses, from your servants and from your people. Only in the Ye'or will they remain.'

An epidemic of lice

[12]Mosheh and Aharon went out from Par'oh, Mosheh cried out to Yahweh about the frogs that he had brought on Par'oh, [13]and Yahweh acted in accordance with Mosheh's word. The frogs died away from the houses, from the courtyards and from the fields. [14]They piled them up, heaps and heaps. The country stank. [15]But when Par'oh saw that there was relief, he firmed up his mind and didn't listen to them, as Yahweh had spoken.
[16]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Say to Aharon, "Hold out your staff and strike the country's soil so it becomes lice in the entire country of Misrayim."' [17]They did so. Aharon stretched out his hand with his staff and struck the country's soil, and lice were on human beings and on animals. All the country's soil became lice in the entire country of Misrayim. [18]The experts did so with their spells to make lice issue, but they couldn't. So the lice were on human beings and on animals. [19]The experts said to Par'oh, 'This is the finger of God.' But Par'oh's mind was adamant and he didn't listen to them, as Yahweh had spoken.
[20]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Start early in the morning and take your stand before Par'oh. There, he'll be going out to the water. You're to say to him, "Yahweh has said this: 'Send my people off so they may serve me. [21]Because if you don't send my people off – here, I'm going to send swarms of flies on you, on your servants, on your people and on your houses. The houses of

Misrayim will be full of the swarms of flies, and also the ground that they walk on. [22]But on that day I'll make a distinction between the Goshen region on which my people stand, so there's no swarm of flies there, in order that you may acknowledge that I am Yahweh, within the country. [23]I shall put a redemption between my people and your people. Tomorrow this sign will come about.''''

Swarms of flies

[24]Yahweh did so. Heavy swarms of flies came into Par'oh's house and into his servants' house. In the entire country of Misrayim the country was devastated in the face of the swarms of flies. [25]Par'oh called for Mosheh and Aharon and said, 'Go, sacrifice for Yahweh your God within the country.' [26]Mosheh said, 'It isn't established to do so, because what we sacrifice for Yahweh our God is an offence to Misrayimites. If we sacrifice what is an offence to Misrayimites before your eyes, won't they stone us? [27]We want to go three days' journey into the wilderness to sacrifice for Yahweh our God, as he says to us.'
[28]Par'oh said, 'I myself will send you off so you may sacrifice for Yahweh your God in the wilderness. Only don't go any great distance. Entreat for me.' [29]Mosheh said, 'Here I am, going out from before you, and I'll entreat Yahweh so the swarms of flies depart from Par'oh and from his servants and from his people tomorrow. Only, Par'oh must not again play about by not sending the people off to sacrifice for Yahweh.'
[30]Mosheh went out from before Par'oh and entreated Yahweh. [31]Yahweh acted in accordance with Mosheh's word and removed the swarms of flies from Par'oh, from his servants and from his people. Not one remained. [32]But Par'oh firmed up his mind this time, too, and did not send the people off.

The distinction between Misrayim and Yisra'el

9 Yahweh said to Mosheh: 'Come to Par'oh and speak to him: "Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, has said this: 'Send my people off so they may serve me. [2]Because if you refuse to send them off and still keep strong hold on to them, [3]here – Yahweh's hand is going to be on your livestock that's in the fields, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the herd and on the flock, with a very heavy pestilence. [4]But Yahweh will make a distinction between Yisra'el's livestock and Misrayim's livestock. Of all that belongs to the Yisra'elites not a thing will die. [5]Yahweh has fixed a set time: tomorrow Yahweh will do this thing in the country.''''
[6]Yahweh did this thing next day. All Misrayim's livestock died; of the Yisra'elites' livestock, not one died. [7]Par'oh sent, and there – not even one of Yisra'el's livestock had died. But Par'oh's mind was firm. He didn't send off the people.
[8]Yahweh said to Mosheh and to Aharon, 'Get yourselves fistfuls of kiln ash. Mosheh is to toss it into the heavens before Par'oh's eyes. [9]It will become dust on the entire country of Misrayim, and on human beings and on animals it will become an inflammation breaking out in blisters in the entire country of Misrayim.'
[10]They got the kiln ash and stood before Par'oh. Mosheh tossed it into the heavens and it became an inflammation breaking out in blisters on human beings and on animals. [11]The wizards were not able to stand before Mosheh because of the inflammation, because the inflammation was on the wizards and on all Misrayim. [12]But Yahweh made Par'oh's mind adamant and he didn't listen to them, as Yahweh has spoken to Mosheh.

The acknowledgement needed

[13]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Start early in the morning and take your stand before Par'oh, and say to him, "Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, has said this: 'Send my people off so they may serve me. [14]Because this time I'm going to send all my blows towards your mind, and on your servants and on your people, in order that you may acknowledge that there's no one like me, in the entire country. [15]Because by now, had I sent my hand and struck down you and your people with an epidemic, you would have been effaced from the country. [16]Yet for this purpose I've let you stand, for the purpose of getting you to see my energy and for the sake of recounting my name in the entire country. [17]You're still exalting yourself over my people so as not to send them off.
[18]Here, this very time tomorrow I'm going to make it rain very heavy hail, such as hasn't happened in Misrayim from the day of its founding until now. [19]So now, send to bring into safety your livestock and everything that you have in the fields. Any human beings or animals that are found in the fields and don't gather in the house, the hail will come down on them and they'll die.''''
[20]Anyone among Par'oh's servants who was in awe of Yahweh's word got his servants and his livestock to flee into their houses, [21]but whoever didn't give his mind to Yahweh's word abandoned his servants and his livestock in the fields. [22]And Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Stretch out your hand over the heavens so hail may come through the entire country of Misrayim, on human beings and on animals and on all the plants of the wild in the country of Misrayim.'

Par'oh flip-flop

[23]So Mosheh stretched out his staff over the heavens. As Yahweh sent a great noise, and hail and fire fell on the ground, Yahweh rained hail on the country of Misrayim. [24]Hail came, with fire flashing about in the middle of the hail, very heavy, such as had not come in the entire country of Misrayim since it became a nation. [25]In the entire country of Misrayim, the hail struck down everything that was in the fields, both human beings and animals. All the plants in the fields it struck down, and all the trees in the fields it broke off. [26]Only in the Goshen region, where the Yisra'elites were, was there no hail.
[27]Par'oh sent and called for Mosheh and Aharon and said to them, 'This time I've done wrong. Yahweh is in the right and I and

my people are in the wrong. [28]Entreat Yahweh so this may be plenty of almighty noise and hail, and I shall send you off. You'll stay no longer.'
[29]Mosheh said to him, 'As I go out of the town, I shall spread the palms of my hands to Yahweh. The great noise – it will leave off, the hail – it will be no more, in order that you may acknowledge that the country belongs to Yahweh. [30]But you and your servants: I know that you are not yet in awe of Yahweh.' [31]The flax and the barley were struck down, because the barley was ripening and the flax was budding, [32]but the wheat and hulled wheat were not struck down, because they are late-ripening.
[33]Mosheh went out of the town from being with Par'oh and spread the palms of his hands to Yahweh, and the great noise and the hail left off and the rain didn't pour on the earth. [34]But Par'oh saw that the rain, the hail and the great noise had left off, and he did wrong again and firmed up his mind, he and his servants. [35]So Par'oh's mind remained adamant and he didn't send the Yisra'elites off – as Yahweh had spoken through Mosheh.

An epidemic of locusts

10 Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Come to Par'oh, because I've hardened his mind and his servants' mind in order to set these signs of mine in his midst [2]and in order that you may recount in the ears of your son and your grandson how I acted abusively against Misrayim, and my signs that I have set among them, so you may acknowledge that I am Yahweh.'
[3]So Mosheh and Aharon came to Par'oh and said to him, 'Yahweh the God of the Hebrews has said this: "How long do you refuse to humble yourself before me? Send my people off so they may serve me. [4]Because if you refuse to send my people off – here, I'm going to bring a locust swarm into your border tomorrow. [5]It will cover the face of the land; people won't be able to see the land. It will eat the rest of what escaped, which remained to you from the hail. It will eat every tree that grows for you, from the fields. [6]They will fill your houses, all your servants' houses and all Misrayim's houses, something that your fathers and grandfathers didn't see, from the day they came into existence on the land until this day."' And he turned his face and went out from being with Par'oh.
[7]Par'oh's servants said to him, 'How long will this man be a snare for us? Send the people off so they may serve Yahweh their God. Don't you yet acknowledge that Misrayim is lost?' [8]So Mosheh and Aharon were brought back to Par'oh, and he said to them, 'Go, serve Yahweh your God. Who exactly are going?' [9]Mosheh said, 'With our young and with our old we will go, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flock and with our herd we will go, because it's Yahweh's festival for us.'

Repentance and more flip-flop

[10]He said to them, 'May Yahweh be with you indeed when I send you and your little ones off! See, you have something bad in view. [11]Definitely not. You men do go and serve Yahweh, because this is what you're seeking.' And they were driven out of Par'oh's presence.
[12]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Stretch out your hand over the country of Misrayim with the locust swarm, so it may come over the country of Misrayim and eat all the plants in the country, anything that the hail left remaining.' [13]So Mosheh stretched out his staff over the country of Misrayim and Yahweh drove an east wind through the country all that day and all night. When the morning came, the east wind had carried the locust swarm.
[14]The locust swarm came over the entire country of Misrayim and settled down in the entire border of Misrayim, very heavy. There had not been a locust swarm like it before it, and after it there would not be. [15]It covered the face of the entire country. The country was dark. It ate all the plants in the country and all the fruit on the trees that the hail had left. Nothing green was left of the trees or the plants in the fields in the entire country of Misrayim.
[16]Par'oh hurried to call for Mosheh and for Aharon and said, 'I've done wrong against Yahweh your God and against you. [17]But now, please carry my wrongdoing only this time. Entreat Yahweh your God that he only remove this death from me.'
[18]He went out from being with Par'oh and entreated Yahweh, [19]and Yahweh changed a very strong west wind. It carried the locust swarm and threw it into the Reed Sea. Not one of the locust swarm remained in the entire border of Misrayim. [20]But Yahweh made Par'oh's mind adamant and he didn't send the Yisra'elites off.

You won't see my face again

[21]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Stretch out your hand over the heavens so there may be darkness over the country of Misrayim and so one can feel darkness.' [22]Mosheh stretched out his hand over the heavens and there was thick darkness through the entire country of Misrayim for three days. [23]No one could see his brother and no one could get up from where he was for three days. But for all the Yisra'elites there was light in their settlements.
[24]Par'oh called for Mosheh and said, 'Go, serve Yahweh. Only your flock and your herd must be laid down. Even your little ones can go with you.' [25]Mosheh said, 'You yourself are to give into our hand sacrifices and burnt offerings so we may make them for Yahweh our God, [26]and also our livestock will go with us (not a hoof will remain behind) because we shall take some of it to serve Yahweh our God, and we ourselves won't know with what we shall serve Yahweh until we come there.'
[27]But Yahweh made Par'oh's mind adamant and he was not willing to send them off. [28]Par'oh said to him, 'Get away from me! Keep watch over yourself: don't see my face again, because on the day you see my face, you'll die.' [29]Mosheh said, 'You've spoken correctly. I shall not see your face ever again.'

The final threat

11 Yahweh said to Mosheh, ‘There’s yet one more blow I shall bring on Par’oh and on Misrayim. After that, he will send you of from here. When he sends you off, it will be complete. He will finally drive you out of here. [2]Speak in the ears of the people, please, so they ask for objects of silver and gold, each man from his neighbour and each woman from her neighbour.’
[3]Yahweh gave the people grace in the eyes of Misrayim. Mosheh himself was also very big in the country of Misrayim in the eyes of Par’oh’s servants and in the eyes of the people.
[4]Mosheh said, ‘Yahweh has said this: “At midnight, I’m going out among the Misrayimites. [5]Every firstborn in the country of Misrayim will die, from the firstborn of Par’oh who sits on the throne to the firstborn of the maidservant who is behind the millstones, and every firstborn of the animals.” [6]There will be a loud cry in the entire country of Misrayim such as has not been and will not be again. [7]But at any of the Yisra’elites a dog won’t growl, either at a person or at an animal, in order that you may acknowledge that Yahweh makes a distinction between Misrayim and Yisra’el. [8]All these servants of yours will come down to me and bow low to me saying, “Get out, you and all your people who follow you.” After, that I’ll go out.’ He went out from Par’oh’s presence in an angry rage.
[9]Yahweh had said to Mosheh, ‘Par’oh won’t listen to you, in order that my proofs may become numerous in the country of Misrayim’, [10]and Mosheh and Aharon had performed all these proofs before Par’oh, but Yahweh had made Par’oh’s mind adamant and he had not sent the Yisra’elites off from his country.

Instructions for a solemn celebration

12 Yahweh said to Mosheh and to Aharon in the country of Misrayim: [2]‘This month is to be the beginning of the months for you. It’s to be the first of the months in the year for you. [3]Speak to the entire Yisra’elite assembly: “On the tenth of this month they’re to get for themselves, each man, a lamb for the ancestral family, a lamb for the household. [4]If the household is too small for a lamb, he and his neighbour near his household are to get one, on the basis of a count of the persons. Each person according to what he will eat, you’re to calculate for the lamb. [5]Your lamb is to be whole, male, a year old. You may get it from the sheep or from the goats.
[6]It’s to be in your keeping until the fourteenth day of this month, then the entire Yisra’elite assembled congregation are to slaughter it at twilight. [7]They’re to get some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they’ll eat it. [8]They’re to eat the meat this night. They’re to eat it roasted in fire, with flatbread and bitters. [9]Don’t eat any of it raw or boiled (boiled in water), please, but rather roasted in fire, including its head, with its legs and its innards. [10]You’re not to leave any of it until morning. What’s left of it until morning, you’re to burn in fire.
[11]This is how you’re to eat it: your hips wrapped round, your boots on your feet, your cane in your hand. You’re to eat it in haste. It’s a Pesah [Passover] for Yahweh. [12]I shall pass through the country of Misrayim this night and strike down every firstborn in the country of Misrayim, human beings and animals. On all the Misrayimite gods I shall perform acts of authority. I am Yahweh.
[13]But for you the blood will be a sign on the houses where you are. I’ll see the blood and pass over you. No blow to devastate will come on you when I strike down the country of Misrayim.

A reminder

[14]This day is to be for you a reminder. You’re to observe it as a festival for Yahweh. Through your generations you’re to observe it, a permanent decree. [15]For seven days you’re to eat flatbread. On the first day you’re totally to eliminate yeast from your houses (because anyone who eats leavened bread – that person shall be cut off from Yisra’el), from the first day to the seventh day.
[16]On the first day it’s a sacred occasion and on the seventh day a sacred occasion for you. No work will be done among you. Only what is to be eaten by a person, that alone may be prepared by you. [17]You’re to keep Flatbread, because on this particular day I got your armies out of the country of Misrayim. You’re to keep this day through your generations, a permanent decree. [18]In the first month on the fourteenth day in the evening, you’re to eat flatbread, until the twenty-first day of the month in the evening. [19]For seven days yeast is not to be found in your houses, because anyone who eats leavened bread – that person shall be cut off from the Yisra’elite assembly, whether being a resident or a native. [20]You will eat no leavened bread. In all your settlements you will eat flatbread.”’
[21]Mosheh called for all Yisra’el’s elders and said to them, ‘Go out, get yourselves sheep for your kin-groups and slaughter the Pesah. [22]Get a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that’s in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that’s in the basin. You – you’re not to go outside, anyone, from the entrance of his house until morning. [23]Yahweh will pass through to hit Misrayim, but he will see the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts. Yahweh will pass by the entrance and not let the devastater come into your households to hit them.

The scream

[24]You’re to keep this word as a permanent decree for yourself and for your descendants. [25]When you come into the country that Yahweh will give you, as he spoke, you’re to keep this service. [26]When your children say to you, “What is this service for you?” [27]you’re to say, “It’s the Pesah sacrifice for Yahweh, because he passed over the Yisra’elites’ households in Misrayim, when he hit Misrayim but rescued our households.”’ The people bent their heads and bowed low.
[28]The Yisra’elites went and did as Yahweh ordered Mosheh and Aharon; so they did. [29]In the middle of the night Yahweh struck down every firstborn in the country of Misrayim, from the firstborn of Par’oh who sat on the throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the cistern, and every firstborn of an animal. [30]Par’oh got up in the night, he and all his servants and all

Misrayim, and there was a loud crying out in Misrayim, because there was no household where there was not someone dead.
[31]He called for Mosheh and Aharon in the night and said, 'Set off, get out from among my people, both you and the Yisra'elites. Go, serve Yahweh in accordance with your word. [32]Both your flock and your herd – take them as you have spoken. Go. But bless me also.'
[33]Misrayim was firm with the people, hurrying to send them off from the country, because (they said), 'We're all going to be dead.' [34]So the people picked up their dough before it was leavened, their mixing bowls wrapped in their clothes, on their shoulder.
[35]The Yisra'elites had acted in accordance with Mosheh's word and asked the Misrayimites for objects of silver and gold, and clothes, [36]and Yahweh had given the people grace in the eyes of the Misrayimites so they had let them ask. So they stripped the Misrayimites.

A huge company

[37]The Yisra'elites moved on from Ra'meses to Sukkot, some 600,000 men on foot apart from little ones. [38]A mixed crowd also went up with them, and a flock and herd, very substantial livestock. [39]They baked the dough they had brought out of Misrayim into flatbread loaves because it was not leavened, because they'd been driven out of Misrayim and hadn't been able to delay, and also they hadn't made provisions for themselves.
[40]The Yisra'elites' settlement that they had had in Misrayim lasted 430 years. [41]At the end of 430 years, on that particular day all Yahweh's armies came out of the country of Misrayim. [42]It was a night of keeping watch for Yahweh, in getting them out of the country of Misrayim. For the Yisra'elites through their generations this night is one of keeping watch for Yahweh.
[43]Yahweh said to Mosheh and Aharon, 'This is the Pesah decree. While no one born of a foreigner may eat of it, [44]any person who is a servant, acquired for silver, but you've circumcised him – he may then eat of it. [45]A settler or employee may not eat of it.
[46]It's to be eaten in one house. You may not take any of the meat outside the house. You may not break any bone of it. [47]The entire Yisra'elite assembly is to do this. [48]When someone is a resident with you and makes Pesah for Yahweh, every male belonging to him is to be circumcised, and then he may draw near to perform it; he'll be like a native of the country. But anyone who is foreskinned may not eat of it. [49]There is to be one instruction for the native and for the person who is a resident among you.'
[50]All the Yisra'elites did as Yahweh ordered Mosheh and Aharon; so they did. [51]This particular day Yahweh got the Yisra'elites out of the country of Misrayim by their armies.

The reminders

13 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]'Make every firstborn sacred for me; the one who opens every womb among the Yisra'elites, human being or animal, is mine.'
[3]Mosheh said to the people, 'Be mindful of this day when you got out of Misrayim, out of a household of serfs, because Yahweh got you out of it by strength of hand. No leavened bread is to be eaten. [4]Today you're going out, in the month of Aviv. [5]When Yahweh brings you into the country of the Kena'anites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Hivvites and the Yebusites, which he swore to your ancestors to give you, a country flowing with milk and syrup, you're to perform this service in this month.
[6]For seven days you're to eat flatbread, and on the seventh day there's to be a festival for Yahweh. [7]Flatbread is to be eaten through the seven days. Leavened bread is not to appear among you. Yeast is not to appear among you in your entire border. [8]You're to tell your child on that day, "It's because of what Yahweh did for me when I got out of Misrayim." [9]It will be a sign for you on your hand and a reminder between your eyes, in order that Yahweh's instruction may be in your mouth, because Yahweh got you out of Misrayim with a strong hand. [10]You're to keep this decree at its set time from year to year.
[11]When Yahweh brings you into the country of the Kena'anites as he swore to you and to your ancestors, and gives it to you, [12]you're to pass on every opener of the womb to Yahweh. Every opener (the drop of an animal that belongs to you), the males are Yahweh's. [13]Any donkey's opener you're to redeem with a sheep; if you don't redeem it, you're to break its neck. Every human opener among your children, you're to redeem.

The long way round

[14]When your child asks in the future "What is this?" you're to say to him, "Yahweh got us out of Misrayim, out of a household of serfs, by strength of hand. [15]When Par'oh was tough about sending us off, Yahweh killed every firstborn in the country of Misrayim, both human firstborn and animal firstborn. That's why I'm sacrificing for Yahweh every opener of the womb, the males, but I redeem the firstborn among my sons." [16]So it will be a sign on your hand and a symbol between your eyes, because Yahweh got us out of Misrayim by strength of hand.'
[17]When Par'oh sent the people off, God didn't lead them by the road to the Pelishtites' [Philistines'] country because it was near, because (God said), 'So that the people don't have a change of heart when they see battle, and turn back to Misrayim.' [18]God made the people go round by the wilderness road to the Reed Sea.
The Yisra'elites went up from the country of Misrayim organized into companies. [19]Mosheh took Yoseph's bones with him, because he had made the Yisra'elites solemnly swear, 'God will definitely attend to you, and you're to take up my bones from here with you.' [20]They moved on from Sukkot and camped at Etam at the edge of the wilderness, [21]with Yahweh going before them by day in a cloud pillar to lead them on the way and by night in a fire pillar to give them light, so they could go by day or night. [22]The cloud pillar by day and the fire pillar by night would not move away from before the people.

One kind of fear turns to another

14 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]‘Speak to the Yisra’elites: they’re to turn back and camp before Pi Hahirot, between Migdol and
the sea. You’re to camp before Ba’al Tsephon, opposite it, by the sea. [3]Par’oh will say of the Yisra’elites, “They’re lost in
the region. The wilderness has closed in on them.” [4]I shall make Par’oh’s mind adamant and he’ll pursue after them, so I may
show my splendour through Par’oh and all his force, and the Misrayimites may acknowledge that I am Yahweh.’ They did so.
[5]It was told the king of Misrayim that the people had taken flight, and the mind of Par’oh and his servants towards the people
changed. They said, ‘What’s this that we’ve done, that we’ve sent Yisra’el off from serving us?’ [6]He harnessed his chariot and
took his people with him, [7]and took 600 picked chariotry, and the entire Misrayimite chariotry, with adjutants over all of them.
[8]So Yahweh made the mind of Par’oh king of Misrayim adamant and he pursued after the Yisra’elites as the Yisra’elites were
leaving with hand high. [9]The Misrayimites pursued after them and overtook them camping by the sea, all Par’oh’s chariot horses,
his riders and his force, near Pi Hahirot, opposite Ba’al Tsephon.
[10]As Par’oh got near, the Yisra’elites lifted their eyes, and there, the Misrayimites were moving on after them, and they were
very fearful. The Yisra’elites cried out to Yahweh, [11]and said to Mosheh, ‘Was it for lack of graves in Misrayim that you took us
to die in the wilderness? What’s this you’ve done to us in getting us out of Misrayim? [12]Isn’t this the thing we spoke to you in
Misrayim, “Leave off from us and we’ll serve the Misrayimites, because serving the Misrayimites is better for us than dying in the
wilderness”?’

Why should you cry out to me?

[13]Mosheh said to the people, ‘Don’t be fearful. Take your stand and see Yahweh’s deliverance, which he’ll effect for you today.
Because the Misrayimites you’ve seen today you won’t see any more, ever again, permanently. [14]Yahweh – he will do battle for
you. You – you can stay quiet.’
[15]Yahweh said to Mosheh, ‘Why should you cry out to me? Speak to the Yisra’elites so they may move on. [16]You yourself, lift
up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it so the Yisra’elites may come into the middle of the sea on the
dry ground. [17]And I – here am I, making the Misrayimites’ mind adamant so they come after them. I shall show my splendour
through Par’oh and through all his force, through his chariotry and through his cavalry. [18]The Misrayimites will acknowledge that
I am Yahweh when I show my splendour through Par’oh, through his chariotry and through his cavalry.’
[19]God’s envoy, who had been going before the Yisra’elite camp, moved on and went behind them, and the cloud pillar moved
on from before them and stood behind them, [20]so it came between the Misrayimite camp and the Yisra’elite camp. So there was
the cloud and the darkness, though it lit the night.
The one didn’t draw near the other all night, [21]but Mosheh stretched out his hand over the sea and Yahweh caused the sea to go
by means of a vigorous east wind, all night, and made the sea into parched ground. So the water split [22]and the Yisra’elites came
into the middle of the sea on the dry ground, with the water a wall for them on their right and on their left. [23]The Misrayimites
pursued, and all Par’oh’s horse, his chariotry and his cavalry came into the middle of the sea.

The good kind of fear returns

[24]At the morning watch Yahweh looked out at the Misrayimite camp through the fire and cloud pillar, and made the
Misrayimite camp turmoil. [25]He jammed the wheels of its chariotry so they drove them with difficulty. Misrayim said, ‘I must flee
from before Yisra’el, because Yahweh is battling for them against Misrayim.’
[26]Yahweh said to Mosheh, ‘Stretch out your hand over the sea, so the water comes back over Misrayim, over its chariotry and
over its cavalry.’ [27]Mosheh stretched out his hand over the sea, and as morning turned its face the sea came back to its regular
position while the Misrayimites were fleeing to meet it. So Yahweh shook the Misrayimites off into the middle of the sea. [28]The
water came back and covered the chariotry and the cavalry. As for all Par’oh’s force coming behind them into the sea, not one of
them remained. [29]But the Yisra’elites: they had gone on dry ground in the middle of the sea with the water a wall for them on their
right and on their left.
[30]Yahweh delivered Yisra’el that day from the hand of Misrayim. Yisra’el saw Misrayim dead on the shore of the sea.
[31]Yisra’el saw the great control with which Yahweh had acted against Misrayim, and they were in awe of Yahweh. They trusted
in Yahweh and in his servant Mosheh.

Yes, Yahweh reigns

15 Then Mosheh and the Yisra’elites sang this song for Yahweh. They said:

I’ll sing for Yahweh because he acted majestically, so majestically:
horse and its rider he threw into the sea.
[2]Yah is my vigour and my strength:
he became my deliverance.
This is my God – I’ll glorify him:
my father’s God – I’ll exalt him.
[3]Yahweh is a strong man;
Yahweh is his name.

[4]Par'oh's chariotry and his force he threw into the sea,
the pick of his adjutants sank in the Reed Sea.
[5]Deeps covered them,
they went down into the depths like a stone.
[6]Your right hand, Yahweh, was triumphant in energy;
your right hand, Yahweh, smashed the enemy.
[7]In the greatness of your majesty you tore down those who rose up against you;
you sent off your rage, it devoured them like straw.
[8]At the blast of your nostrils
water piled up.
Floods stood up as a heap,
deeps solidified in the heart of the sea.
[9]The enemy said, 'I'll pursue, overtake;
I'll share out spoil, my appetite will have its fill.
I'll bare my sword,
my hand will dispossess them.'
[10]You blew with your blast, the sea covered them;
they sank like lead in the august water.
[11]Who is like you among the gods, Yahweh,
who is like you, triumphant in sacredness,
Awe-inspiring in praises,
doing extraordinary things?
[12]You stretched out your hand,
earth swallowed them.
[13]In your commitment you've led the people that you restored,
in your vigour you've guided them to your sacred abode.
[14]Peoples have heard and shuddered,
writhing has seized the people living in Peleshet [Philistia].
[15]Then Edom's chiefs have become fearful,
Mo'ab's leaders.
A shudder has seized them,
all the people living in Kena'an have melted.
[16]Alarm and dread have fallen upon them;
through your arm's greatness they have become as still as stone,
Until your people have passed, Yahweh,
until the people you acquired have passed.
[17]You've brought them and planted them on the mountain that is your domain,
the established place for you to live in that you've made, Yahweh,
The sanctuary, Lord, your hands have established:
[18]Yahweh will reign for ever and ever!

Dancing, singing, protesting

[19]Because Par'oh's horse, his chariotry and his riders came into the sea, and Yahweh let the sea's water come back on them, whereas the Yisra'elites went on dry ground in the middle of the sea. [20]Miryam the prophetess, Aharon's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing. [21]Miryam chanted for them:

Sing for Yahweh, because he has acted majestically, so majestically:
horse and its rider he threw into the sea.

[22]Mosheh got Yisra'el to move on from the Reed Sea and they went out into the Shur Wilderness. They went for three days in the wilderness, and found no water. [23]They came to Marah [Bitter] and couldn't drink water from Marah because it was bitter; that's why they named it Marah. [24]The people protested at Mosheh: 'What are we to drink?' [25]He cried out to Yahweh, and Yahweh pointed out some wood. He threw it into the water and the water became sweet.

He made a decree, a ruling for them there; he tested them there. [26]He said, 'If you listen attentively to the voice of Yahweh your God, do what is right in his eyes, give ear to his orders and keep all his decrees, I won't bring on you any of the diseases that I brought on Misrayim, because I am Yahweh your healer.'

[27]They came to Elim. There were twelve springs of water there and seventy palms. They camped there by the water.

Protests in the wilderness

16 The entire assembly of the Yisra'elites moved on from Elim and came to the Syn Wilderness, which is between Elim and Sinay, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their leaving the country of Misrayim.

[2]The entire assembly of the Yisra'elites protested against Mosheh and Aharon in the wilderness. [3]The Yisra'elites said to them, 'If only we had died by Yahweh's hand in the country of Misrayim when we sat by a pot of meat and ate bread till we were full –

because you've brought us out into this wilderness to make this entire congregation die of hunger!'
[4]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Here, I'm going to rain bread for you from the heavens so the people may go out and glean a day's allocation on its day, in order that I may test it, whether it will walk by my instruction or not. [5]On the sixth day they will prepare what they bring in and it will be double what they glean each day.'
[6]Mosheh and Aharon said to all the Yisra'elites, 'In the evening, then you will acknowledge that it was Yahweh who got you out of the country of Misrayim, [7]and in the morning, then you'll see Yahweh's splendour, when he listens to your protests against Yahweh. But we – what are we that you protest against us?' [8]Mosheh said, 'When Yahweh gives you meat in the evening to eat and bread in the morning till you're full, when Yahweh listens to your protests that you're making against him: what are we? Your protests are not against us but against Yahweh.'
[9]So Mosheh said to Aharon, 'Say to the entire assembly of the Yisra'elites, "Draw near before Yahweh, because he's listened to your protests."'

One day at a time

[10]As Aharon spoke to the entire assembly of the Yisra'elites, they turned their face to the wilderness, and there, Yahweh's splendour appeared in a cloud, [11]and Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [12]'I've listened to the Yisra'elites' protests. Speak to them: "At twilight you shall eat meat and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread, and you will acknowledge that I am Yahweh your God."'
[13]In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew round the camp. [14]The layer of dew came up, and there, on the face of the wilderness something fine, flaky, fine like frost, on the earth.
[15]The Yisra'elites saw it and said each to his brother, 'What [*maan*] is it?' because they didn't know what it was. Mosheh said to them, 'It's the bread that Yahweh has given you as food. [16]This is the thing that Yahweh has ordered. Glean some of it, each of you, as much as he will eat, a gallon per head for the number of persons you are. You're to get it, each individual for the people who are in his tent.'
[17]The Yisra'elites did so. They gleaned, one person getting much, one getting little. [18]But when they measured it by the gallon, the one who got much didn't have excess and the one who got little didn't lack. They had gleaned, each individual, as much as he would eat. [19]Mosheh said to them, 'No one is to leave any of it over until morning.' [20]But they didn't listen to Mosheh. People left some of it over until morning, and it bred maggots and stank, and Mosheh was furious with them.

Manna

[21]So they gleaned it morning by morning, each person, as much as he would eat. When the sun got hot, it would melt. [22]On Friday they gleaned double bread, two gallons for a single person. All the assembly's leaders came and told Mosheh. [23]He said to them, 'It's what Yahweh spoke. Tomorrow is a stopping, a sacred sabbath [*shabbat*, 'stop'] for Yahweh. Bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and lay up for yourselves all that's surplus for keeping until morning.'
[24]They laid it up until morning as Mosheh ordered. It didn't stink and there was no breeding in it. [25]Mosheh said, 'Eat it today, because today is a sabbath for Yahweh. Today you won't find it in the fields. [26]For six days you're to glean, but on the seventh day, the sabbath – there'll be none then.'
[27]On the seventh day some of the people went out to glean, but they didn't find any. [28]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'How long do you people refuse to keep my orders and my instructions? [29]See that it's Yahweh who's given you the sabbath. That's why he's giving bread for two days on the sixth day. Stay each person where he is. No one's to go out of his place on the seventh day.' [30]So the people stopped on the seventh day.
[31]The household of Yisra'el named it *maan* [manna]. It was like coriander seed, white. Its taste was like wafers with sweetener. [32]Mosheh said, 'This is the thing that Yahweh has ordered: "A full gallon of it is to be for keeping through your generations, in order that people may see the bread that I let you eat in the wilderness when I got you out of the country of Misrayim."' [33]So Mosheh said to Aharon, 'Get a container and put a full gallon of *maan* in it, and lay it up before Yahweh for keeping through your generations.' [34]As Yahweh ordered Mosheh, Aharon laid it up before the Affirmation, for keeping.

Hit the rock

[35]The Yisra'elites ate the *maan* for forty years until they came to the edge of the country of Kena'an. ([36]A gallon is a tenth of a barrel.)
17 The entire Yisra'elite assembly moved on from the Syn Wilderness by stages at Yahweh's bidding. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink, [2]and the people got into an argument with Mosheh. They said, 'Give us water so we can drink!' Mosheh said to them, 'Why argue with me? Why test Yahweh?' [3]But the people were thirsty there for water.
So the people protested against Mosheh: 'Why was it that you brought us up from Misrayim to have me and my children and my livestock die of thirst? [4]Mosheh cried out to Yahweh, 'What shall I do about this people? A little while and they'll stone me!'
[5]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Pass before the people, take some of Yisra'el's elders with you and your staff with which you struck the Ye'or in your hand, and go. [6]There, I'll be standing before you there on the crag at Horeb. You're to strike the crag, and water will come out of it, and the people will drink.'
Mosheh did so before the eyes of Yisra'el's elders. [7]He named the place Massah and Meribah ['Testing' and 'Argument'], because of the Yisra'elites' arguing and because of their testing Yahweh by saying, 'Is Yahweh among us or isn't he?'

The first assailant

[8]Amaleq came and battled with Yisra'el at Rephidim. [9]Mosheh said to Yehoshua [Joshua], 'Choose some men for us and go out
and do battle against Amaleq. Tomorrow I'm going to take my stand on top of the hill with God's staff in my hand.'
[10]Yehoshua did as Mosheh told him by battling against Amaleq, while Mosheh, Aharon and Hur went up to the top of the hill.
[11]As Mosheh would raise his hand, Yisra'el would prevail, but as he would rest his hand, Amaleq would prevail. [12]So when
Mosheh's hands were heavy, they got a stone and put it under him and he sat on it, while Aharon and Hur took hold of his hands,
one on this side and one on that. So his hands were trustworthy until sundown [13]and Yehoshua overwhelmed Amaleq and its
people with the mouth of the sword.
[14]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Write this in a document as a reminder, and put it into Yehoshua's ears, how I shall totally wipe out
Amaleq's memory from under the heavens.' [15]Mosheh built an altar and named it 'Yahweh My Banner', [16]and said, 'A hand
against Yah's throne! There will be a battle for Yahweh against Amaleq from generation to generation!'

The first convert

18 Yitro the Midyanite priest, Mosheh's father-in-law, heard all that God had done for Mosheh and for his people Yisra'el, how
Yahweh had got Yisra'el out of Misrayim. [2]So Yitro, Mosheh's father-in-law, got Tsipporah, Mosheh's wife (after her
sending away) [3]and her two sons (of whom one had the name Gershom because – he said – 'I've been a resident [*ger*] in a foreign
country' [4]and the other had the name Eli'ezer because 'the God of my father has been my help [*ezer*] and rescued me from
Par'oh's sword'), [5]and Yitro, Mosheh's father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Mosheh in the wilderness where he was
camped at God's mountain.
[6]He had said to Mosheh, 'I, your father-in-law Yitro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her.' [7]Mosheh
went out to meet his father-in-law. He bowed low and kissed him. Each of them asked his neighbour about whether things were
well, and they came into the tent.
[8]Mosheh recounted to his father-in-law all that Yahweh had done to Par'oh and to Misrayim for Yisra'el's sake, all the hardship
that had befallen them on the way and how Yahweh had rescued them. [9]Yitro rejoiced over all the good that Yahweh had done for
Yisra'el when he rescued them from the hand of Misrayim. [10]Yitro said, 'Yahweh be blessed, who rescued you from the hand of
Misrayim and from the hand of Par'oh, who rescued the people from under the hand of Misrayim. [11]Now I acknowledge that
Yahweh is greater than all gods, because in this matter they asserted themselves against them.' [12]Yitro, Mosheh's father-in-law,
got a burnt offering and sacrifices for God, and Aharon and all Yisra'el's elders came to eat a meal before God with Mosheh's
father-in-law.

On not doing everything yourself

[13]Next day Mosheh sat to decide things for the people, and the people stood round Mosheh from the morning until the evening.
[14]Mosheh's father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people and said, 'What's this thing that you're doing for the people?
Why are you sitting on your own with the entire people taking a stand round you from morning until evening?' [15]Mosheh said to
his father-in-law, 'Because the people come to me to enquire of God. [16]When they have something, it comes to me and I decide
between one person and his neighbour, and I enable them to know God's decrees and his instructions.'
[17]Mosheh's father-in-law said to him, 'The thing that you're doing isn't good. [18]You'll totally wear yourself out, both you and
this people that's with you, too, because the thing's too heavy for you. You can't do it on your own. [19]So now listen to my voice.
I'll give you some counsel. And God be with you! You yourself be near God for the people and you yourself bring the things to
God, [20]and make clear to them the decrees and the instructions and enable them to acknowledge the way in which they're to go
and the action that they're to take. [21]But from the entire people, you yourself are to behold capable individuals who live in awe of
God, truthful individuals, who are hostile to dishonest gain, and to set them over them as divisional officials, section officials, unit
officials and group officials, [22]to decide things for the people at all times. Every big thing they'll bring to you but every small
thing they'll decide themselves. Make things lighter for yourself; they will carry things with you. [23]If you do this thing (and so
God orders you), you'll be able to stand, and also this entire people will come to its place with things being well.'
[24]Mosheh listened to the voice of his father-in-law and did everything that he said. [25]Mosheh chose capable individuals from all
Yisra'el and made them heads over the people, divisional officials, section officials, unit officials and group officials. [26]They
would decide things for the people at all times. The tough thing they'd bring to Mosheh, but every small thing they'd decide
themselves.
[27]Then Mosheh sent his father-in-law off, and he went his way to his own country.

Two kinds of preparation for meeting God

19 At the beginning of the third month after the Yisra'elites came out of the country of Misrayim, on that day they came to the
Sinay Wilderness. [2]They moved on from Rephidim, came to the Sinay Wilderness and camped in the wilderness. Yisra'el
camped there in front of the mountain [3]and Mosheh went up to God.
Yahweh called to him from the mountain: 'You're to say this to the household of Ya'aqob and to tell the Yisra'elites, [4]"You
yourselves saw what I did to Misrayim. I lifted you on eagles' wings and brought you to me. [5]So now, if you really listen to my
voice and keep my pact, you'll be for me personal treasure from among all the peoples. Because the entire earth is mine, [6]but you
in particular will be a priestly kingdom, a sacred nation, for me." These are the words that you're to speak to the Yisra'elites.'
[7]Mosheh came and called for the people's elders and set before them all these words that Yahweh ordered him. [8]The entire

people answered together, ‘Everything that Yahweh spoke we will do.’ Mosheh took the people’s words back to Yahweh, [9]and
Yahweh said to Mosheh, ‘Here, I’m coming to you in a thick cloud, so the people may hear when I speak with you and also may
trust in you permanently.’
So Mosheh told Yahweh the people’s words, [10]and Yahweh said to Mosheh, ‘Go to the people and make them sacred today and
tomorrow, and get them to wash their clothes. [11]They’re to be ready for the third day, because on the third day Yahweh will come
down before the eyes of the entire people on Mount Sinay. [12]You’re to set bounds for the people round about, saying “Keep watch
over yourselves about going up the mountain or touching its border. Anyone who touches the mountain is absolutely to be put to
death. [13]No hand is to touch him, because he’s simply to be stoned or simply to be shot with arrows. Whether it’s an animal or a
person, he’s not to live. When the ram’s horn sounds out, they may go up the mountain.”’

Beware the electric nature of a meeting with God

[14]So Mosheh came down from the mountain to the people and made the people sacred, and they washed their clothes. [15]He said
to the people, ‘Be ready for the third day. Don’t approach a woman.’
[16]On the third day, when the morning came, there were sounds, lightning-flashes and heavy cloud on the mountain, and the
very strong sound of a horn. The entire people that was in the camp trembled. [17]But Mosheh got the people to come out of the
camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the bottom of the mountain.
[18]Now Mount Sinay smoked, all of it, as a result of the fact that Yahweh had come down on it in fire. His smoke went up like
the smoke of a kiln. The entire mountain trembled greatly. [19]The horn’s sound was getting stronger and stronger. When Mosheh
would speak, God would answer him with the sound.
[20]So Yahweh came down on Mount Sinay, to the top of the mountain, and Yahweh called Mosheh to the top of the mountain.
Mosheh went up, [21]but Yahweh said to Mosheh, ‘Go down, testify against the people so they don’t tear through to Yahweh to
look, or many of them will fall. [22]The priests also, who come up to Yahweh, must make themselves sacred, so Yahweh doesn’t
break out against them.’ [23]Mosheh said to Yahweh, ‘The people cannot come up to Mount Sinay, because you yourself testified
against us, “Set bounds for the mountain and make it sacred.”’ [24]But Yahweh said to him, ‘Go, get down, then you come up, and
Aharon with you, but the priests and the people are not to tear through to come up to Yahweh, so he doesn’t break out against
them.’ [25]So Mosheh went down to the people and said it to them.

A rule of life

20 God spoke all these words: [2]‘I am Yahweh your God who got you out of the country of Misrayim, out of a household of
serfs.

[3]For you there will be no other gods in my presence.
[4]You will not make yourself a sculpture or any shape that’s in the heavens above, that’s on the earth below or that’s in the
water under the earth. [5]You will not bow low to them and you will not serve them. Because I, Yahweh your God, am the
passionate God, attending to parents’ waywardness in connection with children, with thirds and with fourths, for people
who are hostile to me, [6]but acting in commitment towards thousands for people who are loyal to me and who keep my
orders.
[7]You will not lift up the name of Yahweh your God in respect of something empty, because Yahweh will not free of guilt a
person who lifts up his name in respect of something empty.
[8]Be mindful of the sabbath day to make it sacred. [9]For six days you can serve and do all your work, [10]but the seventh day is a
sabbath for Yahweh your God. You will not do any work, you, your son or your daughter, your servant or your handmaid,
your animal or your resident who is in your communities. [11]Because in six days Yahweh made the heavens, the earth, the
sea and all that’s in them, and settled down on the seventh day. That’s why Yahweh blessed the seventh day and made it
sacred.
[12]Honour your father and your mother, in order that your time may be long on the land that Yahweh your God is going to give
you.
[13]You will not murder.
[14]You will not be adulterous.
[15]You will not steal.
[16]You will not avow false testimony against your neighbour.
[17]You will not desire your neighbour’s household: you will not desire your neighbour’s wife, his servant or his handmaid, his
ox or his donkey, or anything your neighbour has.’

No manufactured gods

[18]While the entire people were looking at the sounds, the flashes, the sound of the horn, and the smoking mountain – as the
people looked, they hesitated and stood at a distance. [19]They said to Mosheh, ‘You speak with us and we’ll listen. God mustn’t
speak with us, or we’ll die.’ [20]Mosheh said to the people, ‘Don’t be afraid, because God has come in order to test you, and in
order that awe for him may be upon your faces, so you don’t do wrong.’ [21]But the people stood at a distance, whereas Mosheh
went up to the denseness where God was.
[22]Yahweh said to Mosheh, ‘You’re to say this to the Yisra’elites: “You yourselves saw how I spoke with you from the heavens.

[23]With me you will not make gods of silver and you will not make gods of gold for yourselves. [24]An altar of soil you will make for me, and you will sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your well-being offerings, your flock and your herd. At every site where I cause my name to be commemorated, I'll come to you and bless you.
[25]If you make an altar out of stones for me, you will not build it of cut stone, because when you've wielded your cutter on them, you'll have made them ordinary. [26]You will not go up my altar by steps, so your nakedness will not be exposed on it."

Treating bondservants properly

21 These are the rulings that you're to set before them.
[2]When you acquire a Hebrew servant, he's to serve for six years. In the seventh he's to leave as a free man, for nothing. [3]If he comes by himself, he leaves by himself. If he possesses a wife, his wife leaves with him.
[4]If his lord gives him a wife and she gives birth to sons or daughters for him, the wife and her children belong to her lord. He leaves by himself. [5]If the servant explicitly says, "I am loyal to my lord, my wife and my children. I won't leave as a free man", [6]his lord is to bring him up to God and bring him up to the door or the doorpost, and his lord is to pierce his ear with an awl. He's his servant permanently.
[7]When someone sells his daughter as a handmaid, she doesn't leave as servants do. [8]If she is bad in the eyes of her lord, who had designated her for himself, he's to let her be redeemed. He doesn't have the power to sell her to a foreign people, because of his breaking faith with her. [9]But if he was designating her for his son, he's to deal with her in accordance with the ruling for daughters. [10]If he takes himself another wife, he will not withhold her food, her clothing or her time. [11]If he doesn't do these three things for her, she may leave for nothing, without payment.

An eye for an eye

[12]Someone who strikes a man down, so he dies, is absolutely to be put to death. [13]Someone who didn't set a trap, but God made him fall into his hand: I shall set a site for you where he may flee. [14]But when someone asserts himself against his neighbour so as to kill him with shrewdness, you're to take him from beside my altar to die.
[15]Someone who strikes down his father or his mother is absolutely to be put to death. [16]Someone who kidnaps a person, and he sells him or he's found in his possession, is absolutely to be put to death. [17]Someone who slights his father or his mother is absolutely to be put to death.
[18]When people get into an argument and one strikes his neighbour with a stone or with his fist and he doesn't die but he falls into bed, [19]if he gets up and walks about outside on his staff, the one who struck him can be free of guilt, only he's to pay for his sitting around, and definitely to get him healed. [20]When someone strikes his servant or his handmaid with a club and he dies under his hand, he's definitely to submit to redress. [21]Yet if he stands after a day or two, he's not to be subjected to redress, because he's his own silver.
[22]When men fight and they hit a pregnant woman and her children come out but there's no harm, he's definitely to make compensation, as the woman's husband may lay on him, or give it by arbitration. [23]If there's harm, you're to give life for life, [24]eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, [25]burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise. [26]When someone strikes his servant's eye or his handmaid's eye and devastates it, he's to send him off as a free person because of his eye. [27]If someone makes his servant's tooth or his handmaid's tooth fall out, he's to send him off as a free person because of his tooth.

The goring ox and the missing ox

[28]When an ox gores a man or a woman and he dies, the ox is absolutely to be stoned and its flesh is not to be eaten, but the ox's owner can be free of guilt. [29]But if the ox has been inclined to gore in previous days, and it's been testified with its owner, and he doesn't keep it in and it causes the death of a man or a woman, the ox is to be stoned and its owner is also to be put to death. [30]If a ransom is laid on him, he's to give the redemption price for his life in accordance with all that's laid on him. [31]Should it either gore a son or gore a daughter, it's to be done to him in accordance with this ruling. [32]If the ox gores a servant or a handmaid, he's to give silver, thirty sheqels, to his lord, and the ox is to be stoned.
[33]When someone opens a cistern or when someone digs a cistern and doesn't cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls into it, [34]the cistern's owner is to make good. He's to give back silver to its owner, but the dead thing will be his. [35]When someone's ox injures his neighbour's ox and it dies, they're to sell the live ox and divide the silver, and also divide the dead thing. [36]If it was known that the ox was inclined to gore in previous days and its owner doesn't keep it in, he must definitely make good, ox for ox, but the dead thing will be his.
22 When someone steals an ox or sheep and slaughters it or sells it, he's to make good with five from the herd for the ox or four from the fold for the sheep. ([2]If the thief is found while breaking in and he's struck down and dies, no bloodshed is counted in respect of him. [3]If the sun had risen on him, bloodshed is counted in respect of him.) He's definitely to make good; if he doesn't have it, he's to be sold for his theft. [4]If the thing stolen (either ox or donkey or sheep, alive) is actually found in his possession, he's to make good double.

More problems on the farm

[5]When someone burns up a field or vineyard (or sends off his animals so they burn up someone else's field), he's to make good from the good things of his field or from the good things of his vineyard. [6]When a fire breaks out and reaches the thorns, so

stacked grain or standing grain or the field is consumed, the person who caused the burn is definitely to make good.
[7]When someone gives his neighbour silver or things to keep but it's stolen from the man's house, if the thief is found, he's to make good double. [8]If the thief isn't found, the owner of the house is to draw near to God [to testify] that he didn't lay hand on his neighbour's work. [9]Over any breach of trust, over an ox or donkey or sheep or garment or any loss about which someone says, 'This is it', the thing involving the two of them is to come to God. The one whom God says is in the wrong is to make good double to his neighbour.
[10]When someone gives his neighbour a donkey or ox or sheep or any animal to keep and it dies or is injured or is taken off, with no one seeing, [11]there's to be an oath to Yahweh between the two of them that he hasn't laid his hand on his neighbour's work. Its owner is to accept it, and he's not to make good. [12]But if it's actually stolen from him, he's to make good to its owner. [13]If it gets mauled at all, he's to bring it as evidence. For something mauled, he's not to make good.

On taking advantage of people

[14]When someone asks for something from his neighbour and it's injured or it dies, its owner not being with it, he's definitely to make good. [15]If its owner was with it, he's not to make good. If it was a hire, he comes into its hire.
[16]If a man seduces a young girl who's not betrothed and sleeps with her, he's to make the actual marriage payment for her as a wife for himself. [17]If her father absolutely refuses to give her to him, he's to weigh out silver in accordance with the marriage payment for young girls.
[18]A medium: you will not allow her to live. [19]Anyone who has sex with an animal: is absolutely to be put to death. [20]Someone who sacrifices to a god other than Yahweh alone: is to be devoted.
[21]A resident: you will not oppress or afflict him, because you were residents in the country of Misrayim. [22]Any widow or orphan: you will not humble them. [23]If you humble them at all, when they cry aloud to me, I shall listen attentively to their cry. [24]My anger will rage and I shall kill you with the sword. Your wives will become widows, your children orphans.
[25]If you lend silver to my people, to a humble person who is with you, you will not be like a lender to him. You will not make him pay interest. [26]If you take your neighbour's coat as a pledge, before sundown you will give it back to him, [27]because it alone is his covering, his wrapping for his skin. What is he to sleep in? When he cries out to me, I shall listen, because I am gracious.

You know what it's like to be a resident alien

[28]You will not slight God or curse a leader among your people. [29]Your fullness and the pressing of your grapes: you will not delay them. The firstborn of your sons: you will give him to me. [30]You will do this with your oxen and with your sheep. It will be seven days with its mother; on the eighth day you will give it to me. [31]You will be sacred people to me. You will not eat meat from an animal mauled in the fields; you will throw it to the dogs.
23 You will not carry an empty report. Don't put your hand in with a faithless person to become a felonious witness. [2]You will not follow a majority to act badly. You will not avow in an argument so as to bend after a majority, so as to bend it. [3]Neither will you defer to a poor person in his argument.
[4]When you come upon an ox belonging to your enemy or his donkey, straying, you will take it straight back to him. [5]When you see a donkey belonging to someone who is hostile to you lying down under its load and you would refrain from loosening [the load] for it, you will definitely loosen it with him.
[6]You will not bend a poor person's ruling when he is in an argument. [7]A false statement: stay distant from it. Someone who is free of guilt and is in the right: don't kill him, because I do not treat the person who is in the right as in the wrong. [8]A bribe: don't accept it, because a bribe blinds people who can see and overturns the statements of people who are in the right. [9]A resident: you will not afflict him; you yourselves know the feelings of a resident, because you were residents in the country of Misrayim.

The principle of the seventh

[10]For six years you're to sow your land and gather its yield. [11]The seventh, you're to allow it to lie and leave it alone. The needy among your people may eat, and what they leave the creatures of the wild may eat. So you're to do for your vineyard and for your olive. [12]For six days you can do your work, but on the seventh day you're to stop, in order that your ox and your donkey may find relief and the offspring of your handmaid and the resident may find refreshment.
[13]You're to keep watch concerning everything I've said to you. You will not commemorate the name of other gods. It will not be heard in your mouth.
[14]On three occasions in the year you're to hold a festival for me. [15]You're to keep
the Flatbread Festival: for seven days you're to eat flatbread as I ordered you, at the set time in the month of Aviv [March–April], because in it you left Misrayim; and people are not to appear before me empty-handed;
[16]the Harvest Festival: the first products of your work, of what you sow in the fields;
the Ingathering Festival at the end of the year, when you gather your work from the fields.
[17]Three times in the year, every male among you is to appear before the Lord Yahweh.
[18]You will not offer the blood of a sacrifice for me accompanied by leavened bread. The fat from a festival for me will not stay until morning. [19]The very first of the first products of your land you're to bring to the house of Yahweh your God.
You will not cook a kid goat in its own mother's milk.

How to get into the promised land

[20]Here, I'm going to send an envoy before you to keep you on the way and to bring you to the place that I've prepared. [21]Keep watch before him. Listen to his voice. Don't defy him, because he won't carry your rebellions, because my name is within him. [22]But if you do really listen to his voice and do everything I speak, I'll be an enemy to your enemies, an adversary to your adversaries, [23]because my envoy will go before you and bring you to the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Kena'anite, the Hivvite and the Yebusite, and I shall efface them.

[24]You will not bow low to their gods, you will not serve them, you will not do as they do, but completely tear them down and completely break up their columns. [25]You are to serve Yahweh your God. He will bless your bread and your water, and I will remove illness from among you. [26]There'll be no one miscarrying or infertile in your country. I'll bring to completion the number of your days.

[27]I shall send off a dread of me before you and it will throw into turmoil all the people among whom you come. I shall make all your enemies turn their back before you. [28]I shall send a hornet before you, and it will drive out the Hivvites, the Kena'anites and the Hittites from before you.

[29]I shall not drive them out from before you in one year, in case the country becomes a desolation and the creatures of the wild multiply against you. [30]Little by little I shall drive them out from before you until you're fruitful and you have the country as a domain. [31]I shall set your border from the Reed Sea to the Pelishtites' Sea and from the wilderness to the River [Euphrates], because I shall give into your hand the people living in the country and you will drive them out from before you. [32]You will not solemnize a pact with them or with their gods. [33]They won't live in your country, in case they cause you to do wrong in relation to me because you serve their gods, because it would be a snare to you.'

Seeing God

24 He said to Mosheh, 'Go up to Yahweh, you and Aharon, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the Yisra'elite elders. Bow low from afar. [2]Mosheh alone is to come up to Yahweh; they're not to come up and the people are not to go up with him.'

[3]Mosheh came and recounted all Yahweh's words to the people, all the rulings. The entire people answered with one voice: 'All the things Yahweh spoke of, we will do.' [4]Mosheh wrote down all Yahweh's words.

Mosheh started early in the morning and built an altar beneath the mountain, and twelve columns for the twelve Yisra'elite clans. [5]He sent the Yisra'elite boys and they offered up burnt offerings and made well-being sacrifices of bulls. [6]Mosheh took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he tossed over the altar. [7]He got the pact document and read it in the people's ears. They said, 'All that Yahweh spoke of, we will do, we will obey.' [8]Mosheh took the blood, tossed it over the people, and said, 'Here is the blood of the pact that Yahweh has solemnized with you on the basis of all these words.'

[9]Then Mosheh and Aharon, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the Yisra'elite elders went up, [10]and saw the God of Yisra'el. Under his feet was something like a sapphire pavement, like the actual heavens for purity. [11]Against the Yisra'elites' 'pillars' he didn't put out his hand. They beheld God, and they ate and drank.

[12]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Go up to me on the mountain and be there. I shall give you the stone tablets with the instruction and the order that I've written, to instruct them.' [13]So Mosheh and Yehoshua his minister set off, and Mosheh went up to God's mountain. [14]To the elders he said, 'Stay here for us till we come back to you. Here are Aharon and Hur with you. Anyone who has things to raise can come up to them.'

How to build a sanctuary

[15]So Mosheh went up the mountain. The cloud covered the mountain [16]and Yahweh's splendour dwelt on Mount Sinay. The cloud covered it for six days and on the seventh day he called to Mosheh from the middle of the cloud. [17]The appearance of Yahweh's splendour was like devouring fire on the top of the mountain before the eyes of the Yisra'elites. [18]Mosheh came into the middle of the cloud and went up the mountain. Mosheh was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.

25 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]'Speak to the Yisra'elites so they get a contribution for me. You're to get the contribution for me from every individual whose heart makes him free. [3]This is the contribution that you're to get from them: gold, silver, copper; [4]blue, purple and bright crimson, linen, goats' [hair], [5]ram skins dyed red, dolphin skins, acacia wood; [6]oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil and the aromatic incense; [7]onyx stones and stones for the mountings for the chasuble and for the pouch. [8]They're to make me a sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them. [9]In accordance with everything that I'm going to let you see, the pattern of the dwelling and the pattern of all the articles in it, so you're to make it.

[10]They're to make an acacia wood chest, its length two and a half cubits, its width a cubit and a half, and its height a cubit and a half. [11]You are to overlay it with pure gold, overlay it inside and outside, and make a gold moulding on it all round. [12]You're to cast four gold rings for it and put them on its four feet, two rings on one side of it and two on the other. [13]You're to make acacia wood poles and overlay them with gold, [14]and insert the poles into the rings on the sides of the chest, so as to carry the chest by them. [15]The poles are to be in the rings of the chest; they are not to depart from it. [16]Put into the chest the affirmation that I shall give you.

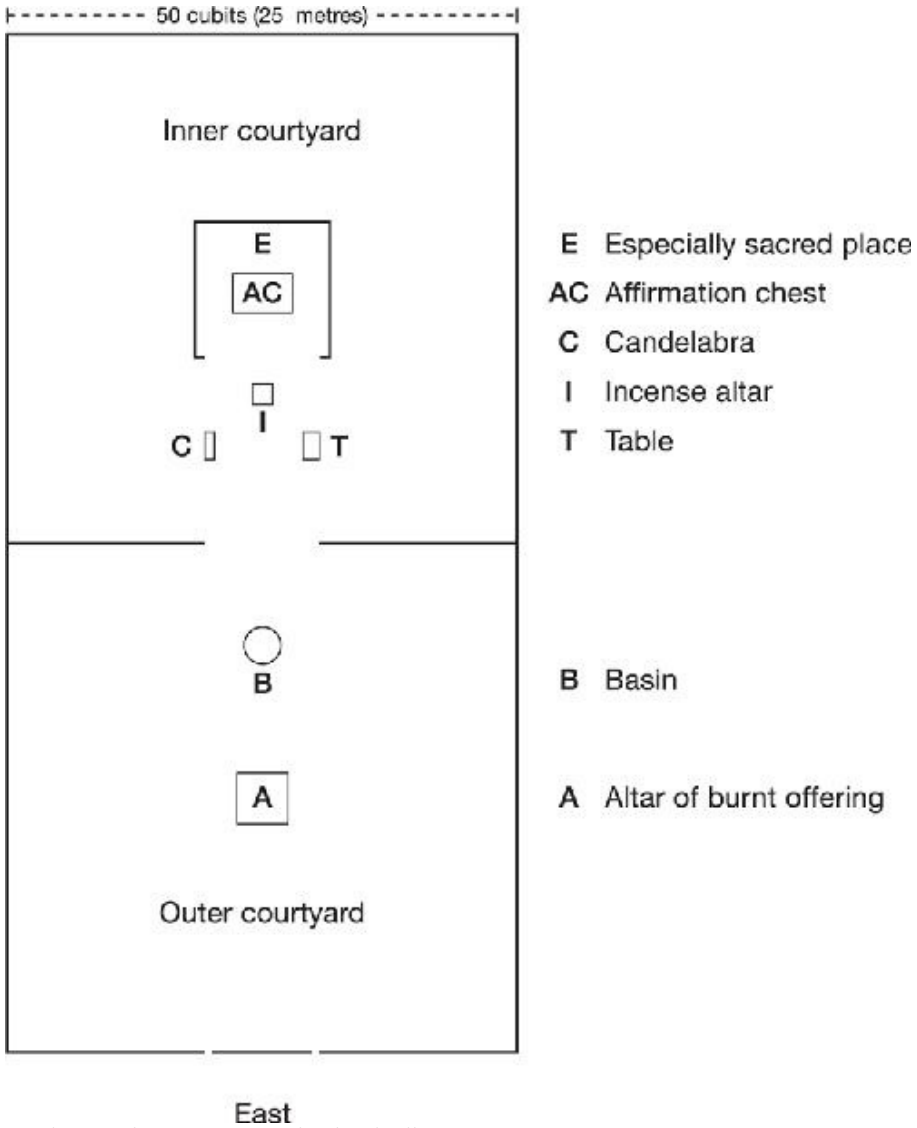
The expiation cover and the table

[17]You're to make an expiation cover of pure gold, its length two and a half cubits and its width a cubit and a half, [18]and to make two gold sphinxes (of hammered work you're to make them) at the two ends of the expiation cover. [19]You're to make one sphinx at one end and the other sphinx at the other end; you're to make the sphinxes issuing from the expiation cover at its two ends. [20]The sphinxes are to be spreading their wings upwards, shielding the expiation cover with their wings, and with their faces one

towards the other; the sphinxes' faces will be towards the expiation cover.
[21]You're to put the expiation cover on the chest, on top, and put into the chest the affirmation that I shall give you. [22]I shall keep an appointment with you there and speak with you from above the expiation cover, from between the sphinxes that are above the affirmation chest, all that I shall order you for the Yisra'elites.
[23]You're to make an acacia wood table, its length two cubits, its width one cubit and its height a cubit and a half. [24]You're to overlay it with pure gold and make a gold moulding for it all round. [25]You're to make a rim for it, a handbreadth all round, and to make a gold moulding for its rim all round. [26]You're to make four gold rings for it and put the rings at the four corners that are at its four legs. [27]The rings are to be close by the rim as housing for the poles for carrying the table. [28]You're to make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. The table will be carried by means of them.
[29]You're to make its dishes, its ladles, its pitchers and its bowls, with which the drink offering will be poured – you're to make them of pure gold. [30]You're to put the presence bread on the table before my presence, regularly.

The candelabrum

[31]You're to make a candelabrum of pure gold. The candelabrum is to be made of hammered work, its base and its stem. Its cups, its flowers and its petals are to come from it; [32]six stems going out from its flanks, three stems of the candelabrum from its one flank and three stems of the candelabrum from its second flank; [33]three cups made like almond blossom on one stem, flower and petal, three stems made like almond blossom on another stem, flower and petal; so for the six stems going out from the candelabrum.
[34]On the candelabrum four cups made like almond blossom, its flowers and its petals; [35]a flower beneath two stems issuing from it, and a flower beneath two stems issuing from it, and a flower beneath two stems issuing from it, for the six branches going out from the candelabrum; [36]their flowers and their stems are to come from it, all of it a single hammered work, pure gold. [37]You're to make its seven lamps (they are to put up its lamps so they give light on the area before it) [38]and its tongs and its pans of pure gold. [39]It will be made of a talent of pure gold, with all these articles.
[40]See that you act by the pattern for them that you're being shown on the mountain.



Exodus 25: The sanctuary – Yahweh's dwelling

How to weave a sanctuary

26 You're to make the dwelling from ten pieces of woven linen and from blue, purple and bright crimson, and to make them with sphinxes, designer's work. [2]The length of each piece, twenty-eight cubits and the width of each piece, four cubits – one size for all the pieces. [3]Five of the pieces are to be joining one to the other, and the other five pieces are to be joining one to the other.

[4]You're to make loops of blue on the lip of the one piece at the edge in its joined set, and to make them in this way at the lip of the edging piece in the second joined set. [5]You're to make fifty loops on the one piece and make fifty loops at the edge of the piece that's in the second joined set, with the loops holding one to the other. [6]You're to make fifty gold clasps and to join the pieces one to the other with the clasps so the dwelling becomes one unit.

[7]You're to make pieces from goats' [hair] for a tent over the dwelling; you're to make eleven pieces. [8]The length of each piece, thirty by the cubit; the width, four by the cubit each piece; one size for the eleven pieces. [9]You're to join five of the pieces on their own, and six of the pieces on their own, and double the sixth piece near the front of the tent.

[10]You're to make fifty loops on the lip of one outermost piece in a joined set, and fifty loops on the lip of the piece in the other joined set. [11]You're to make fifty copper clasps and insert the clasps into the loops and join the tent so it becomes one unit.

[12]The overhang that's surplus in the tent's pieces: the half-piece that's surplus is to overhang the back of the dwelling, [13]while the cubit at one end and the cubit at the other end in the surplus of the tent's pieces will be hung over the flanks of the dwelling on one side and on the other side, to cover it. [14]And you're to make a covering for the tent of ram skins dyed red, with a covering of dolphin skins above it.

How to build a sanctuary

[15]You're to make the planks for the dwelling of acacia wood, standing upright. [16]The length of a plank, ten cubits; the width of

a plank, a cubit and a half, each one; [17]two projections for a plank, parallel one to the other. So you're to do for all the dwelling's planks.
[18]You're to make the planks for the dwelling:
twenty planks for the south (southern) aspect; [19]you're to make forty silver sockets under the twenty planks, two sockets under a plank for its two projections and two sockets under the next plank for its two projections.
[20]For the dwelling's second side, for the north aspect: twenty planks, [21]with their forty silver sockets, two sockets under a plank and two sockets under the next plank.
[22]For the back of the dwelling, to the west, you're to make six planks, [23]and you're to make two planks for the corners of the dwelling, at the back. [24]They're to be double underneath, but together they're to be whole at its top, at the one ring. So it will be for both of them: they'll form two corners. [25]Thus there will be eight planks with their silver sockets, sixteen sockets: two sockets under one plank and two sockets under the next plank.
[26]You're to make bars of acacia wood: five for the planks in one side of the dwelling, [27]five bars for the planks in the second side of the dwelling, and five bars for the planks in the side of the dwelling at the back, to the west, [28]with the central bar in the middle of the planks running from end to end. [29]You're to overlay the planks with gold and to make their rings of gold as housing for the bars, and to overlay the bars with gold.
[30]You're to set up the dwelling in accordance with the ruling about it that you've been enabled to see on the mountain.

The curtain, the screen and the altar

[31]You're to make a curtain of blue, purple and bright crimson, and of woven linen. It's to be made as designer's work, with sphinxes. [32]You're to put it on four posts of acacia overlaid with gold, with their gold hooks, on four silver sockets. [33]You're to put the curtain under the clasps and bring the affirmation chest there, behind the curtain. The curtain will make a distinction between the sacred place and the especially sacred place for you. [34]You're to put the expiation cover on the affirmation chest in the especially sacred place. [35]You're to place the table outside the curtain and the candelabrum in front of the table on the south side of the dwelling, and to put the table on the north side. [36]You're to make a screen for the tent entrance, of blue, purple and bright crimson, and of woven linen, embroiderer's work, [37]and to make for the screen five posts of acacia and overlay them with gold, with their gold hooks, and to cast for them five copper sockets.
27 You're to make the altar of acacia wood, five cubits in length, five cubits in width (the altar will be square), and three cubits in height, [2]and to make its horns on its four corners (its horns are to come from it), and overlay it with copper. [3]You're to make its buckets for clearing it of waste, its shovels, its basins, its forks and its pans: you're to make all its utensils of copper. [4]You're to make a grating for it, a mesh made of copper, and make on the mesh four copper rings at its four corners. [5]You're to put it beneath the altar ledge, underneath; the mesh is to be halfway up the altar. [6]You're to make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with copper. [7]The poles are to be inserted into the rings and the poles are to be on the two sides of the altar when it's carried. [8]You're to make it hollow, of boards. As it has been shown you on the mountain, so they are to make it.

The courtyard

[9]You're to make a courtyard for the dwelling:
On the south (southern) aspect: hangings for the courtyard, woven linen, a hundred by the cubit the length on the one aspect; [10]its twenty posts and their twenty sockets, copper; the posts' hooks and their clasps, silver.
[11]So also on the north aspect along the length: hangings, a hundred cubits the length; its twenty posts and their twenty sockets, copper; the posts' hooks and their clasps, silver.
[12]The width of the courtyard on the west aspect: hangings, fifty cubits; their posts, ten; their sockets, ten.
[13]The width of the courtyard on the front aspect, the east, fifty cubits: [14]hangings, fifteen cubits to the shoulder; their posts, three; their sockets, three; [15]for the second shoulder, hangings, fifteen cubits; their posts, three; their sockets, three.
[16]For the courtyard gateway: a screen, twenty cubits, of blue, purple and bright crimson, and of woven linen, embroiderer's work; their posts, four; their sockets, four. [17]All the courtyard's posts around: clasped with silver; their hooks, silver; their sockets, copper. [18]The length of the courtyard, a hundred by the cubit; the width, fifty consistently; the height, five cubits; of woven linen. Their sockets, copper; [19]for all the articles in the dwelling in all its service, and all its pegs and all the courtyard's pegs, copper.
[20]You yourself are to order the Yisra'elites that they are to get you pure pressed olive oil for lighting, for putting up a lamp regularly. [21]In the appointment tent, outside the curtain which is over the affirmation, Aharon and his sons are to arrange it from evening till morning before Yahweh, a permanent decree through their generations for the Yisra'elites.

How to dress a priest

28 You yourself are to have Aharon your brother presented to you, and his sons with him, from among the Yisra'elites, to act as priests for me: Aharon, Nadab and Abihu, El'azar and Itamar, Aharon's sons. [2]Make sacred garments for Aharon your brother, for splendour and for glory. [3]You yourself are to speak to all the people who are smart in their thinking, the people I've filled with a smart spirit, so they may make Aharon's garments, for making him sacred to act as priest for me.
[4]These are the garments that they're to make: pouch, chasuble, coat, woven tunic, turban and sash. They're to make the sacred garments for Aharon your brother and for his sons to act as priests for me [5]when they get the gold, the blue, purple and bright crimson, and linen.
[6]They're to make the chasuble of gold, of blue, purple and bright crimson, and of woven linen, designer's work. [7]It will have

two shoulder pieces joining to its two corners, so it will be joined. [8]The chasuble's design-work strap, which is on it, is to be like its work, coming from it: of gold, of blue, purple and bright crimson, and of woven linen.
[9]You're to get two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of Yisra'el's sons, [10]six of their names on the one stone and the remaining six names on the second, by their lines of descent. [11]As craftsman's work in stone, with seal engravings, you're to engrave the two stones with the names of Yisra'el's sons. You're to make them surrounded by gold braids. [12]You're to put the two stones on the chasuble's shoulder pieces as reminder stones for Yisra'el's sons. Aharon is to carry their names before Yahweh on his two shoulder pieces for a reminder.
[13]You're to make braids of gold [14]and two chains of pure gold, as plaitings. You're to make them as woven work and to put the woven chains on the braids.

The decision pouch

[15]You're to make a decision pouch, designer's work. You're to make it like the work of the chasuble, of gold, of blue, purple and bright crimson, and of woven linen. [16]It's to be square and folded double, its length a handbreadth and its width a handbreadth. [17]You're to fill it with a filling of stones, four rows of stones:

the first row: a row of carnelian, chrysolyte and emerald;
[18]the second row: turquoise, sapphire and amethyst;
[19]the third row: jacinth, agate and crystal;
[20]the fourth row: beryl, onyx and jasper.

They're to be set in gold in their fillings. [21]The stones will correspond to the names of Yisra'el's sons, twelve corresponding to their names. With seal engravings, each corresponding to its name, they will be for the twelve clans. [22]On the pouch you're to make plaited chains, woven work, pure gold.
[23]You're to make two gold rings on the pouch and to put the two rings on the two edges of the pouch. [24]You're to put the two gold weavings on the two rings at the edges of the pouch. [25]The two ends of the two weavings you're to put on the two braids, and you're to put them on the chasuble's shoulder pieces near its front. [26]You're to make two gold rings and put them on the two edges of the pouch at its lip, which is on the side nearer the chasuble. [27]You're to make two gold rings and put them on the chasuble's two shoulder pieces underneath, near the front, close by its join, above the chasuble's design-work strap. [28]They're to attach the pouch by its rings to the chasuble's rings with a blue cord, so it's on the chasuble's design-work strap and so the pouch doesn't come loose from on the chasuble.
[29]Aharon is to carry the names of Yisra'el's sons on the decision pouch over his heart when he goes into the sacred place, for a reminder before Yahweh regularly. [30]You're to put into the decision pouch the Urim and Tummim, so they're over Aharon's heart when he comes in before Yahweh. Aharon is to carry the decision-making for the Yisra'elites over his heart before Yahweh regularly.

The coat and the medallion

[31]You're to make the chasuble coat, all blue. [32]There's to be an opening for the head in the middle of it. The lip for its opening all round is to be weaver's work (it's to be like the opening of a vest for it) so it doesn't tear. [33]On its hems you're to make pomegranates of blue, purple and bright crimson, on its hems all round, and gold bells among them all round, [34]a gold bell and a pomegranate, a gold bell and a pomegranate, on the coat's hems all round. [35]It's to be on Aharon for ministering so its sound may be heard when he comes into the sacred place before Yahweh and when he goes out, so he does not die.
[36]You're to make a medallion of pure gold and engrave on it with seal engravings, "Sacred for Yahweh". [37]You're to put it on a blue cord so it's on the turban. It's to be near the front of the turban. [38]It's to be on Aharon's forehead so Aharon can carry the waywardness associated with the sacred objects that the Yisra'elites make sacred in connection with any of their sacred gifts. It will be on his forehead regularly, for their acceptance before Yahweh.
[39]You're to weave the tunic of linen, you're to make a turban of linen and you're to make a sash, embroiderer's work.
[40]For Aharon's sons you're to make tunics, and you're to make them sashes and to make mitres for them, for splendour and for glory. [41]You're to put them on Aharon your brother and on his sons with him, and to anoint them, commission them and make them sacred, so they can act as priests for me.
[42]You're to make cloth shorts for them to cover their naked flesh. They're to go from the hips to the thighs [43]and they're to be on Aharon and on his sons when they come into the appointment tent or when they come up to the altar to minister in the sacred place, so that they don't carry waywardness and die. It's a permanent decree for him and for his offspring after him.

The first ordination offering

29 This is the thing that you're to do for them in making them sacred to act as priests for me. Get one bull from the herd and two rams, whole, [2]and flatbread and loaves of flatbread mixed with oil, and flat wafers spread with oil. You're to make them of fine wheat flour. [3]You're to put them in a basket and present them in the basket, with the bull and with the two rams.
[4]Aharon and his sons you're to present at the entrance of the appointment tent and wash them with water. [5]You're to get the garments and clothe Aharon with the tunic, the chasuble coat, the chasuble and the pouch, to wind the chasuble on him with the chasuble's design-work strap, [6]place the turban on his head, put the sacred diadem on the turban, [7]get the anointing oil, pour it on his head and anoint him.

[8]And you're to present his sons, clothe them with tunics, [9]wrap round them with a sash, Aharon and his sons, and bind mitres on them. The priesthood will be theirs by a permanent decree.

You're then to commission Aharon and his sons. [10]Present the bull before the appointment tent. Aharon and his sons are to lean their hands on the bull's head, [11]and you're to slaughter the bull before Yahweh at the entrance of the appointment tent. [12]You're to get some of the bull's blood and put it on the altar's horns with your finger, and all the rest of the blood you're to pour out at the altar's base. [13]You're to get all the fat that covers the innards, the lobe on the liver, and the two kidneys and the fat that's on them, and turn them into smoke on the altar. [14]The bull's flesh, its skin and its intestines you're to burn in fire outside the camp. It's a decontamination.

The second ordination offering

[15]You're to get the one ram, Aharon and his sons are to lean their hands on the ram's head, [16]and you're to slaughter the ram, get its blood and toss it over the altar all round. [17]You're to cut up the ram into its parts, wash its innards and its legs, put them along with its parts and along with its head, [18]and turn the entire ram into smoke on the altar. It's a burnt offering for Yahweh, a nice smell. It's a gift offering for Yahweh.

[19]Then you're to get the second ram, Aharon and his sons are to lean their hands on the ram's head, [20]and you're to slaughter the ram. You're to get some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aharon's ear and on the lobe of his sons' right ear, on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot, and toss the rest of the blood over the altar all round. [21]You're to get some of the blood that's on the altar and some of the anointing oil and spatter it on Aharon, on his garments, on his sons and on his sons' garments with him. So he will become sacred, he, his garments, his sons and his sons' garments with him.

[22]You're to get from the ram the fat, the broad tail, the fat covering the innards, the lobe of the liver, the two kidneys, the fat that's on them, and the right thigh, because it's the commissioning ram, [23]and one round of bread, one loaf of bread made with oil and one wafer from the basket of flatbread that's before Yahweh, [24]put everything on Aharon's palms and on his sons' palms, and elevate them as an elevation offering before Yahweh. [25]Then you're to get them from their hand and turn them into smoke on the altar along with the burnt offering, for a nice smell before Yahweh. It's a gift offering for Yahweh.

The next generation

[26]You're to get the breast from Aharon's commissioning ram and elevate it as an elevation offering before Yahweh, and it will be your portion. [27]You're to make sacred the breast, the elevation offering and the thigh that was the contribution, which was offered up and which was taken up from the commissioning ram, from what belonged to Aharon and from what belonged to his sons, [28]and it will belong to Aharon and to his sons, as a permanent decree from the Yisra'elites, because it's a contribution. It will be a contribution from the Yisra'elites from the well-being sacrifices, their gift for Yahweh.

[29]Aharon's sacred garments will be for his sons after him, for anointing and commissioning them in them. [30]For seven days the one of his sons who acts as priest in his place is to put them on, the one who comes into the appointment tent to minister in the sacred place. [31]You're to get the commissioning ram and cook its flesh at the sacred site, [32]and Aharon and his sons are to eat the ram's flesh and the bread that's in the basket, at the entrance of the appointment tent. [33]The people for whom expiation was made with them in commissioning them, in making them sacred, they're to eat them; an outsider is not to eat them, because they're sacred. [34]If some of the commissioning flesh or some of the bread is left over until morning, you're to burn what is left over in fire. It's not to be eaten, because it's sacred.

How to start and end the day

[35]You're to act towards Aharon and his sons in accordance with all that I've ordered you. For seven days you're to commission them. [36]You're to make a bull as a decontamination each day, for total expiation, and you're to decontaminate the altar through your making expiation on it, and to anoint it, to make it sacred. [37]For seven days you're to make expiation on the altar and make it sacred, so the altar becomes especially sacred, and anything that touches the altar becomes sacred.

[38]This is what you're to make on the altar: two sheep, a year old, regularly each day. [39]Make one sheep in the morning and make the second sheep at twilight, [40]with a tenth of fine flour mixed with pressed oil (a quarter of a gallon) and a libation (a quarter of a gallon of wine for the one sheep). [41]You're to make the second sheep at twilight. You're to make it in the same way as the morning grain offering and its libation, for a nice smell, a gift offering for Yahweh, [42]a regular burnt offering through your generations at the entrance of the appointment tent before Yahweh, where I shall keep an appointment with you to speak to you there, [43]and keep an appointment with the Yisra'elites there. It will become sacred through my splendour. [44]I will make the appointment tent and the altar sacred, and I will make Aharon and his sons sacred to act as priests for me. [45]I shall dwell among the Yisra'elites, I shall be God for them, [46]and they will acknowledge that I am Yahweh their God who got them out of the country of Misrayim to dwell among them. I am Yahweh their God.

The incense altar

30 You're to make an altar for burning incense. You're to make it of acacia wood, [2]its length a cubit, its width a cubit (square) and its height two cubits, with its horns coming from it. [3]You're to overlay it with pure gold – its top, its sides all round and its horns. You're to make a gold moulding for it all round. [4]You're to make two gold rings for it under its moulding, on its two sides, and to make them on its two flanks so they can be housing for poles to carry it with. [5]You're to make the poles of acacia

wood and overlay them with gold.
[6]You're to put it before the curtain that's over the affirmation chest (before the curtain that's over the affirmation) where I will keep an appointment with you. [7]Aharon is to burn sweet-smelling incense on it. Morning by morning when he looks after the lamps he's to burn it. [8]And when Aharon sets up the lamps at twilight he's to burn incense regularly before Yahweh through your generations. [9]You're not to offer up outside incense on it (either a burnt offering or a grain offering), and you're not to pour a libation on it. [10]Aharon is to make expiation on its horns once a year with the blood of a decontamination for complete expiation. Once a year he's to make expiation on it through your generations. It's especially sacred for Yahweh.'

The ransom price

[11]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [12]'When you take the sum of the Yisra'elites in connection with their register, they're to give for Yahweh, each individual, the ransom price for his life, when you register them, so there isn't an epidemic among them when you register them. [13]This is what they're to give, each person who passes on to the register: a half-sheqel by the sanctuary sheqel (twenty grains to the sheqel) – a half-sheqel contribution for Yahweh. [14]Each person passing on to the register, from the age of twenty years and upwards, is to give the contribution for Yahweh. [15]The wealthy person is not to do more and the poor person is not to do less than the half-sheqel, in giving Yahweh's contribution to make expiation for your lives. [16]You're to take the silver of complete expiation from the Yisra'elites and give it for the service of the appointment tent. It's to be for the Yisra'elites a reminder before Yahweh, to make expiation for your lives.'
[17]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [18]'You're to make a copper basin and a copper stand for it, for washing, and to put it between the appointment tent and the altar. Put water there, [19]so Aharon and his sons may wash their hands and their feet from it. [20]When they go into the appointment tent they're to wash with water so they don't die. Or when they come up to the altar to minister by turning into smoke a gift offering for Yahweh, [21]they're to wash their hands and their feet so they don't die. For them it's to be a permanent decree, for him and for his offspring, through their generations.'

How to make incense

[22]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [23]'You yourself, get yourself the chief spices: liquid myrrh, 500; spiced cinnamon, half that, 250; fragrant cane, 250; [24]cassia, 500 – by the sanctuary sheqel; and olive oil, a gallon. [25]You're to make it into sacred anointing oil, the best blend, blender's work. It will be the sacred anointing oil. [26]With it you're to anoint the appointment tent, the affirmation chest, [27]the table and all its articles, the candelabrum and its articles, the incense altar, [28]the burnt offering altar and all its articles, and the basin and its stand. [29]You're to make them sacred so that they become especially sacred. Anyone who touches them will become sacred. [30]You're to anoint Aharon and his sons and make them sacred to act as priests for me.
[31]You're to speak to the Yisra'elites: "This will be the sacred anointing oil for me through your generations. [32]It's not to be poured on the flesh of anyone, and you're not to make any like it, by its proportions. It's sacred. It's to be sacred for you. [33]Anyone who blends some like it or puts some of it on an outsider shall be cut off from his kin."'
[34]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Get yourself aromatic spices – stacte, onyka and galbanum. Of aromatic spices and pure frankincense there's to be equal weight. [35]You're to make them into blended incense, blender's work, salted, pure, sacred. [36]You're to beat some of it into powder and put some of it before the affirmation in the appointment tent where I shall keep an appointment with you. It's to be especially sacred for you. [37]The incense that you make, you're not to make by its proportions for yourselves. For you it's to be sacred for Yahweh. [38]Anyone who makes some like it to smell of it shall be cut off from his kin.'

The first spiritual gifting

31 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]'See, I've called for Betsal'el ben Uri, son of Hur, of the clan of Yehudah, by name. [3]I've filled him with a divine spirit, with smartness, with discernment and with knowledge, in any workmanship, [4]for making designs so as to make things with gold, with silver and with copper, [5]in cutting stone for mountings and in carving wood, for working in any craft.
[6]And I: here, I have put with him Oholi'ab ben Ahisamak of the clan of Dan, and into the mind of everyone who is smart in mind I have put smartness, so they can make everything that I've ordered you: [7]the appointment tent, the chest for the affirmation, the expiation cover that will be on it, all the articles in the tent, [8]the table and its articles, the pure gold candelabrum and all its articles, the incense altar, [9]the burnt offering altar and all its articles, the basin and its stand, [10]the liturgical garments, the sacred garments for Aharon the priest, and his sons' garments for acting as priests, [11]the anointing oil and the aromatic incense for the sacred place. In accordance with all that I've ordered you they are to act.'
[12]Yahweh said to Mosheh: [13]'You yourself, speak to the Yisra'elites: "Nevertheless, my sabbaths you're to keep, because it's a sign between me and you through your generations, for acknowledging that I Yahweh have made you sacred. [14]You're to keep the sabbath because it's sacred for you. The person who treats it as ordinary is absolutely to be put to death. When anyone does work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his kin. [15]For six days work can be done. On the seventh day there is a complete stop [*shabbat shabbaton*], sacred for Yahweh. Anyone who does work on the sabbath day is absolutely to be put to death.
[16]The Yisra'elites are to keep the sabbath, making sabbath through their generations, a permanent pact. [17]Between me and the Yisra'elites it will be a permanent sign. Because in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he stopped and found refreshment."'

Meanwhile, at the foot of the mountain

[18]He gave Mosheh (when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinay) the two affirmation tablets, stone tablets written by God's finger.

32 But the people saw that Mosheh was shamefully long about coming down from the mountain. So the people congregated against Aharon and said to him, 'Up, make us gods who will go before us, because this Mosheh, the man who brought us up from the country of Misrayim – we don't know what's happened to him.' [2]So Aharon said to them, 'Tear off the gold rings that are in the ears of your wives, your sons and your daughters, and bring them to me.'

[3]The entire people tore off the gold rings that were in their ears and brought them to Aharon. [4]He took it from their hand, shaped it with a tool and made it into a bullock figurine. They said, 'Yisra'el, these are your gods who brought you up from the country of Misrayim.'

[5]Aharon saw and built an altar before it. Aharon called out, 'Tomorrow is a festival for Yahweh!' [6]So they started early next day and offered up burnt offerings and brought up well-being sacrifices. The people sat down to eat and to drink, and set about enjoying themselves.

[7]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: 'Get yourself down, because your people whom you brought up from the country of Misrayim have acted devastatingly. [8]They have departed quickly from the way that I ordered them. They've made themselves a bullock figurine, and bowed low to it and sacrificed to it, and said, "Yisra'el, these are your gods who brought you up from the country of Misrayim."'

[9]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'I've looked at this people. Here, it's a tough-necked people. [10]So now, let me be, so my anger may rage against them and I may finish them off, and make you into a big nation.'

How to pray for rebels and how to lose your temper

[11]Mosheh sought the goodwill of Yahweh his God: 'Yahweh, why should your anger rage against your people whom you got out of the country of Misrayim by great energy and by a strong hand? [12]Why should the Misrayimites say, "It was in connection with something bad that he got them out, to kill them in the mountains and finish them off from on the face of the ground"? Turn back from your angry rage. Relent of bringing something bad to your people. [13]Be mindful of Abraham, Yitshaq and Yisra'el, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self: "I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars in the heavens, and this entire country of which I spoke I will give to your offspring and they will have it as their permanent domain."' [14]And Yahweh relented of the bad thing he spoke of bringing to his people.

[15]Then Mosheh turned his face and went down from the mountain with the two affirmation tablets in his hand, tablets written on both their surfaces. They were written this side and that. [16]The tablets were God's work. The writing was God's writing, cut on the tablets.

[17]Yehoshua heard the sound of the people with their shouting and said to Mosheh, 'The sound of battle in the camp!' [18]But he said,

It's not the sound of singing in strength,
and it's not the sound of singing in weakness,
the sound of singing that I'm hearing.

[19]When he got near the camp, he saw the bullock and dancing. Mosheh's anger raged and he threw the tablets from his hands and broke them up beneath the mountain. [20]He got the bullock that they had made and burned it in fire. He ground it until it became fine, scattered it on the face of the water and made the Yisra'elites drink it.

'This bullock came out'

[21]Mosheh said to Aharon, 'What did this people do to you that you brought upon it this great wrong?' [22]Aharon said, 'May my lord's anger not rage. You know this people, that it's the epitome of what is bad. [23]They said to me, "Make us gods that will go before us, because this Mosheh, the man who brought us up from the country of Misrayim – we don't know what has happened to him." [24]So I said to them, "Whoever has gold, tear it off." They gave it to me and I threw it into the fire, and this bullock came out.'

[25]Mosheh saw the people – it was gone wild, because Aharon had let it go wild, with contempt for those who rose up against them. [26]Mosheh stood in the camp gateway and said, 'Who belongs to Yahweh – to me!' All the Levites gathered to him. [27]He said to them, 'Yahweh, Yisra'el's God, has said this: "Put, each person, his sword on his thigh. Pass through and come back from gateway to gateway in the camp and kill each person his brother, each person his friend and each person the one near to him."'

[28]The Levites acted in accordance with Mosheh's word, and of the people that day there fell some 3,000 people. [29]Mosheh said, 'They've commissioned you today for Yahweh, because each person was against his son and against his brother, to bestow a blessing on you today.'

[30]Next day Mosheh said to the people, 'You – you've done a great wrong, but I'll now go up to God. Maybe I can make expiation for your wrongdoing.' [31]So Mosheh went back to Yahweh and said, 'Oh, it was a great wrong this people did when they made gold gods for themselves. [32]But now, if you could carry their wrongdoing . . . But if not, please wipe me out from the document that you wrote.'

[33]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Whoever did wrong in relation to me, I'll wipe him out from my document. [34]So now, get going, lead the people where I spoke you of. There, my envoy – he'll go before you, but on the day I attend to them, I shall attend to them in respect of their wrongdoing.'

A place where people could check things out with God

[35]Yahweh hit the people because they made the bullock, which Aharon made,

33 and Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: 'Get going, go up from here, you and the people that you brought up from the country of Misrayim, to the country that I swore to Abraham, to Yitshaq and to Ya'aqob, saying "To your offspring I will give it." [2]I shall send an envoy before you and drive out the Kena'anite, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivvite and the Yebusite – [3]to a country flowing with milk and syrup. Because I shall not go up among you, because you're a tough-necked people, in case I finish you off on the way.' [4]When the people heard this bad thing, they took up grieving and no one put on his finery.

[5]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Say to the Yisra'elites, "You're a tough-necked people. Were I to go up among you for one moment, I could finish you off. So now, take your jewellery off you, so I may know what I should do with you."' [6]So the Yisra'elites stripped off their jewellery from Mount Horeb onwards.

[7]Now Mosheh would take a tent and spread it for himself outside the camp, some distance from the camp. He called it the appointment tent. Anyone seeking something from Yahweh would go out to the appointment tent that was outside the camp.

[8]When Mosheh went out to the tent, the entire people would get up and stand, each person at his tent entrance, and look at Mosheh until he came into the tent. [9]As Mosheh came into the tent, the cloud pillar would come down and stand at the tent entrance, and he would speak with Mosheh. [10]The entire people would see the cloud pillar standing at the tent entrance, and the entire people would get up and bow low, each person at his tent entrance. [11]Yahweh would speak to Mosheh face to face, as someone speaks to his neighbour, and he would go back to the camp, though his minister, Yehoshua ben Nun, a boy, would not move away from inside the tent.

Rock of Ages

[12]Mosheh said to Yahweh, 'Look, you're saying to me, "Take this people up", but you yourself haven't made known to me whom you'll send with me. And you yourself said, "I've acknowledged you by name; indeed, you've found grace in my eyes." [13]So now, please, if I've actually found grace in your eyes, please let me know your way, so I may acknowledge you, in order that I may find grace in your eyes. Look, because this nation is your people.'

[14]He said, 'My face – it will go, and I'll enable you to settle down.' [15]He said to him, 'If your face doesn't go, don't take us up from here. [16]By what means would it be acknowledged, then, that I've found grace in your eyes, I and your people, unless by your going with us, so we may be distinct, I and your people, from any other people on the face of the ground?' [17]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'This thing, too, that you've spoken of, I will do, because you've found grace in my eyes and I've acknowledged you by name.'

[18]He said, 'Please let me see your splendour.' [19]He said, 'I myself will pass all my goodness before your face and call out the very name of Yahweh before you: I grace whomever I grace and have compassion on whomever I have compassion.' [20]But he said, 'You can't see my face, because a human being can't see me and stay alive.'

[21]But Yahweh said, 'Here is a place with me. Take your stand on the crag. [22]When my splendour passes, I'll put you in a crack in the crag and lay the palm of my hand over you until I've passed by. [23]Then I'll remove my palm and you'll see my back, whereas my face won't be seen.'

Now I will confirm the pact

34 Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Carve yourself two stone tablets like the first ones, and I'll write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke up. [2]Be ready by the morning, and come up Mount Sinay in the morning and take your stand before me there on the top of the mountain. [3]No one's to come up with you, nor is anyone to appear on the entire mountain, nor are flock or herd to pasture near the mountain.' [4]So he carved two stone tablets like the first ones.

Mosheh started early in the morning and went up Mount Sinay as Yahweh ordered him. He took the two stone tablets in his hand. [5]Yahweh came down in a cloud, took his stand with him there and called out the very name of Yahweh. [6]Yahweh passed before his face.

Yahweh called out, 'Yahweh, God compassionate and gracious, long-tempered, big in commitment and truthfulness, [7]preserving commitment towards the thousands, carrying waywardness, rebellion and wrongdoing; he certainly doesn't treat people as free of guilt, attending to parents' waywardness in connection with children and with grandchildren, with thirds and with fourths.'

[8]Mosheh hurried and bent his head to the ground and bowed low, [9]and said, 'Please, if I have indeed found grace in your eyes, will the Lord, will the Lord please go among us? Because this is a tough-necked people, pardon our waywardness and our wrongdoing. Have us as your domain.'

[10]He said, 'Here, I am going to solemnize a pact. In front of all your people I will do extraordinary things that haven't been created in the entire earth or among all the nations. The entire people among whom you are will see how awe-inspiring is the deed of Yahweh that I'm going to do with you.

Promises and decrees reaffirmed

[11]See that you keep what I'm ordering you today. Here I am, I'm going to drive out from before you the Amorite, the Kena'anite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivvite and the Yebusite.

[12]Keep watch over yourself so that you don't solemnize a pact with the people living in the country into which you're coming, so that it doesn't become a snare among you. [13]Because you're to demolish their altars, break up their columns and cut down their totem poles. [14]Because you will not bow low to any god, because Yahweh, whose name is 'Passionate', is the

passionate God. [15]You are not to solemnize a pact with the people living in the country. They will whore after their gods
and sacrifice for their gods, and someone will call you and you'll eat of his sacrifice. [16]You'll take some of his daughters for
your sons, and his daughters will whore after their gods, and get your sons to whore after their gods.
[17]You will not make cast-metal gods for yourself.
[18]You're to keep the Flatbread Festival. For seven days you're to eat flatbread, which I ordered at the set time in the month of
Aviv, because in the month of Aviv you got out of Misrayim.
[19]Every opener of the womb is mine, and all your livestock that's born male, the first offspring of ox and sheep. [20]A donkey's
opener you're to redeem with a sheep, but if you don't redeem it, you're to break its neck. Every firstborn among your
children, you're to redeem.
People may not appear before me empty-handed.
[21]For six days you can serve, but on the seventh day you're to stop. In ploughing and in harvest you're to stop.

The magnificent presence

[22]You're to perform the Shabu'ot Festival for yourself, the first products of the wheat harvest, and the Ingathering Festival, the
turning of the year. [23]Three times in the year all your males are to appear before the Lord Yahweh, Yisra'el's God,
[24]because I shall dispossess nations from before you and widen your border, and no one will desire your land when you go
up to appear before Yahweh your God three times in the year.
[25]You will not slaughter the blood of a sacrifice for me accompanied by leavened bread.
The sacrifice of the Pesah Festival will not stay until morning.
[26]The very first of the first products of your land you're to bring to the house of Yahweh your God.
You will not cook a kid goat in its mother's milk.'

[27]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Write these words for yourself, because on the basis of these words I solemnize a pact with you and with Yisra'el.'
[28]He was there with Yahweh for forty days and forty nights; he didn't eat food and he didn't drink water. He wrote on the tablets the words of the pact, the Ten Words.
[29]When Mosheh came down from Mount Sinay with the two affirmation tablets in Mosheh's hand as he came down from the mountain, Mosheh didn't know that the skin of his face emanated through his speaking with him. [30]Aharon and all the Yisra'elites saw Mosheh: there, the skin of his face emanated. They were afraid to come up to him. [31]Mosheh called to them, and Aharon and all the assembly's leaders came back to him and Mosheh spoke to them. [32]Afterwards, all the Yisra'elites came up and he gave them orders about all that Yahweh had spoken with him on Mount Sinay.
[33]When Mosheh had finished speaking with them he put a veil on his face. [34]When Mosheh came before Yahweh to speak with him he would remove the veil until he came out. Then he would come out and speak to the Yisra'elites about what he had been ordered. [35]The Yisra'elites would see Mosheh's face, how the skin of Mosheh's face emanated, and Mosheh would put back the veil on his face until he came to speak with him.

The commission

35 Mosheh got the entire assembly of the Yisra'elites to congregate, and he said to them, 'These are the things that Yahweh has ordered you to do. [2]For six days work can be done, but on the seventh day it will be sacred for you, a complete stopping, for Yahweh. Anyone who does work on it is to be put to death. [3]You're not to burn a fire among all your settlements on the stopping day.'
[4]Mosheh said to the entire assembly of the Yisra'elites: 'This is the thing that Yahweh has ordered. [5]Get from among yourselves a contribution for Yahweh. Everyone who's free in heart can bring Yahweh's contribution: gold, silver, copper; [6] blue, purple and bright crimson, linen, goats' [hair]; [7]ram skins dyed red, dolphin skins, acacia wood; [8]oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil and the aromatic incense, [9]onyx stones and stones for the mountings for the chasuble and for the pouch.
[10]Everyone who is smart of mind among you, they're to come and make everything that Yahweh has ordered: [11]the dwelling, the tent and its covering, its clasps and its planks, its bars, its posts and its sockets, [12]the chest and its poles, the expiation cover and the screen curtain, [13]the table, its poles and all its articles, and the presence bread, [14]the candelabrum for lighting, its articles, its lamps and the oil for lighting, [15]the incense altar and its poles, the anointing oil and the aromatic incense, the entrance screen for the dwelling entrance, [16]the altar for the burnt offering, the copper grating that it has, its poles and all its articles, the basin and its stand, [17]the hangings for the courtyard, its posts and its sockets, and the screen for the courtyard gateway, [18]the pegs for the dwelling, the pegs for the courtyard and their ropes, [19]the liturgical garments for ministering in the sacred place, the sacred garments for Aharon the priest, and the garments for his sons to act as priests.'

The enthusiastic giving

[20]The entire assembly of the Yisra'elites went out of Mosheh's presence, [21]then came, every individual whose mind lifted him up and everyone whose spirit made him free, and brought a contribution for Yahweh for the work on the appointment tent and for all its service, and for the sacred garments.
[22]They came, men along with women, everyone who was free in heart, and brought brooches, earrings, rings and necklaces – all objects of gold, each individual who brought an offering of gold for Yahweh. [23]Everyone with whom there could be found

blue, purple and bright crimson, linen, goats' [hair], ram skins dyed red or dolphin skins, brought them. [24]Everyone who was taking up a contribution of silver or copper brought the offering for Yahweh. Everyone with whom acacia wood could be found for any of the work for the service brought it. [25]Every woman who was smart of mind spun with her hands and brought the spinning, blue, purple and bright crimson, and linen. [26]All the women whose mind lifted them up with smartness spun the goats' [hair]. [27]The leaders brought onyx stones and stones for the mountings on the chasuble and on the pouch, [28]the spice and the oil for lighting, for the anointing oil and for the aromatic incense. [29]Every man and woman whose heart made them free to bring for all the work that Yahweh ordered them to do, through Mosheh – the Yisra'elites brought a free offering for Yahweh.

The over-enthusiastic giving

[30]Mosheh said to the Yisra'elites: 'Look, Yahweh has called by name for Betsal'el ben Uri, son of Hur, of the clan of Yehudah. [31]He's filled him with a divine spirit, with smartness, with discernment and with knowledge, in any workmanship, [32]for drafting designs to make things with gold, with silver and with copper, [33]in cutting stone for mountings and in carving wood, to make things in any design craft. [34]He's put in his mind how to teach, he and Oholi'ab ben Ahisamak of the clan of Dan. [35]He's filled them with smartness of mind to do any work: the craftsman, the designer, the embroiderer in blue, purple and bright crimson, and in linen, and the weaver, workers in any craft and makers of designs.

36 So Betsal'el and Oholi'ab and everyone smart of mind, in whom Yahweh has put smartness and discernment so as to know how to do the work for the service in the sacred place, are to do all that Yahweh ordered.'

[2]So Mosheh called for Betsal'el and Oholi'ab and everyone smart of mind, into whose mind Yahweh had put smartness, everyone whose mind lifted him up, to draw near for the work, to do it. [3]They got from before Mosheh every contribution that the Yisra'elites had brought for the work for the service in the sacred place, to do it.

When those people still brought to him a free gift, morning by morning, [4]all the smart people doing all the work in the sacred place came, one by one from his work, which they were doing, [5]and said to Mosheh, 'The people are bringing much, more than enough for the service involved in the work that Yahweh ordered us to do.' [6]So Mosheh made an order and they passed the sound through the camp, 'No man or woman is to do any more work towards the contribution for the sacred place.' So the people finished bringing. [7]The work was enough for the work, to do it. It left some over.

Hangings for the dwelling

[8]The people who were doing the work, everyone who was smart of mind, made the dwelling of ten pieces of woven linen and blue, purple and bright crimson; with sphinxes, designer's work, he made them. [9]The length of each piece, twenty-eight cubits, and the width of each piece, four cubits – one size for all the pieces. [10]He joined five of the pieces one to the other, and joined the other five pieces one to the other. [11]He made loops of blue on the lip of the one piece at the edge of its joined set, and in this way made them at the lip of the edging piece in the second joined set. [12]He made fifty loops on the one piece and made fifty loops at the edge of the piece that's in the second joined set, with the loops holding one to the other. [13]He made fifty gold clasps, and joined the pieces to one another with the clasps so the dwelling became one unit.

[14]He made pieces from goats' [hair] for a tent over the dwelling; eleven pieces he made them. [15]The length of each piece thirty by the cubit; the width four cubits each piece, one size for the eleven pieces. [16]He joined five of the pieces on their own, and six of the pieces on their own. [17]He made fifty loops on the lip of one outermost piece in a joined set, and fifty loops on the lip of the piece in the other joined set. [18]He made fifty copper clasps to join the tent so it became one unit. [19]He made a covering for the tent of ram skins dyed red and a covering of dolphin skins above it.

The frame for the dwelling

[20]He made the planks for the dwelling of acacia wood, standing upright, [21]the length of a plank ten cubits, the width of a plank a cubit and a half, each one, [22]two projections for each plank, parallel one to the other. So he did for all the dwelling's planks. [23]He made the planks for the dwelling:

twenty planks for the south (southern) aspect; [24]he made forty silver sockets under the twenty planks, two sockets under the one plank for its two projections and two sockets under the next plank for its two projections.

[25]For the dwelling's second side, on the north aspect: twenty planks, [26]with their forty silver sockets, two sockets under the one plank and two sockets under the next plank.

[27]For the back of the dwelling, to the west, he made six planks, [28]and he made two planks for the corners of the dwelling, at the back. [29]They were double underneath, but together they were whole at its top, at the one ring. So he made it for both of them, for the two corners. [30]Thus there were eight planks with their silver sockets, sixteen sockets: two sockets under one plank and two sockets under the next plank.

[31]He made bars of acacia wood: five for the planks in one side of the dwelling, [32]five bars for planks in the second side of the dwelling, and five bars for the planks in the dwelling at the back, to the west. [33]He made the central bar in the middle of the planks running from end to end. [34]The planks he overlaid with gold. The rings he made of gold as housing for the bars, and he overlaid the bars with gold.

The affirmation chest and the expiation cover

[35]He made the curtain of blue, purple and bright crimson, and woven linen. He made it as designer's work, with sphinxes. [36]He

made for it four posts of acacia and overlaid them with gold, with their gold hooks, and he cast for them four silver sockets. [37]He made a screen for the tent entrance, of blue, purple and bright crimson, and woven linen, embroiderer's work, [38]and its five posts with their hooks. He overlaid their tops and their clasps with gold. The five sockets were copper.

37 Betsal'el made the chest of acacia wood, its length two and a half cubits, its width a cubit and a half, and its height a cubit and a half. [2]He overlaid it with pure gold, inside and outside, and made a gold moulding for it all round. [3]He cast four gold rings for it, on its four feet, two rings on one side of it and two on the other. [4]He made poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold, [5]and inserted the poles into the rings on the sides of the chest, for carrying the chest.

[6]He made an expiation cover of pure gold, its length two and a half cubits and its width a cubit and a half, [7]and he made two gold sphinxes (of hammered work he made them) at the two ends of the expiation cover, [8]one sphinx at one end and the other sphinx at the other end. He made the sphinxes coming from the expiation cover at its two ends. [9]The sphinxes were spreading their wings upwards, shielding the expiation cover with their wings, and with their faces one towards the other; the sphinxes' faces were towards the expiation cover.

The candelabrum

[10]He made the table of acacia wood, its length two cubits, its width one cubit and its height a cubit and a half. [11]He overlaid it with pure gold and made a gold moulding for it all round. [12]He made a rim of a handbreadth for it all round and made a gold moulding for its rim all round. [13]He made four gold rings for it and put the rings at the four corners that were at its four feet. [14]The rings were close by the rim as housing for the poles for carrying the table. [15]He made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold. [16]He made the articles that would be on the table – its dishes, its ladles, its pitchers and its bowls, in which the drink offering would be poured – of pure gold.

[17]He made the candelabrum of pure gold. He made the candelabrum of hammered work, its base and its stem. Its cups, its flowers and its petals came from it; [18]six stems going out from its flanks, three stems of the candelabrum from its one flank and three stems of the candelabrum from its second flank; [19]three cups made like almond blossom on one stem, flower and petal, three stems made like almond blossom on another stem, flower and petal; so for the six stems going out from the candelabrum.

[20]On the candelabrum four cups made like almond blossom, its flowers and its petals; [21]a flower beneath two stems issuing from it, and a flower beneath two stems issuing from it, and a flower beneath two stems issuing from it, for the six branches going out from it; [22]their flowers and their stems came from it, all of it a single hammered work, pure gold. [23]He made its seven lamps, its tongs and its pans of pure gold. [24]He made it and all its articles out of a talent of pure gold.

The altars

[25]He made the incense altar of acacia wood, its length a cubit, its width a cubit (square) and its height two cubits; its horns came from it. [26]He overlaid it with pure gold – its top, its sides all round and its horns. He made a gold moulding for it all round. [27]He made two gold rings for it under its moulding, on its two sides, on its two flanks, for housing for the poles to carry it with. [28]He made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold. [29]He made the sacred anointing oil and the pure aromatic incense, blender's work.

38 He made the altar for burnt offering of acacia wood, its length five cubits, its width five cubits (square) and its height three cubits. [2]He made its horns on its four corners (its horns came from it) and overlaid it with copper. [3]He made all the altar's utensils: the buckets, the shovels, the basins, the forks and the pans; he made all its utensils of copper. [4]He made a grating for the altar, a mesh made of copper, below its ledge, underneath, halfway up it. [5]He cast four rings at the four corners of the copper mesh as housing for the poles. [6]He made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with copper, [7]and inserted the poles into the rings on the two sides of the altar for carrying it with. He made it hollow, of boards.

[8]He made the copper basin and its copper stand with the mirrors of the women who served, who did their serving at the entrance of the appointment tent.

The courtyard

[9]He made the courtyard:

on the south (southern) aspect: hangings for the courtyard, woven linen, a hundred by the cubit; [10]their twenty posts and their twenty sockets, copper; the posts' hooks and their clasps, silver;

[11]on the north aspect: a hundred by the cubit; their twenty posts and their twenty sockets, copper; the posts' hooks and their clasps, silver;

[12]on the west aspect: hangings, fifty by the cubit; their posts, ten; their sockets, ten; the posts' hooks and their clasps, silver;

[13]on the front aspect, the east: fifty by the cubit: [14]hangings, fifteen cubits to the shoulder; their posts, three; their sockets, three; [15]for the second shoulder (on each side of the courtyard gateway), hangings, fifteen cubits; their posts, three; their sockets, three;

[16]all the courtyard hangings, woven linen, all round;

[17]the sockets for the posts, copper; the hooks and the clasps of the posts, silver; the overlay of their tops, silver; all the courtyard posts were clasped with silver;

[18]the screen for the courtyard gateway, embroiderer's work: blue, purple and bright crimson, and woven linen, twenty cubits in length, its height (by width) five cubits, close by the courtyard hangings;

[19]their four posts and their four sockets, copper; their hooks, silver; the overlay of their tops and their clasps, silver;

[20]all the pegs for the dwelling and for the courtyard all round, copper.
[21]This is the register of the dwelling, the affirmation dwelling, which was made at Mosheh's bidding, the Levites' service at the hand of Itamar ben Aharon the priest. [22]Betsal'el ben Uri, son of Hur of the clan of Yehudah – he made all that Yahweh had ordered Mosheh, [23]and with him Oholi'ab ben Ahisamak of the clan of Dan, the craftsman, the designer, and the embroiderer in blue, purple and bright crimson, and in linen.

How much it was!

[24]All the gold that was made into the work, in all the work in the sacred place and that was the gold of the elevation offering: 29 talents and 730 sheqels (by the sanctuary sheqel). [25]The silver in the assembly register: 100 talents and 1,775 sheqels (by the sanctuary sheqel), [26]a fraction per head (a half-sheqel by the sanctuary sheqel) for each person passing through the register, from the age of twenty years and upwards: 603,550 people.
[27]The 100 talents of silver were for casting the sockets for the sacred place and the curtain sockets, 100 sockets for the 100 talents, a talent for a socket. [28]He made the 1,775 sheqels into hooks for the posts, overlaid their tops and clasped them.
[29]The copper of the elevation offering: 70 talents and 2,400 sheqels. [30]With it he made the entrance sockets for the appointment tent, the copper altar and the copper grating that it had, and all the altar's utensils; [31]the courtyard sockets all round and the courtyard gateway sockets; and all the dwelling's pegs and all the courtyard's pegs all round.
39 From the blue, purple and bright crimson, they made the liturgical garments for ministering in the sacred place, and they made the sacred garments that were for Aharon, as Yahweh had ordered Mosheh.
[2]He made the chasuble of gold, of blue, purple and bright crimson, and of woven linen. [3]They beat out sheets of gold and cut wires for working into the middle of the blue, of the purple, of the bright crimson and of the linen, designer's work. [4]They made joining shoulder pieces for it; it was joined to two of its corners. [5]Its chasuble's design-work strap, which was on it, came from it; it was made like its work, gold, blue, purple, bright crimson and woven linen, as Yahweh had ordered Mosheh.

The pouch

[6]They made the onyx stones surrounded by gold braids, engraved with seal engravings corresponding to the names of Yisra'el's sons. [7]He put them on the chasuble's shoulder pieces as reminder stones for Yisra'el's sons, as Yahweh had ordered Mosheh.
[8]He made the pouch as designer's work like the work of the chasuble, gold, blue, purple and bright crimson, and woven linen. [9]It was square. They made the pouch folded double, a handbreadth its length and a handbreadth its width, folded double. [10]They filled it with four rows of stones:

the first row: a row of carnelian, chrysolyte and emerald;
[11]the second row: turquoise, sapphire and amethyst;
[12]the third row: jacinth, agate and crystal;
[13]the fourth row: beryl, onyx and jasper.

They were surrounded by gold braids in their fillings. [14]The stones corresponded to the names of Yisra'el's sons, twelve corresponding to their names, with seal engravings, each corresponding to its name, for the twelve clans.
[15]On the pouch they made plaited chains, woven work, pure gold. [16]They made two gold braids and two gold rings and put the two rings on the two edges of the pouch. [17]They put the two gold weavings on the two rings at the edges of the pouch. [18]The two ends of the two weavings they put on the chasuble's shoulder pieces near its front.

As Yahweh had ordered

[19]They made two gold rings and put them on the two edges of the pouch at its lip, which is on the side nearer the chasuble. [20]They made two gold rings and put them on the chasuble's two shoulder pieces underneath, near the front, close by its join, above the chasuble's design-work strap. [21]They attached the pouch by its rings to the chasuble's rings with a blue cord, so it was on the chasuble's design-work strap and the pouch would not come loose from on the chasuble, as Yahweh had ordered Mosheh.
[22]They made the chasuble coat, weaver's work, all blue, [23]the opening of the coat in the middle of it like the opening of a vest, with the lip for its opening all round so it would not tear. [24]On the coat's hems they made pomegranates of blue, purple and bright crimson, woven, [25]and they made bells of pure gold and put the bells in among the pomegranates on the coat's hems all round, [26]a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, on the coat's hems all round, for ministering, as Yahweh had ordered Mosheh. [27]They made linen tunics, weaver's work, for Aharon and for his sons, [28]the linen turban, ornamental linen mitres, cloth shorts (woven linen), [29]and the sash of woven linen, blue, purple and bright crimson, embroiderer's work, as Yahweh had ordered Mosheh.
[30]They made the medallion, the sacred diadem of pure gold, and wrote on it a seal inscription, 'Sacred for Yahweh'. [31]They put a blue cord on it so as to put it on the turban above, as Yahweh had ordered Mosheh.

And Mosheh blessed them

[32]So the entire service of the dwelling, the appointment tent, finished. The Yisra'elites did everything in accordance with all that Yahweh had ordered Mosheh, so they did. [33]They brought the dwelling to Mosheh with the tent and all its articles – its clasps,

its planks, its bars, its posts, its sockets, [34]the covering of ram skins dyed red, the covering of dolphin skins, the screen curtain,
[35]the affirmation chest and its poles and the expiation cover; [36]the table and all its articles and the presence bread; [37]the pure
candelabrum, its lamps (lamps in order) and all its articles, and the oil for lighting; [38]the gold altar, the anointing oil, the aromatic
incense and the screen for the tent entrance; [39]the copper altar, the copper grating that it had, its poles and all its articles, the basin
and its stand; [40]the courtyard hangings, its posts and its sockets, the screen for the courtyard gateway, its cords and its pegs; and
all the articles for the service of the dwelling, the appointment tent; [41]the liturgical garments for ministering in the sacred place,
the sacred garments for Aharon the priest, and his sons' garments for acting as priests.
[42]In accordance with all that Yahweh had ordered Mosheh, so the Yisra'elites had done the entire service. [43]Mosheh saw all the
work: there, they had done it. As Yahweh had ordered, so they had done. And Mosheh blessed them.

Instructions for assembling and sanctifying

40 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]'On the first day of the first month you're to set up the dwelling, the appointment tent. [3]You're
to place there the affirmation chest and screen over the chest with the curtain. [4]You're to bring in the table and see to its
arrangement, bring in the candelabrum and put up its lamps, [5]put the gold incense altar before the affirmation chest, and place the
screen for the courtyard gateway.
[6]You're to put the altar for burnt offering before the entrance of the dwelling, the appointment tent, [7]put the basin between the
appointment tent and the altar and put water there, [8]place the courtyard all round, and put in place the screen for the courtyard
gateway.
[9]You're to get the anointing oil and anoint the dwelling and everything that's in it, and make it and all its articles sacred, so it
may be sacred. [10]You're to anoint the altar for burnt offering and all its articles and make the altar sacred, so the altar may be
especially sacred, [11]and you're to anoint the basin and its stand and make it sacred.
[12]You're to present Aharon and his sons at the entrance of the appointment tent and wash them with water, [13]put the sacred
garments on Aharon, and anoint him and make him sacred so he may act as priest for me. [14]You're to present his sons and put
tunics on them, [15]and anoint them as you anointed their father so they may act as priests for me. Their anointing will continue to
be for them for a permanent priesthood, through their generations.'
[16]Mosheh acted in accordance with all that Yahweh had ordered him, so he did.

Yahweh's splendour fills the dwelling

[17]In the first month in the second year, on the first of the month, the dwelling was set up. [18]Mosheh set up the dwelling.
He put its sockets and placed its planks and put its bars and set up its posts. [19]He spread the tent over the dwelling and put the
tent covering over it, on top, as Yahweh had ordered Mosheh. [20]He got the affirmation and put it in the chest, placed the
poles on the chest and put the expiation cover on the chest, on top, [21]brought the chest into the dwelling, placed the
screening curtain and screened off the affirmation chest, as Yahweh had ordered Mosheh.
[22]He put the table in the appointment tent on the side of the dwelling, northward, outside the curtain, [23]and saw to the
arrangement of bread on it before Yahweh, as Yahweh had ordered Mosheh.
[24]He placed the candelabrum in the appointment tent in front of the table on the side of the dwelling southward, [25]and put up
the lamps before Yahweh, as Yahweh had ordered Mosheh.
[26]He placed the gold altar in the appointment tent before the curtain, [27]and burned aromatic incense on it, as Yahweh had
ordered Mosheh.
[28]He placed the screen for the dwelling entrance, [29]and placed the altar for burnt offering at the entrance of the dwelling, the
appointment tent, and offered up the burnt offering and the grain offering on it, as Yahweh had ordered Mosheh.
[30]He placed the basin between the appointment tent and the altar and put water for washing there, [31]so that Mosheh and
Aharon and his sons could wash their hands and their feet from it, [32]so they could wash when they came into the
appointment tent and when they drew near the altar, as Yahweh had ordered Mosheh.
[33]He set up the courtyard all round the dwelling and the altar and put in place the screen for the courtyard entrance.
When Mosheh finished the work, [34]the cloud covered the appointment tent, and Yahweh's splendour filled the dwelling.
[35]Mosheh couldn't go into the appointment tent because the cloud dwelt over it and Yahweh's splendour filled the dwelling.
[36]When the cloud lifted from over the dwelling, the Yisra'elites would move on, during all their movements. [37]If the cloud
didn't lift, they wouldn't move on until the day it lifted, [38]because Yahweh's cloud would be over the dwelling by day and the fire
would be in it by night, before the eyes of Yisra'el's entire household during all their movements.

Leviticus

Leviticus takes its name from the Levites, the people who traced their descent back to Jacob's son Levi. Among them were the descendants of Aaron, Levi's great-grandson; they were the priests, people who had responsibility for key aspects of the offering of sacrifices. The other descendants of Levi, the non-priestly Levites, are commonly referred to simply as 'the Levites', for short; they were responsible for the many practical aspects of worship in the sanctuary.

The priests and the (other) Levites also had important responsibility for teaching people about what it means to be a proper Israelite, and much of Leviticus comprises a handbook on matters the Levites need to know about, in order to give such teaching. It also covers matters the priests and Levites themselves need to know about, in order to do their own work.

Chapters 1—7 of the book comprise instructions for them about how to offer the different sacrifices, which can be

- a way of giving something to God as an act of worship;
- a way of sharing in a fellowship meal with God, especially when one had reason to express gratitude to God for some blessing;
- a way of finding purification or decontamination when one was affected by a taboo;
- a way of making reparation for wrongdoing (sacrifice was not directly a means by which one found forgiveness for sins; that came on the basis of God's mercy and grace when one repented).

These opening chapters of the book thus pose challenges to us about worship, about giving to God, about fellowship with God, about purification and about reparation.

Chapters 8—10 recount how Moses ordains Aaron and his sons, how they begin their ministry, but then how things go terribly wrong. Leviticus thus continues the story in Exodus.

Chapters 11—16 revert to detailed instructions. They now concern things that make people taboo and thus forbidden to come into the sanctuary. Many of these are things that clash with Yahweh's own nature, particularly death and sex. The rules in Leviticus can drive readers to face the reality of death and face the way we can make sex into a god. Infringing such taboos would defile the sanctuary and risk making God unwilling to be there. An annual expiation day purifies the sanctuary from the effect of such breaches.

Chapters 17—27 offer miscellaneous instructions about ordinary people's lives, with an underlying concern for Israel to be different, to be sacred as God is sacred. It means maintaining distinctions such as those between God and sex or God and death, and also maintaining distinctions of a moral kind. Behaviour that doesn't match Yahweh's moral character is at least as reprehensible as behaviour that doesn't match other aspects of who God is.

The rules for life cover much of the same ground as Exodus 20—24. Genesis to Deuteronomy as a whole is a compilation of teachings that the Holy Spirit inspired during Israel's history, when different contexts required God to give the people different guidance to match different situations. The teaching in Leviticus suggests a context when Israel had become a nation with a central government, a capital and a 'proper' temple.

Attributing the instructions to Moses then affirms that these instructions are outworkings of principles that Moses would affirm. They're the kind of thing Moses would say if he were living in the time of (say) Hezekiah in the eighth century, 500 years after Moses – though we don't know which particular century Leviticus actually comes from.

Giving to God: something from your herd

1 He called Mosheh [Moses]; Yahweh spoke to him from the appointment tent: [2]'Speak to the Yisra'elites [Israelites] and say to them: "When one of you presents an offering of an animal for Yahweh, you may present your offering from the herd or from the flock.

[3]If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he's to present a male that's whole. He's to present it at the entrance of the appointment tent, for his acceptance before Yahweh. [4]He's to lean his hand on the head of the burnt offering so it may be acceptable for him, to make expiation for him. [5]He's to slaughter the animal from the herd before Yahweh, and Aharon's [Aaron's] sons, the priests, are to present the blood and toss the blood over the altar that's at the entrance of the appointment tent, all round.

[6]He's to skin the burnt offering and cut it up into its parts. [7]The sons of Aharon the priest are to put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire, [8]and Aharon's sons, the priests, are to arrange the parts, with the head and with the suet, on the wood that's on the fire that's on the altar. [9]He's to wash its innards and its legs in water, and the priest is to turn the entire thing into smoke at the altar, a burnt offering, a gift offering, a nice smell for Yahweh.

Giving something smaller

[10]If his offering as a burnt offering is from the flock, from the sheep or from the goats, he's to present a male that's whole. [11]He's to slaughter it before Yahweh at the side of the altar, to the north, and Aharon's sons, the priests, are to toss its blood over the altar, all round. [12]He's to cut it up into its parts, and the priest is to arrange them with its head and with its suet on the wood that's on the fire that's on the altar. [13]He's to wash the innards and the legs with water, and the priest is to present the entire thing and turn it into smoke at the altar. It's a burnt offering, a gift offering, a nice smell for Yahweh.

[14]If his offering for Yahweh is a burnt offering from the birds, he's to present his offering from doves or from young pigeons. [15]The priest is to present it at the altar, wring its head and turn it into smoke at the altar. Its blood is to be drained out against the side of the altar. [16]He's to remove its crop with its plumage and throw it beside the altar to the east, to the place for waste. [17]The

priest is to tear it open by its wings, not divide it, and turn it to smoke at the altar on the wood that's on the fire. It's a burnt offering, a gift offering, a nice smell for Yahweh.

The grain offering

2 When a person presents as an offering a grain offering for Yahweh, his offering is to be fine flour. He's to pour oil on it and put frankincense on it [2]and bring it to Aharon's sons, the priests. He's to scoop from there a fistful from its fine flour and from its oil, along with all its frankincense, and the priest is to turn its commemorative portion into smoke at the altar, a gift offering, a nice smell for Yahweh. [3]The rest of the grain offering is for Aharon and his sons, something especially sacred from Yahweh's gift offerings.

[4]When you present as an offering a grain offering baked in an oven: fine flour, loaves of flatbread mixed with oil, or flat wafers spread with oil. [5]If your offering is a grain offering on a griddle, it's to be fine flour mixed with oil, flatbread; [6]break it into bits and pour oil on it. It's a grain offering. [7]If your offering is a grain offering in a pan, it's to be made of fine flour in oil.

[8]You may bring for Yahweh a grain offering that's made from these, and one is to present it to the priest and he will bring it up to the altar. [9]The priest is to take up from the grain offering its commemorative portion and turn it into smoke at the altar, a gift offering, a nice smell for Yahweh. [10]The rest of the grain offering is for Aharon and his sons, something especially sacred from Yahweh's gift offerings.

Season with salt

[11]No grain offering that you present for Yahweh is to be made with yeast, because all leavened bread and all syrup – you're not to turn any of it into smoke as a gift offering for Yahweh. [12]You may present them for Yahweh as an offering of the very first [of the harvest], but they may not go up to the altar as a nice smell.

[13]You're to season with salt your every offering that's a grain offering. You're not to let the salt of your pact with God cease from your grain offering. With every offering of yours you're to present salt.

[14]If you present a first-products grain offering for Yahweh, you're to present young ears, roasted in fire, kernels from the plantation, as your first-products grain offering. [15]You're to put oil on it and place frankincense on it; it's a grain offering. [16]The priest is to turn its commemorative portion into smoke, some of its kernels and of its oil, along with all its frankincense, as a gift offering for Yahweh.

The sacrifice shared with Yahweh

3 If his offering is a well-being sacrifice: if he's presenting something from the herd, whether male or female, he's to present it as one that's whole, before Yahweh. [2]He's to lean his hand on his offering's head and slaughter it at the entrance of the appointment tent, and Aharon's sons, the priests, are to toss the blood over the altar, all round. [3]He's to present from the well-being sacrifice, as a gift offering for Yahweh, the fat covering the innards, all the fat that's on the innards, [4]the two kidneys and the fat that's on them, which is on the loins, and the lobe on the liver; he's to remove it along with the kidneys. [5]Aharon's sons are to turn it into smoke at the altar, along with the burnt offering that's on the wood that's on the fire, a gift offering, a nice smell for Yahweh.

[6]If his offering as a well-being sacrifice for Yahweh is from the flock, whether male or female, he's to present it as one that's whole. [7]If he's presenting a sheep as his offering, he's to present it before Yahweh, [8]lean his hand on his offering's head and slaughter it before the appointment tent. Aharon's sons are to toss its blood over the altar, all round.

All fat belongs to Yahweh

[9]He's to present from the well-being sacrifice, as a gift offering for Yahweh, its fat, the broad tail, whole (which he's to remove close by the backbone), the fat covering the innards, all the fat that's on the innards, [10]the two kidneys and the fat that's on them, which is on the loins, and the lobe on the liver; he's to remove it along with the kidneys. [11]The priest is to turn it into smoke at the altar as a meal, as a gift offering for Yahweh.

[12]If his offering is a goat, he's to present it before Yahweh, [13]lean his hand on its head and slaughter it before the appointment tent. Aharon's sons are to toss its blood over the altar, all round. [14]He's to present from it as his offering, as a gift offering for Yahweh, the fat covering the innards and all the fat that's on the innards, [15]the two kidneys and the fat that's on them, which is on the loins, and the lobe on the liver; he's to remove it along with the kidneys. [16]The priest is to turn them into smoke at the altar as a meal, as a gift offering, as a nice smell.

All fat belongs to Yahweh. [17]It's a permanent decree through your generations in all your settlements. You will not eat any fat or any blood."'

When a priest does wrong by mistake

4 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]'Speak to the Yisra'elites: "When a person does wrong by mistake in connection with any of Yahweh's orders about what should not be done, and does one of them . . .

[3]If the anointed priest does wrong and brings liability on the people, for his wrong that he did he's to present for Yahweh a bull from the herd, one that's whole, as a decontamination. [4]He's to bring the bull to the entrance of the appointment tent before Yahweh, lean his hand on the bull's head and slaughter the bull before Yahweh. [5]The anointed priest is to get some of the bull's

blood and bring it into the appointment tent. [6]The priest is to dip his finger in the blood and spatter some of the blood seven times before Yahweh, before the curtain of the sacred place.
[7]The priest is to put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of aromatic incense that's in the appointment tent, before Yahweh, and to pour out all the bull's blood at the base of the altar for burnt offering, at the entrance of the appointment tent.
[8]All the fat of the decontamination bull: he's to take up from it the fat covering the innards, all the fat that's on the innards, [9]the two kidneys and the fat that's on them, which is on the loins, and the lobe on the liver; he's to remove it along with the kidneys [10]as it's taken up from an ox that's a well-being sacrifice. The priest is to turn them into smoke at the altar for burnt offering. [11]The bull's skin and all its flesh, along with its head, its legs, its innards and its intestines: [12]he's to take the entire bull out to a pure place outside the camp, to where the waste is poured out, and burn it on wood in fire. It's to burn at the place where the waste is poured out.

When the assembly does wrong by mistake

[13]If the entire Yisra'elite assembly make a mistake and something escapes the eyes of the congregation, and they do something in connection with any of Yahweh's orders about what should not be done, and incur liability, [14]and the wrong that they did in connection with it becomes known, the congregation are to present a bull from the herd as a decontamination. They're to bring it before the appointment tent, [15]the assembly's elders are to lean their hands on the bull's head before Yahweh, and one is to slaughter the bull before Yahweh.
[16]The anointed priest is to bring some of the bull's blood into the appointment tent. [17]The priest is to dip his finger in the blood and spatter it seven times before Yahweh, before the curtain. [18]He's to put some of the blood on the horns of the altar that's before Yahweh, which is in the appointment tent, and to pour out all the blood at the base of the altar for burnt offering, at the entrance of the appointment tent.
[19]All its fat he's to take up from it and turn it into smoke at the altar. [20]He's to do to the bull as he did to the decontamination bull; so he's to do to it, and make expiation for them, and it will be pardoned them. [21]He's to take the bull out, outside the camp, and burn it as he burned the first bull. It's a decontamination for the congregation.

When a leader does wrong by mistake

[22]When a leader does wrong and does something in connection with any of Yahweh's orders about what should not be done, by mistake, and incurs liability, [23]or someone causes him to acknowledge his wrong that he did, he's to bring as his offering a he-goat from the flock, one that's whole. [24]He's to lean his hand on the goat's head and slaughter it in the place where one slaughters the burnt offering before Yahweh. It's a decontamination. [25]The priest is to get some of the decontamination blood with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar for burnt offering, and to pour out its blood at the base of the altar for burnt offering. [26]All its fat he's to turn into smoke at the altar, like the fat of the well-being sacrifice. So he's to make expiation for him because of his wrongdoing, and it will be pardoned him.

When an individual does wrong by mistake

[27]If an individual person from the country's people does wrong by mistake, in doing something in connection with any of Yahweh's orders about what should not be done, and incurs liability, [28]or someone causes him to acknowledge his wrong that he did, he's to bring as his offering a she-goat from the flock, one that's whole, a female, for his wrong that he did. [29]He's to lean his hand on the head of the decontamination and slaughter the decontamination in the place of burnt offering. [30]The priest is to get some of its blood with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar for burnt offering, and to pour out all its blood at the altar's base. [31]All its fat he's to remove, as the fat was removed from the well-being sacrifice, and the priest is to turn it into smoke at the altar, as a nice smell for Yahweh. So the priest is to make expiation for him, and it will be pardoned him.
[32]If he brings a sheep as his offering as a decontamination, he's to bring a female that's whole. [33]He's to lean his hand on the head of the decontamination and slaughter it as a decontamination in the place where one slaughters the burnt offering. [34]The priest is to get some of the blood of the decontamination with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar for burnt offering, and to pour out all its blood at the altar's base. [35]All its fat he's to remove, as the fat from the sheep of a well-being sacrifice is removed, and the priest is to turn them into smoke at the altar over Yahweh's gift offering. So the priest is to make expiation for him for his wrong that he did, and it will be pardoned him.

Making reparation

5 When a person does wrong: he heard the sound of a vow and he was a witness (either he saw or he knew). If he doesn't tell, he carries his waywardness. [2]Or a person who touches any taboo thing (either the corpse of a taboo creature, the corpse of a taboo domestic animal or the corpse of a taboo teeming creature) and it escapes him, but he's become taboo and he's liable. [3]Or when he touches something human that's taboo (in connection with anything taboo for him, by which one becomes taboo) and it escapes him, but he's come to know it and he's liable. [4]Or when a person swears, blurting with his lips, to act badly or to do good, in connection with anything that a human being may blurt out in an oath, and it escapes him, but he's come to know it and he's liable.
In connection with one of these matters: [5]when he's liable in connection with one of these matters, he must make confession of what he's done wrong in connection with it, [6]and bring his reparation to Yahweh for his wrong that he did: a female from the flock, a ewe-lamb or a she-goat from the flock, as a decontamination; and the priest is to make expiation for him in relation to his

wrongdoing.
[7]If his hand doesn't extend to enough for a sheep, he's to bring to Yahweh as his reparation for what he's done wrong two doves or two young pigeons, one as a decontamination and one as a burnt offering. [8]He's to bring them to the priest and he's to present the one that's a decontamination first, wring its head from near its neck, but not divide it, [9]and spatter some of the decontamination blood against the side of the altar. The remainder of the blood is to drain at the altar's base. It's a decontamination. [10]The second he's to make as a burnt offering in accordance with the ruling.
So the priest is to make expiation for him because of his wrong that he did, and it will be pardoned him.

More occasions for reparation

[11]If his hand doesn't stretch to two doves or two young pigeons, he's to bring as his offering for what he did wrong a tenth of a barrel of fine flour as a decontamination. He's not to place oil on it and he's not to put frankincense on it, because it's a decontamination. [12]He's to bring it to the priest, and the priest is to scoop out of it a fistful as a commemorative portion and turn it into smoke at the altar over Yahweh's gift offering. It's a decontamination. [13]So the priest is to make expiation for him because of his wrong that he did in connection with one of these matters, and it will be pardoned him. It will be the priest's, like the grain offering."'
[14]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [15]'When a person commits a trespass and does wrong by mistake in connection with Yahweh's sacred things, he's to bring his reparation to Yahweh, a ram that's whole from the flock on the basis of the evaluation (in silver by sheqels, by the sanctuary sheqel), as a reparation. [16]For what he did wrong in connection with the sacred thing, he's to make good and add a fifth to it, and give it to the priest. The priest will make expiation for him with the reparation ram, and it will be pardoned him.
[17]If a person, when he does wrong and does one of all the things that Yahweh has ordered should not be done, but he didn't know, he'll be liable and he'll carry his waywardness. [18]He's to bring to the priest a ram that's whole from the flock, on the basis of the evaluation as a reparation. The priest will make expiation for him because of his mistake that he made when he didn't know, and it will be pardoned him. [19]It's a reparation. He incurred liability to Yahweh.'

Wrongdoing against Yahweh and wrongdoing against other people

6 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]'When a person does wrong and commits a trespass against Yahweh and is deceptive towards his fellow in connection with something entrusted or something deposited with him or by seizing, or he defrauds his fellow, [3]or he finds something lost and is deceptive about it and swears in falsehood, regarding one of all the things that a human being may do so as to do wrong by them: [4]when he does wrong and is liable, he's to give back the thing that he seized or the thing that he got by fraud or the thing that was entrusted to him or the lost thing that he found, [5]or anything regarding which he swore in falsehood. He's to make good for it in terms of its total sum and add to it a fifth of it. He's to give it to the person to whom it belongs, on the day of his reparation.
[6]As his reparation he's to bring Yahweh a ram that's whole from the flock, on the basis of the evaluation as a reparation, to the priest. [7]The priest will make expiation for him before Yahweh and it will be pardoned him in respect of the one thing out of all the things that he might do, to incur liability by it.'
[8]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [9]'Order Aharon and his sons: "This is the instruction about the burnt offering. The burnt offering is on the hearth, on the altar, all night until the morning. The altar fire is to be kept burning on it. [10]Then the priest is to put on his cloth tunic and put on his cloth shorts over his flesh and take up the waste to which the fire devours the burnt offering on the altar and put it beside the altar. [11]He's then to take off his garments, put on other garments and take out the waste outside the camp to a pure place.

Priests' instructions about grain offerings

[12]The fire on the altar is to be kept burning on it; it's not to go out. The priest is to burn wood on it morning by morning, arrange the burnt offering on it and turn into smoke the fat parts of the well-being sacrifices on it. [13]A continual fire is to be kept burning on the altar; it's not to go out.
[14]This is the instruction about the grain offering. Aharon's sons are to bring it before Yahweh before the altar. [15]He's to take up from it in his fist some of the fine flour of the grain offering and some of its oil and all the frankincense that's on the grain offering, and burn its commemorative portion into smoke for Yahweh at the altar, a nice smell. [16]The rest of it Aharon and his sons are to eat. It's to be eaten as flatbread in the sacred place; they're to eat it in the appointment tent courtyard. [17]It's not to be baked with yeast. I've given it to them as their share from my gift offerings. It's especially sacred, like the decontamination and the reparation. [18]Any male among Aharon's descendants may eat it (a permanent decree through your generations) from Yahweh's gift offerings. Anything that touches them becomes sacred."'
[19]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [20]'This is Aharon and his sons' offering, which they're to present for Yahweh on the day of his anointing: a tenth of a gallon of fine flour as a regular grain offering, half of it in the morning and half of it in the evening. [21]It's to be made on a griddle, with oil. You're to bring it blended. You're to present it as baked bits of the grain offering, broken pieces, a nice smell for Yahweh.
[22]The priest anointed in his place from among his sons is to make it (a permanent decree) for Yahweh. It's to be turned into smoke, a whole offering. [23]Every grain offering by a priest is to be a whole offering. It will not be eaten.'

Priests' instructions about the decontamination and reparation

[24]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [25]‘Speak to Aharon and to his sons: “This is the instruction about the decontamination. In the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered, the decontamination is to be slaughtered, before Yahweh. It’s especially sacred. [26]The priest who offers it as a decontamination is to eat it. It’s to be eaten in the sacred place, in the appointment tent courtyard. [27]Anything that touches its flesh becomes sacred, and when some of its blood spatters on a garment, you’re to wash what it spatters on, in the sacred place. [28]A clay container in which it’s boiled is to be broken. If it was boiled in a copper container, it’s to be scoured and rinsed with water. [29]Any male among the priests may eat it. It’s especially sacred. [30]But no decontamination may be eaten from which some of its blood has been brought into the appointment tent to make expiation in the sacred place. It’s to be burned in fire.

7 This is the instruction about the reparation. It’s especially sacred. [2]In the place where they slaughter the burnt offering they’re to slaughter the reparation. Its blood he’s to toss over the altar all round. [3]From it he’s to present all its fat: the broad tail, the fat covering the innards, [4] the two kidneys and the fat that’s on them, which is on the loins, and the lobe on the liver; he’s to remove it along with the kidneys. [5]The priest is to turn them into smoke at the altar as a gift offering for Yahweh. It’s a reparation. [6]Any male among the priests may eat it. He’s to eat it in the sacred place. It’s especially sacred.

The several reasons for a well-being sacrifice

[7]As is the decontamination, so is the reparation; there’s one instruction for them. The priest who makes expiation by it, it belongs to him. [8]The priest who presents an individual’s burnt offering – the skin of the burnt offering that he presents belongs to the priest; it’s to be his. [9]Any grain offering that’s baked in the oven, and any that’s made in the pan or on a griddle, belongs to the priest who presents it; it’s to be his. [10]Any grain offering that’s mixed with oil or dry is to belong to Aharon’s sons, each the same as his brother.

[11]This is the instruction about the well-being sacrifice that someone presents for Yahweh. [12]If he presents it as a thanksgiving, along with the thanksgiving he’s to present flat loaves mixed with oil, flat wafers spread with oil, and fine flour blended, loaves mixed with oil, [13]along with the loaves of leavened bread. He’s to present his offering along with his thanksgiving well-being sacrifice. [14]From it he’s to present one from each offering as a contribution for Yahweh, to the priest who tosses the blood of the well-being sacrifice: it’s to be his.

[15]The flesh of his thanksgiving well-being sacrifice is to be eaten on the day of its offering. He’s not to leave any of it till morning. [16]If the sacrifice he offers is a pledge or free offering, it’s to be eaten on the day he presents his sacrifice, though what is left of it may be eaten on the next day, [17]but what is left of the flesh of the sacrifice is to be burned in fire on the third day. [18]If any of the flesh of his well-being sacrifice is eaten at all on the third day, the one who presents it won’t find acceptance. It won’t be deemed for him. It will be an objectionable thing. The person who eats of it will carry his waywardness.

The priest’s allocations

[19]Flesh that touches anything taboo will not be eaten. It will be burned in fire. [Other] flesh: anyone who is pure may eat flesh. [20]But the person who eats the flesh from a well-being sacrifice, which is Yahweh’s, when his taboo is on him – that person shall be cut off from his kin. [21]A person who touches anything taboo (a human taboo or a taboo animal or any taboo atrocity) and eats from the flesh of Yahweh’s well-being sacrifice – that person shall be cut off from his kin.”’

[22]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [23]‘Speak to the Yisra’elites: “You will not eat any of the fat of ox or sheep or goat. [24]The fat from a corpse and the fat from something mauled may be used for any work, but you will not eat it at all. [25]When anyone eats the fat from an animal from which one may present a gift offering for Yahweh, the person who eats shall be cut off from his kin.

[26]You will not eat any blood in any of your settlements, of bird or of animal. [27]Any person who eats any blood, that person shall be cut off from his kin.”’

[28]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [29]‘Speak to the Yisra’elites: “One who presents his well-being sacrifice for Yahweh, he’s to bring his offering for Yahweh from his well-being sacrifice. [30]His hands are to bring Yahweh’s gift offerings. He’s to bring the fat along with the breast – the breast for elevating as an elevation offering before Yahweh.

[31]The priest is to turn the fat into smoke at the altar, and the breast is to be for Aharon and his sons. [32]The right thigh you’re to give as a contribution to the priest from your well-being sacrifices. [33]The one of Aharon’s sons who presents the blood of the well-being sacrifices, and the fat: the right thigh is to be his portion, [34]because I’ve taken the breast of the elevation offering and the thigh of the contribution from the Yisra’elites from their well-being sacrifices and given them to Aharon the priest and to his sons (as a permanent decree) from the Yisra’elites.”’

The ordination begins

[35]This is Aharon’s anointing share and his sons’ anointing share from Yahweh’s gift offerings on the day he presents them to act as priests for Yahweh, [36]which Yahweh ordered to give them on the day of his anointing them (a permanent decree from the Yisra’elites through their generations).

[37]This is the instruction for the burnt offering, for the grain offering, for the decontamination, for the reparation, for the commissioning and for the well-being sacrifice, [38]with which Yahweh ordered Mosheh at Mount Sinay on the day he ordered the Yisra’elites to present their offerings for Yahweh, in the Sinay Wilderness.

8 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]‘Get Aharon and his sons with him, and the garments, the anointing oil, the decontamination bull, the two rams and the basket of flatbread, [3]and congregate the entire assembly at the entrance of the appointment tent.’

[4]Mosheh did as Yahweh ordered him, and the assembly congregated at the entrance of the appointment tent. [5]Mosheh said to

the assembly, ‘This is the thing that Yahweh has ordered to do.’
[6]Mosheh presented Aharon and his sons and washed them with water. [7]He put the tunic on him, wrapped him with the sash, clothed him with the coat, put the chasuble on him, wrapped him with the chasuble’s design-work strap and wound it to him with it. [8]He placed the pouch on him and put into the pouch the Urim and Tummim. [9]He placed the turban on his head and placed on the turban near the front of it the gold medallion, the sacred diadem, as Yahweh ordered Mosheh.

The vestments

[10]Mosheh got the anointing oil and anointed the dwelling and everything that was in it, and made them sacred. [11]He sprinkled some of it on the altar seven times and anointed the altar and all its articles, and the basin and its stand, to make them sacred. [12]He poured some of the anointing oil on Aharon’s head and anointed him, to make him sacred.
[13]Mosheh presented Aharon’s sons, clothed them in tunics, wrapped them with a sash and bound mitres on them, as Yahweh ordered Mosheh. [14]He brought up the decontamination bull. Aharon and his sons leaned their hands on the head of the decontamination bull, [15]and he slaughtered it. Mosheh got the blood and put it on the altar’s horns all round with his finger and decontaminated the altar, and poured out the blood at the altar’s base. So he made it sacred for making expiation on it. [16]He got all the fat that was on the innards, the lobe of the liver, the two kidneys and their fat, and Mosheh turned them into smoke at the altar. [17]The bull, its skin, its flesh and its intestines he burned in fire outside the camp, as Yahweh ordered Mosheh.
[18]He presented the ram for the burnt offering, Aharon and his sons leaned their hands on the ram’s head, [19]and he slaughtered it. Mosheh tossed the blood over the altar all round [20]and cut up the ram into its parts. Mosheh turned the head, the parts and the suet into smoke, [21]and the innards and the legs he washed with water.
So Mosheh turned the entire ram into smoke at the altar. It was a burnt offering, as a nice smell. It was a gift offering for Yahweh, as Yahweh ordered Mosheh.

The commissioning offering

[22]Then he presented the second ram, the commissioning ram. Aharon and his sons leaned their hands on the ram’s head, [23]and he slaughtered it. Mosheh got some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aharon’s right ear, on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. [24]He presented Aharon’s sons, and Mosheh put some of the blood on the lobe of their right ear, on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot.
Mosheh tossed the blood over the altar all round. [25]He got the fat – the broad tail, all the fat that was on the innards, the lobe of the liver, the two kidneys and their fat, and the right thigh – [26]and from the basket of flatbread that was before Yahweh he got one loaf of flatbread, one loaf of bread made with oil, and one wafer, and placed them on the fat parts and on the right thigh.
[27]He put everything on Aharon’s palms and on his sons’ palms and elevated them as an elevation offering before Yahweh. [28]Mosheh took them from on their palms and turned them into smoke at the altar along with the burnt offering. They were a commissioning offering, as a sweet smell. It was a gift offering for Yahweh. [29]Mosheh got the breast and elevated it as an elevation offering before Yahweh. From the commissioning ram it was Mosheh’s portion, as Yahweh ordered Mosheh.
[30]Mosheh got some of the anointing oil and some of the blood that was on the altar and spattered it on Aharon and on his garments, and on his sons and on his sons’ garments with him, and made them sacred, Aharon and his garments and his sons and his sons’ garments with him.

Seven days in the appointment tent

[31]Mosheh said to Aharon and to his sons: ‘Boil the flesh at the entrance of the appointment tent. You’re to eat it there, with the bread that’s in the commissioning basket, as I ordered: “Aharon and his sons are to eat it.” [32]The rest of the flesh and of the bread you’re to burn in fire. [33]You will not go out of the entrance of the appointment tent for seven days until the day when the days of your commissioning are complete, because for seven days he will commission you. [34]As he has done this day, Yahweh has ordered to do, to make expiation for you. [35]You’re to stay at the entrance of the appointment tent, day and night, for seven days, and keep Yahweh’s charge, so you don’t die, because so I’ve been ordered.’
[36]Aharon and his sons did all the things that Yahweh ordered through Mosheh.
9 On the eighth day Mosheh called for Aharon and his sons, and Yisra’el’s elders, [2]and said to Aharon, ‘Get yourself a bullock from the herd as a decontamination and a ram as a burnt offering, ones that are whole, and present them before Yahweh. [3]And speak to the Yisra’elites: “Get a he-goat from the flock as a decontamination, a bullock and a lamb (ones that are a year old, that are whole) as a burnt offering, [4]an ox and a ram as a well-being offering to sacrifice before Yahweh, and a grain offering mixed with oil, because today Yahweh will appear to you.”’

Aharon’s offerings

[5]So they took what Mosheh ordered to the front of the appointment tent, and the entire assembly drew near and stood before Yahweh. [6]Mosheh said, ‘This is the thing that Yahweh ordered that you do, so Yahweh’s splendour may appear to you.’
[7]Mosheh said to Aharon, ‘Draw near the altar and make your decontamination and your burnt offering and make expiation for yourself and for the people, and make the people’s offering and make expiation for them, as Yahweh has ordered.’
[8]So Aharon drew near the altar and slaughtered the decontamination bullock that was his. [9]Aharon’s sons presented the blood to him and he dipped his finger in the blood and put it on the altar’s horns, and poured out the blood at the altar’s base. [10]The fat, the

kidneys and the lobe from the liver from the decontamination he turned into smoke at the altar, as Yahweh ordered Mosheh. [11]The flesh and the skin he burned in fire outside the camp.
[12]He slaughtered the burnt offering, and Aharon's sons passed the blood to him and he tossed it over the altar all round. [13]They passed the burnt offering to him in its parts, with the head, and he turned it into smoke on the altar. [14]He washed the innards and the legs and turned them into smoke along with the burnt offering on the altar.

Yahweh's splendour appears

[15]Then he presented the people's offering. He got the decontamination goat which was the people's, slaughtered it and made it a decontamination, like the first. [16]He presented the burnt offering and made it in accordance with the ruling. [17]He presented the grain offering, filled his palm from it and turned it into smoke on the altar, apart from the morning burnt offering. [18]He slaughtered the ox and the ram, the well-being sacrifice that was the people's, and Aharon's sons passed the blood to him (and he tossed it over the altar, all round), [19]and the fat parts from the ox and the ram, the broad tail, the covering, the kidneys and the lobe of the liver. [20]They placed the fat parts on the breasts and turned the fat parts into smoke at the altar. [21]The breasts and the right thigh Aharon elevated as an elevation offering before Yahweh, as Mosheh ordered.
[22]Aharon lifted up his hands to the people and blessed them, then came down from making the decontamination, the burnt offering and the well-being sacrifice. [23]Mosheh and Aharon went into the appointment tent, and came out and blessed the people. Then Yahweh's splendour appeared to the entire people, [24]and fire came out from before Yahweh and devoured the burnt offering and the fat parts on the altar. The entire people saw, and resounded, and fell on their faces.

Disaster strikes

10 But Aharon's sons, Nadab and Abihu, each took his pan, put fire in it, placed incense on it and presented before Yahweh outside fire, which he had not ordered them. [2]Fire came out from before Yahweh and devoured them. They died before Yahweh.
[3]Mosheh said to Aharon, 'It's what Yahweh spoke of:

In the people who draw near me I will show myself sacred
and before the face of the entire people I will show splendour.'

Aharon was silent, [4]but Mosheh called for Misha'el and Eltsaphan, sons of Uzzi'el, Aharon's uncle, and said to them, 'Draw near, carry your brothers from before the sacred place, outside the camp.' [5]They drew near and carried them by their tunics outside the camp, as Mosheh said.
[6]Mosheh said to Aharon and to El'azar and Itamar his sons, 'Don't bare your heads, and you will not tear your clothes, so you don't die and he becomes furious with the entire assembly. Your brothers, Yisra'el's entire household, may bewail the burning that Yahweh has brought about. [7]You will not go out of the entrance of the appointment tent, so you will not die, because Yahweh's anointing oil is on you.' They did as Mosheh said.
[8]Yahweh spoke to Aharon, [9]'Don't drink wine or liquor, you or your sons with you, when you go into the appointment tent, so you will not die (a permanent decree, through your generations), [10]so you can make a distinction between the sacred and the ordinary and between the taboo and the pure, [11]and instruct the Yisra'elites in all the decrees that Yahweh has spoken to them through Mosheh.'

On being careful with the decrees

[12]Mosheh spoke to Aharon and to El'azar and to Itamar, his remaining sons: 'Get the grain offering that's left from Yahweh's gift offerings and eat it as flatbread beside the altar, because it's especially sacred. [13]You're to eat it in the sacred place, because it's a decree for you and a decree for your sons from Yahweh's gift offerings, because I've been ordered so.
[14]The breast of the elevation offering and the thigh of the contribution you may eat in a pure place, you and your sons and your daughters with you, because they have been given (a decree for you and a decree for your children) from the Yisra'elites' well-being sacrifices. [15]They're to bring the thigh of the contribution and the breast of the elevation offering, along with the gift offerings of fat things, to elevate as an elevation offering before Yahweh, and it will be yours and your children's with you (as a permanent decree) as Yahweh has ordered.'
[16]Then Mosheh enquired urgently about the decontamination goat. There, it had been burned. He was furious with El'azar and Itamar, Aharon's remaining sons, and said, [17]'Why didn't you eat the decontamination, in the sacred place, because it's especially sacred, and he's given it to you to carry the assembly's waywardness, to make expiation for them before Yahweh? [18]Here, its blood was not brought into the sacred place, inside. You should certainly eat it in the sacred place, as I ordered.'
[19] But Aharon spoke to Mosheh: 'Here, today they have presented their decontamination and their burnt offering before Yahweh, and things like these have happened to me. Had I eaten the decontamination today, would it have been good in Yahweh's eyes?' [20]Mosheh listened, and it was good in his eyes.

You are what you eat

11 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh and to Aharon: [2]'Speak to the Yisra'elites: "These are the creatures that you may eat, of all the animals that are on the earth: [3]anything that has a divided hoof (that has a cleft in its hoofs) that brings up the cud – among

the animals, you may eat it. [4]This, however, you will not eat, of those that bring up the cud or of those that have a divided hoof:
the camel, because it brings up its cud but it doesn't have a divided hoof – it's taboo for you;
[5]the rock badger, because it brings up the cud but it doesn't have a divided hoof – it's taboo for you;
[6]the hare, because it brings up the cud but it doesn't have a divided hoof – it's taboo for you;
[7]the pig, because it has a divided hoof (it has a cleft in its hoof) but it doesn't chew the cud – it's taboo for you.
[8]You will not eat of their meat and you will not touch their corpse – they're taboo for you.
[9]This you may eat of everything that's in the water: anything that has fins and scales, in the water, in the seas and in the wadis – you may eat them. [10]But anything that doesn't have fins and scales, in the water and in the wadis, of any teeming things of the water and of any living thing that's in the water – they're an atrocity for you. [11]Given that they will be an atrocity for you, from their flesh you will not eat and you're to treat their corpse as an atrocity. [12]Anything in the water that does not have fins and scales is an atrocity for you.

How touch produces taboo

[13]These you're to treat as an atrocity from the birds – they're not to be eaten, they're an atrocity:

the eagle, the vulture, the osprey, [14]the kite, the falcon (any of its species), [15]the raven (any of its species), [16]the ostrich, the nighthawk, the seagull, the hawk (any of its species), [17]the tawny owl, the cormorant, the screech owl, [18]the barn owl, the pelican, the swan, [19]the stork, the heron (any of its species), the hoopoe and the bat.

[20]Any teeming, flying thing walking on all fours is an atrocity for you. [21]However, you may eat this: of any teeming, flying thing walking on all fours that has bending legs above its feet to leap with on the earth, [22]of them you may eat these:

the locust (any of its species), the winged locust (any of its species), the cricket (any of its species), the grasshopper (any of its species).

[23]But any other teeming, flying thing that has four legs is an atrocity for you.
[24]By these you make yourself taboo; anyone who touches their corpse becomes taboo until the evening, [25]and anyone who carries their corpse is to wash his clothes and becomes taboo until the evening:
[26]By any animal that does have hoofs but they have no cleft, or that doesn't bring up the cud. They're taboo for you; anyone who touches them becomes taboo.
[27]Any that walks on its hands, among all the creatures that walk on all fours, are taboo for you. Anyone who touches their corpse becomes taboo until the evening. [28]Someone who carries their corpse is to wash his clothes and become taboo until the evening. They're taboo for you.

How other contact produces taboo

[29]This is taboo for you among the things that teem on the earth:

the mole, the mouse, the lizard (any of its species), [30]the ferret, the gecko, the crocodile, the skink and the chameleon.

[31]These are the taboo things for you among everything that teems.
Anyone who touches them when they're dead becomes taboo until the evening.
[32]Anything on which one of them falls when they're dead becomes taboo, of any article of wood, clothing, skin or sacking.
Any article that can be used for work is to be put in water; it becomes taboo until the evening, then it becomes pure.
[33]Any clay container inside which one of them falls – anything that's inside it becomes taboo, and you're to break it.
[34]Of anything that would be eaten on to which water comes, it becomes taboo.
Anything that would be drunk in any container becomes taboo.
[35]Anything on which one of their corpses falls becomes taboo.
An oven or a stove is to be smashed; they're taboo, and they're to be taboo for you.
[36]However, a spring or a cistern (a container for water) continues to be pure, but a person who touches their corpse [in it] becomes taboo.
[37]When one of their corpses falls on any seed for sowing, which is to be sown, it's pure. [38]But when water is put on seed and one of their corpses falls on it, it becomes taboo for you.

The importance of making distinctions

[39]When one of the animals that's for eating by you dies, someone who touches its corpse becomes taboo until the evening.
[40]One who eats of its corpse is to wash his clothes; he becomes taboo until the evening. One who carries its corpse is to wash his clothes; he becomes taboo until the evening.
[41]Everything that teems on the earth is an atrocity. It's not to be eaten. [42]Anything that goes on its belly and anything that goes on all fours, and further anything that has many feet: regarding anything that teems on the earth, you will not eat them, because they're an atrocity. [43]You're not to make yourselves into an atrocity through anything that teems. You will not make yourselves taboo through them and become taboo through them, [44]because I am Yahweh your God. You're to make yourselves sacred and be

sacred, because I am sacred. You will not make yourselves taboo through any teeming thing that moves on the earth, [45]because I
am Yahweh who brought you up from the country of Misrayim [Egypt] to be your God. You're to be sacred, because I am sacred.
[46]This is the instruction about animals, birds, and all living creatures that move in the water, and concerning all creatures that
teem on the earth, [47]for making a distinction between the taboo and the pure and between the living things that are eaten and the
living things that may not be eaten."'

The childbirth taboo

12 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]'Speak to the Yisra'elites: "When a woman brings forth offspring and gives birth to a male, she
becomes taboo for seven days; she becomes taboo as in the days of flowing when she's unwell. ([3]On the eighth day the flesh
of his foreskin is to be circumcised.)
[4]For thirty-three days she's to live in a state of blood purifying. She will not touch anything sacred or go into the sanctuary until
the completion of her days of purifying. [5]If she gives birth to a female, she becomes taboo for two weeks as in her flowing and
she's to live for sixty-six days in a state of blood purifying.
[6]At the completion of her days of purifying, for a son or a daughter, she's to bring a year-old lamb as a burnt offering, and a
young pigeon or dove as a decontamination, to the priest at the entrance of the appointment tent. [7]He's to present it before
Yahweh and make expiation for her, and she'll become pure from her flow of blood. This is the instruction about someone giving
birth to a male or to a female.
[8]If her hand can't find enough for a sheep, she's to get two doves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering and one for
decontamination, and the priest is to make expiation for her, and she'll become pure."'

Scaliness (aka leprosy)

13 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh and to Aharon: [2]'When there is in the skin of a person's body a swelling or rash or spot and it
becomes an outbreak of scaliness in the skin of his body, he's to be brought to Aharon the priest or to one of his sons, the
priests, [3]and the priest is to look at the outbreak in the skin of the body. If the hair in the outbreak has turned white and the
outbreak's appearance is deeper than the skin of his body, the outbreak is scaliness. When the priest sees it, he's to pronounce him
taboo.
[4]If it's a white spot in the skin of his body, its appearance is not deeper than the skin, and the hair hasn't turned white, the priest
is to confine [the person with] the outbreak for seven days. [5]On the seventh day the priest is to look: there, if the outbreak has
stood still, in his eyes, and the outbreak hasn't spread in the skin, the priest is to confine him for a second seven days.
[6]The priest is to look at him on the second seventh day: there, if the outbreak has faded and the outbreak hasn't spread in the
skin, the priest is to pronounce him pure. It's a rash. He's to wash his clothes, and he'll become pure. [7]But if the rash actually
spreads in the skin after his appearing to the priest for his purity pronouncement, he's to appear a second time to the priest, [8]and
the priest will look, and there, the rash has spread in the skin, the priest is to pronounce him taboo. It's scaliness.

Dealing with uncertainty

[9]When there's an outbreak of scaliness in a person and he's brought to the priest, [10]if the priest looks, and there, a white
swelling in the skin, and it's turned the hair white, with a living growth of live flesh in the swelling: [11]it's dormant scaliness in the
skin of his body, and the priest will pronounce him taboo. He won't confine him, because he's taboo.
[12]If the scaliness does break out in the skin and the scaliness covers the entire skin of [the person with] the outbreak, from his
head to his feet, everything visible to the priest's eyes, [13]so the priest looks and there, the scaliness has covered his entire body,
he'll pronounce [the person with] the outbreak pure. All of him has turned white. He's pure.
[14]But on the day live flesh appears in him, he becomes taboo. [15]When the priest sees the live flesh, he's to pronounce him
taboo. The live flesh is taboo. It's scaliness. [16]Or when the live flesh again turns white, he's to come to the priest [17]and the priest
is to look, and there, the outbreak has turned white, then the priest is to pronounce [the person with] the outbreak pure. He's pure.
[18]When there's an eruption in the skin of someone's body and it heals, [19]but in the place of the eruption there's a white swelling
or a white-reddish spot, he's to appear to the priest [20]and the priest is to look and there, it's lower than the skin and its hair has
turned white, then the priest is to pronounce him taboo. It's an outbreak of scaliness that has broken out in the eruption. [21]But if
the priest looks at it and there, no white hair is in it, it's not lower than the skin and it's pale, then the priest is to confine him for
seven days. [22]If it does spread in his skin, the priest is to pronounce him taboo. It's an outbreak. [23]But if the spot halts in its place
(it hasn't spread), it's the scab from the eruption. The priest is to pronounce him pure.

Burns and scabies

[24]Or when there's a burn from fire in the skin of a body and the living growth from the burn becomes a white-reddish or white
spot, [25]if the priest looks at it, and there, the hair has turned white in the spot and its appearance is deeper than the skin: it's
scaliness that's broken out in the burn. The priest is to pronounce him taboo. It's an outbreak of scaliness. [26]But if the priest looks
at it and there, in the spot is no white hair, and it's not lower than the skin and it's pale, the priest is to confine him for seven days.
[27]The priest is to look at him on the seventh day. If it's actually spread in the skin, the priest is to pronounce him taboo. It's an
outbreak of scaliness. [28]But if the spot halts in its place (it hasn't spread in the skin) and it's pale, it's the swelling from the burn.
The priest is to pronounce him pure, because it's the scab from the burn.
[29]When there's an outbreak in a man or a woman in the head or in the beard, [30]and the priest looks at the outbreak, and there, its

appearance is deeper than the skin and there's thin yellow hair in it, the priest is to pronounce him taboo. It's scabies; it's scaliness in the head or the beard. [31]But when the priest looks at the scabies outbreak and there, its appearance is not deeper than the skin, but there's no black hair in it, the priest is to confine [the person with] the scabies outbreak for seven days. [32]The priest is to look at the outbreak on the seventh day: there, the scabies hasn't spread and no yellow hair has come in it, and the scabies' appearance is not deeper than the skin, [33]the person is to shave, but not shave the scabies, and the priest is to confine [the person with] the scabies for a second seven days.

Spots and hair loss

[34]The priest is to look at the scabies on the seventh day: there, the scabies hasn't spread in the skin and its appearance is not deeper than the skin, so the priest is to pronounce him pure. He's to wash his clothes, and he'll become pure. [35]But if the scabies actually spreads after his purity pronouncement, [36]the priest is to look at him. There, the scabies has spread in his skin. The priest will not seek for yellow hair. The person is taboo. [37]But if in his eyes the scabies has halted and black hair has grown in it, the scabies has healed. The person is pure. The priest is to pronounce him pure.

[38]When there are spots in the skin of a man or a woman's body, white spots, [39]and the priest looks, and there, the spots in the skin of their body are pale, white, it's a sore that's broken out in the skin. The person is pure.

[40]When a man's head becomes hairless: he's bald, he's pure. [41]If his head becomes hairless from the side of his face: his hair is receding, he's pure. [42]But when there's a white-reddish outbreak in the bald part or in the receding part, it's scaliness breaking out in his bald part or in his receding part, [43]and the priest is to look at him. There, the swelling from the outbreak is white-reddish in his bald part or in his receding part, like the appearance of scaliness in the skin of the body, [44]the man has been made scaly. He's taboo. The priest is to pronounce him taboo. His outbreak is in his head.

[45]Somone who's been made scaly, who has the outbreak in him: his clothes are to be torn, his head is to be bared, he's to cover his lip and he's to call, "Taboo, taboo". [46]For all the time that the outbreak is in him, he becomes taboo. While he's taboo, he's to live apart. His dwelling will be outside the camp.

Scaliness in clothing

[47]When there's an outbreak of scaliness in clothing, in wool clothing or in fabric clothing, [48]whether in the warp or in the woof of the fabric or of the wool, or in a skin or in anything worked from skin, [49]and the outbreak is greenish or reddish in the clothing or in the skin, whether in the warp or in the woof, or in any skin article: it's an outbreak of scaliness. It's to be shown to the priest. [50]The priest is to look at the outbreak and confine [the thing with] the outbreak for seven days. [51]He's to look at the outbreak on the seventh day. When the outbreak has spread in the clothing, whether in the warp or in the woof or in the skin, for any work for which the skin may be used, the outbreak is a malignant scaliness. It's taboo. [52]He's to burn the cloth, whether warp or woof, in wool or in fabric or any skin article in which there is the outbreak, because it's a malignant scaliness. It's to be burned in fire.

[53]But if the priest looks, and there, the outbreak in the clothing, whether in the warp or in the woof or in any skin article, hasn't spread, [54]the priest is to order that they wash the thing with the outbreak in it, and 'confine' it for a second seven days. [55]The priest is to look at the outbreak after it has been washed, and there, the outbreak hasn't changed its appearance, though the outbreak hasn't spread, it's taboo. You're to burn it in fire. It's a fungus, in its bald side or in its receding side.

[56]But if the priest looks, and there, the outbreak is pale after it's been washed, he's to tear it out from the clothing or from the skin, either from the warp or from the woof. [57]If it appears again in the clothing, either in the warp or in the woof, or in any skin article, it's breaking out. You're to burn in fire the thing in which is the outbreak. [58]But the clothing, either the warp or the woof or any skin article that you wash so that the outbreak departs from them, it's to be washed a second time, and it will become pure.

[59]This is the instruction for an outbreak of scaliness in clothing, wool or fabric, either the warp or the woof, or for any skin article, for pronouncing it pure or pronouncing it taboo.'

Being restored to the assembly

14 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]'This is to be the instruction for the person with scaliness, on the day of his purifying. He's to be brought to the priest; [3]the priest is to go outside the camp. The priest is to look, and there, the outbreak of scaliness has healed from the person with scaliness, [4]so the priest is to order that someone get for the person purifying himself two pure live birds, cedar wood, scarlet yarn and hyssop.

[5]The priest is to order that he slaughter one bird in a clay container over fresh water. [6]The live bird he's to take, with the cedar wood, the scarlet yarn and the hyssop, and dip them with the live bird in the blood of the bird that was slaughtered over the fresh water. [7]He's to spatter it over the person purifying himself from the scaliness, seven times, and purify him, and to send off the live bird over the face of the fields.

[8]The person purifying himself is to wash his clothes, shave all his hair and bathe in water, and he'll become pure. Afterwards, he may go into the camp, but he's to live outside his tent for seven days. [9]On the seventh day he's to shave all his hair – his head, his beard and his eyebrows. He's to shave all his hair, wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and he'll become pure.

[10]On the eighth day he's to get two sheep that are whole, and one ewe a year old that's whole, three tenths of grain-offering fine flour, mixed with oil, and one pint of oil. [11]The priest who is purifying is to stand the person who's purifying himself with them, before Yahweh, at the entrance of the appointment tent.

The decontamination rite

[12]The priest is to get one sheep and present it as a reparation, with the pint of oil, and to elevate them as an elevation offering before Yahweh. [13]He's to slaughter the sheep in the place where one slaughters the decontamination and the burnt offering, in the sacred place, because the reparation is like the decontamination; it belongs to the priest. It's especially sacred.

[14]The priest is to get some of the blood of the reparation. The priest is to put it on the lobe of the ear of the person purifying himself (the right), on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. [15]The priest is to get some of the pint of oil and pour it on to the priest's palm, the left. [16]And the priest is to dip his right finger in the oil that's on his left palm and sprinkle some of the oil with his finger seven times before Yahweh. [17]Some of the rest of the oil that's on his palm the priest is to put on the lobe of the ear of the person purifying himself (the right), on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot, over the blood of the reparation. [18]The rest of the oil that's on the priest's palm he's to put on the head of the person purifying himself. So the priest is to make expiation for him before Yahweh. [19]The priest is to make the decontamination and make expiation for the person purifying himself from his taboo.

Afterwards, he's to slaughter the burnt offering. [20]The priest is to offer up the burnt offering and the grain offering at the altar. So the priest will make expiation for him, and he'll become pure.

For someone of limited means

[21]If he's poor and his hand doesn't stretch to it, he's to get one sheep as a reparation, to be an elevation offering to make expiation for him, one tenth of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, a pint of oil, [22]and two doves or two young pigeons, as his hand stretches to it. One will be a decontamination and one a burnt offering.

[23]He's to bring them to the priest on the eighth day for his purifying, to the entrance of the appointment tent, before Yahweh. [24]The priest is to get the reparation sheep and the pint of oil, and the priest is to elevate them as an elevation offering before Yahweh. [25]He's to slaughter the reparation sheep, and the priest is to get some of the blood of the reparation and put it on the lobe of the ear of the person purifying himself (the right), on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot.

[26]The priest is to pour some of the oil on to the priest's palm, the left, [27]and the priest is to spatter some of the oil that's on his left palm with the finger of his right hand seven times before Yahweh. [28]Some of the oil that's on his palm the priest is to put on the lobe of the ear of the person purifying himself (the right), on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot, on the place with the reparation blood. [29]The rest of the oil that's on the priest's palm he's to put on the head of the person purifying himself, to make expiation for him before Yahweh.

[30]He's to make an offering of one of the doves or young pigeons, from whichever his hand stretches to [31](whichever his hand stretches to), one the decontamination and one the burnt offering, along with the grain offering. So the priest is to make expiation before Yahweh for the person purifying himself.

[32]This is the instruction for the person on whom there's an outbreak of scaliness, whose hand doesn't stretch, in his purifying.'

Scaliness in a house

[33]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh and to Aharon: [34]'When you come into the country of Kena'an [Canaan], which I'm giving you as a holding, and I put an outbreak of scaliness in a house in the country that's your holding, [35]the house's owner is to come and tell the priest, "Something like an outbreak has appeared to me in the house." [36]The priest is to order that they clear the house before the priest comes to look at the outbreak, so nothing that's in the house becomes taboo. After this, the priest will come to look at the house. [37]He will look at the outbreak, and there, if the outbreak in the house's walls is greenish or reddish depressions and their appearance is lower than the wall, [38]the priest is to come out from the house to the entrance of the house and confine it for seven days.

[39]The priest is to come back on the seventh day and look, and there, the outbreak has spread in the house's walls. [40]The priest is to order that they take out the stones in which is the outbreak and throw them outside the town into a taboo place. [41]He's to get the house scraped, from the house all round, and they're to pour out the earth that they've scraped off, outside the town into a taboo place. [42]They're to get other stones and bring them in the place of the stones, and get other earth and coat the house.

[43]If the outbreak comes back and breaks out in the house after he's pulled out the stones and after the scraping of the house and after the coating, [44]the priest is to come and look, and there, the outbreak has spread in the house. It's a malignant scaliness. [45]He's to demolish the house, its stones, its wood and all the soil from the house, and take it out to a taboo place outside the town.

Purifying a house

[46]Someone who goes into the house through all the time he's confined it becomes taboo until the evening. [47]Someone who sleeps in the house is to wash his clothes. Someone who eats in the house is to wash his clothes.

[48]If the priest actually comes and looks, and there, the outbreak hasn't spread in the house after the coating of the house, the priest is to pronounce the house pure, because the outbreak has healed. [49]To decontaminate the house, he's to get two birds, cedar wood, bright crimson and hyssop. [50]He's to slaughter one bird in a clay container over fresh water. [51]He's to get the cedar wood and the hyssop and the bright crimson and the live bird and dip them in the blood of the slaughtered bird and in the fresh water, and spatter the house seven times. [52]He's to decontaminate the house with the bird's blood, with the fresh water, with the live bird, with the cedar wood, with the hyssop and with the bright crimson, [53]then send off the live bird outside the town to the fields. So he will make expiation for the house, and it will become pure.

[54]This is the instruction for every outbreak of scaliness, for scabies, [55]for scaliness in cloth or for a house, [56]for a swelling, for a rash or for a spot, [57]to give instruction on the day of becoming taboo and on the day of becoming pure. This is the instruction

about scaliness.’

A man’s genital discharge

15 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh and to Aharon: [2]‘Speak to the Yisra’elites: “When any man is discharging from his flesh, his discharge is taboo. [3]This will be his taboo through his discharge, whether his flesh runs with his discharge or his flesh seizes up because of his discharge – it’s his taboo: [4]any bedding that the man who is discharging lies on becomes taboo. Any object that he sits on becomes taboo. [5]A person who touches his bedding is to wash his clothes and bathe in water, and he becomes taboo until the evening.

[6]Someone who sits on the object that the man who is discharging sits on is to wash his clothes and bathe in water, and he becomes taboo until the evening. [7]Someone who touches the flesh of the man who is discharging is to wash his clothes and bathe in water, and he becomes taboo until the evening. [8]When the man who is discharging spits on someone who is pure, he’s to wash his clothes and bathe in water, and he becomes taboo until the evening. [9]Any saddle that the man who is discharging rides on becomes taboo. [10]Anyone who touches anything that was under him becomes taboo until the evening, and someone who carries them is to wash his clothes and bathe in water, and he becomes taboo until the evening. [11]Anyone whom the man who is discharging touches when he hasn’t rinsed his hands in water is to wash his clothes and bathe in water, and he becomes taboo until the evening. [12]A clay object that the man who is discharging touches is to be broken, and any wood object is to be rinsed in water.

More on genital discharges and emission of semen

[13]When the man who is discharging is pure from his discharge, he’s to count for himself seven days for his purifying, wash his clothes and bathe his body in fresh water, and he’ll become pure. [14]On the eighth day he’s to get himself two doves or two young pigeons and come before Yahweh at the entrance of the appointment tent, and give them to the priest. [15]The priest is to make them as offerings, one as a decontamination, one as a burnt offering. So the priest is to make expiation for him before Yahweh because of his discharge.

[16]When an emission of semen goes out from a man, he’s to bathe his entire body in water, and he becomes taboo until the evening. [17]Any clothing or any skin on which the emission of semen comes is to be washed in water, and it becomes taboo until the evening. [18]A woman that the man sleeps with involving an emission of semen, they’re to bathe in water and they become taboo until the evening.

[19]When a woman is discharging, if her discharge in her flesh is blood, she’s to be in her flowing for seven days. Anyone who touches her becomes taboo until the evening. [20]Anything that she lies on in her flowing becomes taboo, and anything that she sits on becomes taboo. [21]Anyone who touches her bedding is to wash his clothes and bathe in water, and he becomes taboo until the evening. [22]Anyone who touches any article on which she sits is to wash his clothes and bathe in water, and he becomes taboo until the evening. [23]Whether it’s on the bedding or on the article on which she sits, through touching it he becomes taboo until the evening. [24]If a man actually sleeps with her, her flowing comes on him. He becomes taboo for seven days, and any bedding on which he lies becomes taboo.

On keeping away from taboo

[25]When a woman’s discharge of blood flows for many days not during her flowing, or when she discharges beyond her flowing, for all the days of her discharge her taboo will be like the days of her flowing. She’s taboo. [26]Any bedding on which she lies all the days of her discharge will be for her like the bedding during her flowing. Any article that she sits on becomes taboo, like the taboo during her flowing. [27]Anyone who touches them becomes taboo. He’s to wash his clothes and bathe in water, and he becomes taboo until the evening.

[28]If she’s pure from her discharge, she’s to count for herself seven days, and afterwards she’ll become pure. [29]On the eighth day she’s to get herself two doves or two young pigeons and bring them to the priest at the entrance of the appointment tent. [30]The priest is to make one as a decontamination and one as a burnt offering. So the priest is to make expiation for her before Yahweh, from her taboo discharge.

[31]You’re to consecrate the Yisra’elites from their taboo, so they won’t die through their taboo, through bringing taboo on my dwelling among them.

[32]This is the instruction about someone from whom an emission of semen goes out and who becomes taboo through it, [33]about a woman when she’s unwell, about someone who has their discharge, male or female, and about the man who sleeps with a woman who is taboo.’

The expiation day

16 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh and Aharon after the death of Aharon’s two sons when they drew near before Yahweh and died. [2]Yahweh said to Mosheh: ‘Speak to your brother Aharon: he’s not to come at any time into the sacred place, inside the curtain, before the expiation cover that’s on the chest, so he doesn’t die, because I appear in a cloud, over the expiation cover. [3]In this way Aharon is to come into the sacred place: with a bull from the herd as a decontamination, and a ram as a burnt offering. [4]He’s to put on a sacred linen tunic, and cloth shorts are to be on his body. He’s to wrap on a cloth sash and wind on a cloth turban. They’re sacred garments; he’s to wash his body in water and then put them on.

[5]From the assembly of the Yisra’elites he’s to get two goats from the flock as a decontamination and a ram as a burnt offering.

[6]Aharon is to present the decontamination bull that is his and make expiation for himself and for his household, [7]and to get the two goats and set them before Yahweh at the entrance of the appointment tent. [8]Aharon is to put lots on the two goats, one lot for Yahweh and one lot for Azazel. [9]Aharon is to present the goat on to which the lot came for Yahweh and to make it as a decontamination. [10]The goat on to which the lot came for Azazel is to stand alive before Yahweh, to make expiation on it and to send it off to Azazel to the wilderness.

Expiation for the sanctuary

[11]Aharon is then to present the decontamination bull which is his, and make expiation for himself and for his household. He's to slaughter the decontamination bull that is his, [12]and get a panful of burning coals from on the altar from before Yahweh, and his fistfuls of fine aromatic incense, and bring it inside the curtain. [13]He's to put the incense on the fire before Yahweh so the incense cloud covers the expiation cover that's on the affirmation, so he won't die.

[14]He's to get some of the bull's blood and spatter it with his finger on the surface of the expiation cover to the east, and before the expiation cover he's to spatter some of the blood seven times with his finger. [15]Then he's to slaughter the decontamination goat that's the people's, bring its blood inside the curtain and do with the blood as he did with the bull's blood. He's to spatter it on the expiation cover and before the expiation cover. [16]So he will make expiation for the sacred place from the Yisra'elites' taboos and from their rebellions, in relation to all their wrongdoings.

So he's to do for the appointment tent, which dwells with them in the middle of their taboos. [17]No human being is to be in the appointment tent when he goes in to make expiation in the sacred place, until his coming out. So he will make expiation for himself, for his household and for the entire Yisra'elite congregation.

The goat for Azazel

[18]Then he's to go out to the altar that's before Yahweh and make expiation on it. He's to get some of the bull's blood and some of the goat's blood and put it on the altar's horns all round. [19]He's to spatter some of the blood on it seven times with his finger. So he will purify it and make it sacred from the Yisra'elites' taboos.

[20]When he's finished making expiation for the sacred place, the appointment tent and the altar, he's to present the live goat. [21]Aharon is to lean both his hands on the live goat's head and confess over it all the wayward acts of the Yisra'elites and all their rebellions in relation to all their wrongdoings, put them on the goat's head and send it off by means of an appointed person into the wilderness. [22]The goat is to carry on it all their wayward acts to a region that's cut off. He's to send off the goat into the wilderness.

[23]Then Aharon is to go into the appointment tent and take off the cloth garments that he put on when he went into the sacred place, and set them down there. [24]He's to bathe his body in water in the sacred place, put on his garments, go out and make his burnt offering and the people's burnt offering, and make expiation for himself and for the people. [25]The fat of the decontamination he's to turn into smoke at the altar. [26]The person who sent off the goat to Azazel is to wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and after that come into the camp.

The discipline of the seventh month

[27]He's to take out the decontamination bull and the decontamination goat (whose blood was brought in to make expiation in the sacred place) outside the camp, and burn in fire their skins, their flesh and their intestines. [28]The one who burns them is to wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and after that come into the camp.

[29]This is to be a permanent decree for you: in the seventh month on the tenth of the month you're to humble yourselves and not do any work, the native and the person who is a resident among you, [30]because on this day he makes expiation for you to purify you from all your wrongdoings; you will become pure before Yahweh. [31]It will be a total stop for you. You're to humble yourselves (a permanent decree).

[32]The priest whom he anoints and commissions to act as priest in his father's place is to make expiation. He's to put on the cloth garments, the sacred garments. [33]He's to make expiation for the sacred sanctuary, to make expiation for the appointment tent and the altar, and to make expiation for the priests and for the entire people of the congregation.

[34]This is to be a permanent decree for you, to make expiation for the Yisra'elites from all their wrongdoings once in the year.'

He did as Yahweh ordered Mosheh.

Slaughtering animals at the sanctuary

17 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]'Speak to Aharon, to his sons and to all the Yisra'elites: "This is the thing that Yahweh has ordered. [3]An individual person from Yisra'el's household who slaughters an ox or sheep or goat in the camp or slaughters it outside the camp [4]and doesn't bring it to the entrance of the appointment tent to present as an offering for Yahweh before Yahweh's dwelling: blood will be deemed for that person. He's shed blood. That person shall be cut off from among his people."

[5]It is in order that the Yisra'elites may bring their sacrifices that they're making on the face of the fields – may bring them to Yahweh at the entrance of the appointment tent, to the priest, and make them into well-being sacrifices for Yahweh, [6]and the priest may toss their blood over Yahweh's altar at the entrance of the appointment tent and turn the fat into smoke as a nice smell for Yahweh, [7]and they may no more make their sacrifices to goat-demons after whom they're whoring. This is to be a permanent decree for them, through their generations.

[8]You're to say to them: "Anyone, anyone from Yisra'el's household or from the people who reside among you who offers up a burnt offering or a sacrifice [9]and doesn't bring it to the entrance of the appointment tent to make it as an offering for Yahweh, that individual shall be cut off from his kin. [10]And an individual person from Yisra'el's household or from the people who reside among you who eats any blood: I will set my face against the life of the person who eats the blood and cut it off from among its people, [11a]because the life of the body is in the blood."

It's the blood that makes expiation

[11b]I myself have given it to you on the altar to make expiation for your lives, because it's the blood that makes expiation, by means of the life. [12]That's why I've said to the Yisra'elites, "No person from among you will eat blood, nor will the people who reside among you eat blood."

[13]An individual person from the Yisra'elites or from the people who reside among you who catches a game animal or a bird that may be eaten is to pour out its blood and cover it with soil. [14]Because its blood is the life of all flesh. It simply is its life. So I've said to the Yisra'elites, "You will not eat the blood of any flesh, because its blood is the life of all flesh. Anyone who eats it shall be cut off."

[15]Any person who eats a corpse or something mauled, either a native or a resident, is to wash his clothes and bathe in water, and he becomes taboo until the evening, then he becomes pure. [16]If he doesn't wash them and doesn't bathe his body, he carries his waywardness.'

18 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]'Speak to the Yisra'elites: "I am Yahweh your God. [3]You will not act in accordance with the practice of the country of Misrayim in which you lived, and you will not act in accordance with the practice of the country of Kena'an where I'm bringing you. You will not walk by their decrees. [4]You're to act on my rulings and keep my decrees, walking by them. I am Yahweh your God. [5]You're to keep my decrees and my rulings, by which the person who acts on them may live. I am Yahweh.

Forbidden sexual relationships

[6]No individual person will approach any close relative so as to expose their nakedness. I am Yahweh.

[7]You will not expose your father's nakedness or your mother's nakedness. It's your mother; you will not expose her nakedness.

[8]You will not expose the nakedness of your father's wife; it's your father's nakedness.

[9]You will not expose the nakedness of your sister – your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, born in the household or born outside.

[10]You will not expose the nakedness of your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter, their nakedness, because they are your nakedness.

[11]You will not expose the nakedness of your father's wife's daughter, your father's offspring; she's your sister. You will not expose her nakedness.

[12]You will not expose the nakedness of your father's sister; she's your father's relative.

[13]You will not expose the nakedness of your mother's sister, because she's your mother's relative.

[14]You will not expose the nakedness of your father's brother. You will not approach his wife; she's your aunt.

[15]You will not expose the nakedness of your daughter-in-law. She's your son's wife; you will not expose her nakedness.

[16]You will not expose the nakedness of your brother's wife. It's your brother's nakedness.

[17]You will not expose the nakedness of a woman and her daughter. You will not take her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter and expose her nakedness. They're relatives. It's a deliberate wickedness.

How Kena'an vomited out its inhabitants

[18]You will not take a wife alongside her sister so as to cause pressure, so as to expose her nakedness beside her during her lifetime.

[19]You will not approach a woman during her taboo flowing, so as to expose her nakedness.

[20]You will not have sex with the wife of your fellow, so as to become taboo through her.

[21]You will not give any of your offspring for passing across to the Shameful King; you will not treat the name of your God as ordinary. I am Yahweh.

[22]You will not sleep with a male as one sleeps with a woman. It's an offensive act.

[23]You will not have sex with any animal so as to become taboo by it, and no woman is to present herself before an animal so as to lie down with it. It's a perversion.

[24]Don't make yourself taboo through any of these things, because by all these the nations that I'm going to send off from before you made themselves taboo. [25]The country became taboo and I've attended to it for its waywardness, and the country has vomited out the people living in it. [26]You yourselves are to keep my decrees and my rulings; you will not perform any of these offensive acts, the native or the person who is a resident among you, [27]because the people who were in the country before you performed all these offensive acts, and the country became taboo. [28]The country is not to vomit you out because you make it taboo, as it has vomited out the nations that were before you. [29]Because anyone who performs any of these offensive acts – the persons who perform them shall be cut off from among their people.

[30] You're to keep my charge so you don't perform any of the offensive decrees that were performed before you. You're not to

make yourselves taboo through them. I am Yahweh your God.”’

Be sacred as I am sacred

19 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]‘Speak to the entire Yisra’elite assembly: “You’re to be sacred, because I, Yahweh your God,
am sacred.
[3]An individual is to live in awe of his mother and his father and keep my sabbaths. I am Yahweh your God.
[4]Don’t turn your face to non-entities and don’t make figurine gods for yourselves. I am Yahweh your God.
[5]When you make a well-being sacrifice for Yahweh, make it so it may be for your acceptance. [6]It’s to be eaten on the day you
sacrifice it, or the next day. What is left until the third day is to be burned in fire. [7]If it’s actually eaten on the third day, it
will be an objectionable thing. It won’t find acceptance. [8]The one who eats it – he will carry his waywardness, because he’s
treated as ordinary something sacred that belongs to Yahweh. That person shall be cut off from his kin.
[9]When you reap the harvest of your land, each of you will not finish off harvesting the side of your field, and you will not
gather the gleanings of your harvest [10]or scour your vineyard or glean your vineyard’s windfall. You’re to leave them for
the humble and for the resident. I am Yahweh your God.
[11]You will not steal, you will not deceive, and you will not cheat, one individual his fellow.
[12]You will not swear falsely by my name and treat the name of your God as ordinary. I am Yahweh.
[13]You will not defraud your neighbour and you will not seize things.
The wages of an employee will not stay with you until morning.
[14]You will not slight the deaf and you will not put an obstacle before the blind but live in awe of your God. I am Yahweh.

Let creation be

[15]You will not do evil in making a decision: you will not honour the person of someone who is poor and you will not respect
the person of someone who is big; you will make a decision for your fellow with faithfulness.
[16]You will not live as a slanderer among your kin.
You will not take the stand against your neighbour’s life. I am Yahweh.
[17]You will not be hostile to your brother in your mind; you will firmly reprove your fellow, so you do not carry liability
because of him.
[18]You will not take redress and you will not hold on to things in relation to members of your people, but be loyal to your
neighbour as to yourself. I am Yahweh. [19]You’re to keep my decrees.
You will not mate two kinds of animals; you will not sow your field with two kinds; you will not put cloth woven of two kinds
on to yourself.
[20]When a man sleeps with a woman (has sex) and she’s a maidservant designated to someone but she hasn’t actually been
redeemed or given her freedom, there’s to be an inquiry. They will not be put to death, because she had not been freed,
[21]but he’s to bring his reparation to Yahweh to the entrance of the appointment tent, a ram as a reparation, [22]and the priest is
to make expiation for him with the reparation ram before Yahweh for the wrong that he did. So it will be pardoned for him
in respect of the wrong that he did.
[23]When you come into the country and you plant any edible tree, you’re to treat its fruit as its foreskin. For three years it’s to
be foreskinned to you. It’s not to be eaten. [24]In the fourth year all its fruit will be sacred, an expression of great praise to
Yahweh. [25]In the fifth year you may eat its fruit – so as to increase its yield for you. I am Yahweh your God.

Yisra’el’s distinctiveness

[26]You will not eat anything with the blood.
You will not cast spells and you will not practise augury.
[27]You will not trim the side of your head, you will not do violence to the side of your beard, [28]you will not make a gash on
your flesh for someone and you will not make the mark of a cut on yourselves. I am Yahweh.
[29]Don’t treat your daughter as ordinary by making her act the whore, so the country doesn’t whore and become full of
deliberate wickedness.
[30]You’re to keep my sabbaths and live in awe of my sanctuary. I am Yahweh.
[31]Don’t turn your face to ghosts and don’t seek spirits, so as to become taboo through them. I am Yahweh your God.
[32]You’re to get up in the presence of the grey-haired, respect the person of the elderly and live in awe of your God. I am
Yahweh.
[33]When a person is a resident with you in your country, you will not wrong him. [34]The person who is a resident with you is to
be for you like a native from among you. You’re to be loyal to him as someone like you, because you were residents in the
country of Misrayim. I am Yahweh your God.
[35]You will not do evil over a ruling – over length, over weight or over volume. [36]You’re to have true balances, true weights, a
true barrel and a true gallon.
I am Yahweh your God who got you out of the country of Misrayim, [37]and you’re to keep all my decrees and all my rulings, and
act on them. I am Yahweh.”’

Yisra’el’s sacredness

20 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]‘Say to the Yisra’elites: “An individual person from the Yisra’elites or from the people residing in Yisra’el who gives one of his offspring to the Shameful King is absolutely to be put to death. The people of the country are to pelt him with stones. [3]I myself will set my face against that man and cut him off from among his people, because he’s given one of his offspring to the Shameful King, in order to make my sanctuary taboo and treat my sacred name as ordinary. [4]If the people of the country actually hide their eyes from that man when he gives one of his offspring to the Shameful King, so they don’t put him to death, [5]I myself will set my face against that man and against his kin-group, and cut off him and all those who whore after him, and thus whore after the Shameful King, from among their people.

[6]The person who turns his face to ghosts and to spirits to whore after them: I shall set my face against that person and cut him off from among his people. [7]You’re to make yourselves sacred and to be sacred, because I am Yahweh your God. [8]You’re to keep my decrees and act on them. I am Yahweh who makes you sacred.

[9]When an individual person who slights his father and his mother – he’s absolutely to be put to death. He’s slighted his father and his mother. His shed blood is against him.

Rules about sex

[10]When someone is adulterous with someone’s wife (is adulterous with his neighbour’s wife), the adulterer and the adulteress are absolutely to be put to death.

[11]Someone who sleeps with his father’s wife has exposed his father’s nakedness. The two of them are absolutely to be put to death. Their shed blood is against them.

[12]Someone who sleeps with his daughter-in-law is absolutely to die. The two of them have committed a perversion. Their shed blood is against them.

[13]Someone who sleeps with a male as one sleeps with a woman – the two of them have performed an offensive act. They are absolutely to be put to death. Their shed blood is against them.

[14]Someone who takes a woman and her mother: it’s a deliberate wickedness. They are to burn him and them in fire. There will not be a deliberate wickedness among you.

[15]Someone who has sex with an animal is absolutely to be put to death, and you’re to kill the animal.

[16]A woman who approaches any animal to lie down with it: you’re to kill the woman and the animal. They are absolutely to be put to death. Their shed blood is against them.

[17]Someone who takes his sister, his father’s daughter or his mother’s daughter, and he sees her nakedness and she sees his nakedness: it’s a shameful thing. They shall be cut off before their people’s eyes. He’s exposed his sister’s nakedness. He will carry his waywardness.

[18]When a man sleeps with a woman who’s unwell and exposes her nakedness, he has bared her flow and she herself has exposed her blood flow. Both of them shall be cut off from among their people.

[19]You will not expose the nakedness of your mother’s sister or your father’s sister, because he’s bared his flesh. They will carry their waywardness.

[20]Someone who sleeps with his aunt has exposed his uncle’s nakedness. They will carry their waywardness. They will die childless.

[21]Someone who takes his brother’s wife – it’s a defilement. He’s exposed his brother’s nakedness. They will be childless.

Yisra’el’s distinctiveness

[22]You’re to keep all my decrees and all my rulings, and act on them, so the country where I’m bringing you to live won’t vomit you out. [23]You will not walk by the decrees of the nations that I’m sending off from before you because they did all these things. I was dismayed about them [24]and I said to you, ‘You’re the ones who will take possession of their land.’ I myself shall give it to you to possess, a country flowing with milk and syrup. I am Yahweh your God, who has made you distinct from the peoples.

[25]So you’re to make a distinction between the pure animal and the taboo, between the taboo bird and the pure. You will not make yourselves into an atrocity through an animal or a bird or anything that moves on the ground, which I’ve made distinct, for you to treat as taboo. [26]You’re to be sacred for me, because I Yahweh am sacred, and I’ve made you distinct from the peoples to be mine.

[27]When there’s a ghost or spirit in a man or a woman, they are absolutely to be put to death. People are to pelt them with stones. Their shed blood will be on their own heads.”’

The priests’ discipline

21 Yahweh said to Mosheh: ‘Speak to the priests, Aharon’s sons: “No one is to make himself taboo for a [dead] person among his kin, [2]except for his relative who’s near to him – for his mother, for his father, for his son, for his daughter, for his brother, [3]or for his sister who’s a young girl and is near to him, who hasn’t yet come to belong to a man; for her he may make himself taboo. [4]He will not make himself taboo as a husband among his kin, so as to become ordinary.

[5]They will not make a bald patch on their head, they will not shave the side of their beard and they will not make a gash on their flesh. [6]They are to be sacred for their God and they will not treat the name of their God as ordinary, because they present Yahweh’s gift offerings, their God’s meal, so they’re to be sacred. [7]They will not take a woman who’s a whore and who’s ordinary, and they will not take a woman divorced by her husband, because he’s sacred for his God. [8]You’re to treat him as sacred, because he presents your God’s meal. He’s to be sacred for you, because I am sacred, Yahweh who makes you sacred. [9]When the daughter of an individual priest becomes ordinary by whoring, she makes her father ordinary. She’s to be burned in

fire.
[10]The priest who is greater than his brothers, on whose head the anointing oil has been poured and whom they have commissioned to put on the garments, will not bare his head or tear his clothes. [11]He will not go in near any dead people; he will not become taboo for his father or for his mother. [12]He will not go out of the sanctuary and treat his God's sanctuary as ordinary, because the consecration of his God's anointing oil is on him. I am Yahweh.
[13]That man is to take a woman in her virginity. [14]A widow or divorcee or someone made ordinary by whoring – these he will not take. Rather, he's to take a young girl from his kin, [15]so he doesn't make his offspring among his kin ordinary, because I am Yahweh who makes him sacred."'

Priestly distinctives

[16]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [17]'Speak to Aharon: "Through their generations, no individual from your offspring in whom there's a defect is to draw near to present his God's meal. [18]Because no individual in whom there's a defect is to draw near: one blind or lame or disfigured or deformed, [19]or one who has an injury to his leg or an injury to his hand, [20]or one who is a hunchback or dwarf or defective in his eye or [has] scab or sore or crushed testicle. [21]No individual from Aharon's offspring in whom there's a defect will come up to present Yahweh's gift offerings. There being a defect in him, he will not come up to present Yahweh's meal. [22]He may eat his God's meal, from the especially sacred and from the sacred. [23]Nevertheless he will not go to the curtain and he will not come up to the altar, because there's a defect in him. He will not treat my great sanctuary as ordinary, because I am Yahweh who makes it sacred."'
[24]Mosheh spoke to Aharon and to his sons and to all the Yisra'elites.
22 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]'Speak to Aharon and to his sons so they stay consecrated from the Yisra'elites' sacred things (and don't treat my sacred name as ordinary), which they are making sacred for me. I am Yahweh. [3]Say to them: "Through your generations, any one of all your offspring who comes near the sacred things that the Yisra'elites make sacred for Yahweh and his taboo is on him, that person shall be cut off from before me. I am Yahweh."

Dealing with sacred food

[4]No individual person from Aharon's offspring who has been made scaly or is discharging will eat of the sacred things until he becomes pure. Someone who touches anything taboo through a [dead] person, or an individual from whom there's an emission of semen, [5]or an individual who touches anything that teems for which he becomes taboo or a human being for whom he becomes taboo: for any taboo of his, [6]the person who touches it becomes taboo until the evening and will not eat of the sacred things unless he's bathed his body in water [7]and the sun has gone down, and he's become pure. Afterwards, he may eat of the sacred things, because it's his meal. [8]He will not eat a corpse or something mauled so as to become taboo through it. I am Yahweh.
[9]They're to keep my charge, and not carry wrongdoing because of it and die through it because they treat it as ordinary. I am Yahweh who makes them sacred. [10]No outsider will eat something sacred. A settler with a priest, or an employee, will not eat something sacred. [11]When a priest acquires someone as his own for silver, he may eat of it, and someone born in his household – they may eat of his meal. [12]When a priest's daughter comes to belong to an individual who is an outsider, she will not eat of the contribution among the sacred things. [13]But when a priest's daughter becomes a widow or divorcee and she has no offspring, and comes back to her father's household as in her youth, she may eat of her father's meal. But no outsider may eat of it.
[14]When an individual eats something sacred by mistake, he's to add to it a fifth of it and give the priest the sacred thing. [15]They will not treat the Yisra'elites' sacred things as ordinary, which they take up for Yahweh, [16]and make them carry waywardness requiring reparation through their eating their sacred things, because I am Yahweh who makes them sacred.'

Acceptable sacrifices

[17]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [18]'Speak to Aharon and to his sons and to all the Yisra'elites: "An individual person from Yisra'el's household or from the residents in Yisra'el who presents his offering in connection with any of their pledges or with any of their free offerings that they present for Yahweh as a burnt offering: [19]for your acceptance, a male – among the herd, among the flock or among the goats – that's whole. [20]Any in which there's a defect you will not present because it won't be for acceptance for you.
[21]When someone presents a well-being sacrifice for Yahweh, to fulfil a pledge or as a free offering, among the herd or among the flock, it's to be whole, for acceptance; there will be no defect in it. [22]Blind or injured or disfigured or suppurating or with scabs or sores: you will not present these for Yahweh and you will not put any of them on the altar as a gift offering for Yahweh. [23]You may make into a free offering an ox or sheep that's deformed or stunted, but for a pledge it will not find acceptance.
[24]You will not present for Yahweh something bruised, crushed, torn or cut. In your country you will not make an offering [25]or present as your God's meal any of these from the hand of a foreigner, because their deformity in them is a defect in them. They won't find acceptance for you."'
[26]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [27]'When an ox or sheep or goat is born, it's to be under its mother for seven days. From the eighth day onwards, it will find acceptance as an offering, a gift offering for Yahweh. [28]You will not slaughter a cow or sheep with its offspring on the same day. [29]When you make a thanksgiving sacrifice for Yahweh, offer it so it may be for your acceptance. [30]It's to be eaten on that day. You will not leave any of it until morning. I am Yahweh.
[31]You're to keep my orders and act on them. I am Yahweh. [32]You will not treat my sacred name as ordinary, so I may show myself sacred among the Yisra'elites. I am Yahweh, who made you sacred, [33]the one who got you out of the country of Misrayim

to be your God. I am Yahweh.'

The set times

23 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]'Speak to the Yisra'elites: "These are Yahweh's set times, which you're to call for as sacred occasions. They're my set times. [3]For six days, work may be done. On the seventh a complete stop [*shabbat shabbaton*], a sacred occasion. You will not do any work. It's a sabbath for Yahweh in all your settlements.

[4]These are Yahweh's set times, the sacred occasions, which you're to call for at their set time. [5]In the first month on the fourteenth of the month at twilight, Yahweh's Pesah [Passover], [6]and on the fifteenth day of this month, the Flatbread Festival for Yahweh. For seven days you're to eat flatbread. [7]On the first day it's to be a sacred occasion for you; you will not do any servile work. [8]You're to present a gift offering for Yahweh for seven days. On the seventh day, a sacred occasion, you will not do any servile work."'

[9]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [10]'Speak to the Yisra'elites: "When you come into the country that I'm giving you and you reap its harvest, you're to bring the first sheaf of your harvest to the priest. [11]He's to elevate the sheaf before Yahweh for your acceptance. On the day after the sabbath the priest is to elevate it. [12]On the day of your elevating the sheaf, you're to make a lamb that's whole, a year old, into a burnt offering for Yahweh, [13]with its grain offering of two tenths of fine flour mixed with oil, a gift offering for Yahweh, a nice smell, and its libation, wine, a quarter of a gallon. [14]You will not eat bread or roasted grain or plantation-growth until this particular day, until you bring the offering to your God (a permanent decree through your generations in all your settlements).

The first harvests

[15]You're to count seven sabbaths for yourselves from the day after the sabbath, from the day you bring the elevation sheaf. They're to be whole weeks. [16]You're to count until the day after the seventh sabbath, fifty days, and present an offering of new grain for Yahweh.

[17]From your settlements you're to bring two loaves of elevation bread. They're to be two tenths of fine flour. They're to be baked with yeast, as first products for Yahweh. [18]You're to present with the bread seven lambs that are whole, a year old, one bull from the herd and two rams. They're to be a burnt offering for Yahweh, with their grain offering and their libations, a gift offering, a nice smell for Yahweh. [19]And you're to make one he-goat from the flock into a decontamination, and two sheep, a year old, into a well-being sacrifice. [20]The priest is to elevate them with the first-products bread as an elevation offering before Yahweh, along with the two sheep. They're to be sacred for Yahweh, for the priest.

[21]You're to call for this particular day. It's to be a sacred occasion for you; you're to do no servile work (a permanent decree in all your settlements through your generations).

[22]When you reap the harvest of your land, each of you will not finish off harvesting the edge of your field and you will not gather the gleanings of your harvest. You will leave them for the humble and for the resident. I am Yahweh your God."'

[23]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [24]'Speak to the Yisra'elites: "In the seventh month on the first of the month there's to be a stop for you, a reminder with a horn blast, a sacred occasion. [25]You will do no servile work. You're to present a gift offering for Yahweh."'

The Day of Complete Expiation

[26]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [27]'But then: on the tenth of this seventh month is the Day of Complete Expiation. It's to be a sacred occasion for you. You're to humble yourselves and present a gift offering for Yahweh. [28]You will do no work on this particular day, because it's the Day of Complete Expiation, to make expiation for you before Yahweh your God. [29]Because any person who is not humbled on this particular day is to be cut off from his kin, [30]and any person who does any work on this particular day – I'll cause that person to perish from among his people. [31]You will not do any work (a permanent decree through your generations in all your settlements). [32]It's to be a complete stop [*shabbat shabbaton*] for you, and you're to humble yourselves. On the ninth of the month in the evening, from evening to evening, you're to make your sabbath stop.'

[33]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [34]'Speak to the Yisra'elites: "On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the Sukkot Festival for Yahweh, for seven days. [35]On the first day, a sacred occasion; you will do no servile work. [36]For seven days you are to present a gift offering for Yahweh. On the eighth day it's to be a sacred occasion for you. You're to present a gift offering for Yahweh. It's an assembly; you will not do any servile work.

[37]These are Yahweh's set times that you're to call for as sacred occasions for presenting a gift offering for Yahweh: burnt offering and grain offering, sacrifice and libations, a day's allocation on its day, [38]apart from Yahweh's sabbaths, from your gift offerings, from all your pledges and from all your free offerings that you give for Yahweh.

The Sukkot (Tabernacles) Festival and the candelabrum

[39]But then, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you've gathered in the yield of the country, you're to observe Yahweh's festival, for seven days: on the first day a stop and on the eighth day a stop. [40]On the first day you're to get yourselves the fruit of magnificent trees, branches of palm, boughs of green trees, and poplars from the wadi, and rejoice before Yahweh your God for seven days. [41]You're to observe it as a festival for Yahweh for seven days in the year (a permanent decree through your generations). In the seventh month you're to observe it. [42]You're to live in bivouacs [*sukkot*] for seven days – every native in

Yisra'el, they're to live in bivouacs – [43]in order that your generations may acknowledge that I made the Yisra'elites live in bivouacs when I got them out of the country of Misrayim. I am Yahweh your God.'"

[44]Mosheh called for Yahweh's set times to all the Yisra'elites.

24 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]'Order the Yisra'elites that they're to get for you clear pressed olive oil for lighting, for putting up a lamp regularly. [3]Outside the affirmation curtain in the appointment tent, Aharon is to order it from evening to morning before Yahweh regularly (a permanent decree through your generations). [4]On the pure candelabrum he's to order the lamps before Yahweh regularly.

[5]You're to get fine flour and bake it into twelve loaves. One loaf is to be two tenths. [6]You're to place them in two rows, six in a row, on the pure table before Yahweh. [7]You're to put pure frankincense with the row. It will be a commemorative portion for the bread, a gift offering for Yahweh. [8]Sabbath day by sabbath day he's to order it before Yahweh, regularly, a permanent pact on the part of the Yisra'elites. [9]It's to belong to Aharon and to his sons and they're to eat it in a sacred place, because it's especially sacred for him from Yahweh's gift offerings (a permanent decree).'

An eye for an eye

[10]A Yisra'elite woman's son, who was a Misrayimite man's son, went out among the Yisra'elites, and the Yisra'elite woman's son and a Yisra'elite got into a fight in the camp. [11]The Yisra'elite woman's son cursed the name and slighted it. So they brought him to Mosheh (his mother's name was Shelomit bat Dibri, of the clan of Dan) [12]and they placed him under keep for things to be made clear to them at Yahweh's bidding.

[13]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [14]'Take the slighter outside the camp. All the people who heard are to lean their hands on his head, and the entire assembly is to stone him.

[15]You're to speak to the Yisra'elites: "An individual person who slights his God will carry his wrongdoing. [16]A person who curses Yahweh's name is absolutely to be put to death. The entire assembly is indeed to stone him. As with the resident, so with the native, for his cursing the name he's to be put to death.

[17]An individual who strikes down any human being is absolutely to be put to death. [18]One who strikes down an animal is to make good for it, life for life. [19]An individual who causes an injury to his fellow: as he did, so it's to be done to him, [20]fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. As he causes an injury to the person, so it's to be caused to him. [21]One who strikes down an animal is to make good for it, but one who strikes down a human being is to be put to death. [22]There's to be one ruling for you; it's to be as with the resident, so with the native, because I am Yahweh your God.'"

[23]Mosheh spoke to the Yisra'elites, and they took the slighter outside the camp and pelted him with stones. The Yisra'elites did as Yahweh ordered Mosheh.

Sabbaths for the land

25 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh at Mount Sinay: [2]'Speak to the Yisra'elites: "When you come into the country I'm giving you, the country is to make a sabbath stop for Yahweh. [3]For six years you may sow your field and for six years you may prune your vineyard and gather its yield, [4]but in the seventh year there's to be a complete stop [*shabbat shabbaton*] for the country, a sabbath for Yahweh. You will not sow your field, you will not prune your vineyard, [5] you will not reap your harvest's aftergrowth, you will not cut the grapes of your free vines. It's to be a year of stopping for the country. [6]The country's sabbath will be food for you, for you yourself, for your servant and for your handmaid, for your employee and for your resident living with you, [7]for your animals and for the creatures that are in your country: all its yield will be for eating.

[8]You're to count seven sabbaths of years for yourselves, seven times seven years, so that the time period of your seven sabbaths of years will be forty-nine years. [9]You're to make a blasting horn pass through in the seventh month, on the tenth of the month; on the Day of Complete Expiation you're to make the horn pass through your entire country. [10]You're to make the fiftieth year sacred and call for a release in the country for all the people living in it. It's to be a ram's horn year for you. You're to go back, each individual, to his holding, and to go back, each individual, to his kin-group. [11]The year, that fiftieth year, is to be a ram's horn year for you: you will not sow, you will not reap its aftergrowth and you will not cut its free vines, [12]because it's a ram's horn year. It's to be sacred for you. You will eat the yield from the field.

The 'Jubilee', the ram's horn year

[13]In this ram's horn year you're to go back, each individual, to his holding. [14]When you sell something to your fellow, or buy from your fellow's hand, you're not to wrong one another. [15]It's by the count of the years since the ram's horn year that you're to buy from your fellow; it's by the count of the years of yield that he's to sell to you. [16]On the basis of the large number of the years you'll pay a high price to him; on the basis of the low number of the years you'll pay a low price to him, because it's the count of the yields that he's selling to you. [17]You will not wrong one another but live in awe of your God, because I am Yahweh your God.

[18]You're to act on my decrees and keep my rulings and act on them, so you may live on the land in confidence. [19]The land will give its fruit and you'll eat your fill and live in confidence on it. [20]When you say, 'What are we to eat in the seventh year if we don't sow or gather our yield?', [21]I shall order my blessing for you in the sixth year and it will generate the yield for three years. [22]You'll sow the eighth year and eat from the yield of the old; until the ninth year, until its yield comes in, you'll eat the old.

[23]The land will not be sold permanently because the land belongs to me, because you're residents, settlers, living with me. [24]In the entire land that's your holding, you're to grant restoration for the land.

When your brother does badly

[25]When your brother does poorly and sells part of his holding, his restorer who is near to him is to come to him and restore what his brother has sold. [26]When an individual doesn't have a restorer, but his means stretch and provide enough for its restoration, [27]he's to think over the years since his sale and give the surplus back to the individual to whom he sold it, and go back to his holding. [28]If his means don't provide enough for giving it back to him, what he sold will be in the possession of the person who bought it until the ram's horn year. It will go out in the ram's horn year and he will go back to his holding.
[29]If an individual sells a dwelling house in a walled town, its restoration may happen up to the completion of a year from its sale. Through the time, its restoration may happen. [30]If it's not restored up to the fulfilling of a whole year for it, the house (which is in a town that has a wall) will transfer permanently to the person who bought it, through his generations. It will not go out in the ram's horn year.
[31]Given that houses in villages that have no wall all round are to be thought of as fields in the country, restoration may happen for it, and it will go out in the ram's horn year. [32]The Levites' towns, the houses in the towns in their holding: there may be permanent restoration for the Levites. [33]Something that one of the Levites may restore (a house sale when the town is in his holding) will go out in the ram's horn year, because the houses in the Levites' towns are their holding among the Yisra'elites. [34]The pastureland fields belonging to their towns will not be sold, because it's a permanent holding for them.

Not like slaves

[35]When your brother does poorly and his means fall to you, you're to take strong hold of him as a resident, a settler, so he can stay alive with you. [36]You're not to take interest or profit from him; you're to live in awe of your God, so your brother can stay alive with you. [37]You will not give your money to him at interest and you will not give him your food for profit. [38]I am Yahweh your God who got you out of the country of Misrayim to give you the country of Kena'an, to be God for you.
[39]When your brother does badly with you, and he sells himself to you, you will not make him serve with servile service. [40]He's to be with you as an employee, as a settler. Until the ram's horn year he's to serve with you, [41]then he's to go out from you, he and his children with him, and go back to his kin-group, to his ancestors' holding. [42]Because they're my servants, whom I got out of the country of Misrayim, they will not sell themselves as a servant is sold. [43]You're not to hold sway over him with harshness. You're to live in awe of your God.
[44]Your servant and your handmaid who belong to you from the nations that are round you – from them you may buy a servant or a handmaid, [45]and also from the children of the settlers who are resident with you. You may buy from them and from their kin-groups that are with you, that give birth in your country, and they will be your holding. [46]You may have them as a domain for your children after you, to possess as a permanent holding. By means of them you may get service. But over your brothers, the Yisra'elites, over one another you will not hold sway with harshness.

Servitude to a foreigner

[47]When the means of a resident (a settler with you) stretch, but your brother with him does badly, and he sells himself to the resident (the settler with you) or to an offshoot of a resident's kin-group, [48]after he's sold himself, restoration may happen for him; one of his brothers may restore him, [49]or his uncle or his uncle's son may restore him, or any close relative from his kin-group may restore him. Or when his means stretch, he may restore himself.
[50]He's to think with the person who bought him, from the year when he sold himself to him until the ram's horn year, and the silver for his sale will be in accordance with the number of years. As it would be for the time of an employee he'll be with him.
[51]If there are still many years, on the basis of them he's to give back for his restoration some of the silver that was his price, [52]and if few years remain until the ram's horn year, he's to think about himself, and on the basis of his years he's to give back for his restoration. [53]He's to be with him like an employee by the year. He's not to hold sway over him with harshness in your eyes. [54]If he doesn't restore himself in these ways, he's to go out in the ram's horn year, he and his children with him, [55]because the Yisra'elites are my servants. They're my servants whom I got out of the country of Misrayim. I am Yahweh your God.
26 You will not make non-entities for yourselves, you will not set up a sculpture or a column for yourselves and you will not put a carved stone in your country to bow low to it, because I am Yahweh your God. [2]You're to keep my sabbaths and to live in awe of my sanctuary. I am Yahweh.

Promises

[3]If you walk by my decrees, and keep my orders and act on them, [4]I shall give your rains in their time, so the country will give its produce and the trees of the fields will give their fruit. [5]For you, threshing will overtake reaping and reaping will overtake sowing. You'll eat your bread to the full and live in confidence in your country.
[6]I shall put peace in the country and you will lie down with no one making you tremble. I shall eliminate the bad animal from the country and a sword won't pass through your country. [7]You will pursue your enemies and they will fall to the sword before you. [8]Five of you will pursue a hundred and a hundred of you will pursue 10,000. Your enemies will fall to the sword before you.
[9]I shall turn my face to you and make you fruitful and make you numerous. I shall implement my pact with you. [10]You'll eat old stuff stored but then take out the old in favour of the new. [11]I shall put my dwelling among you and my soul won't spurn you. [12]I shall walk about among you. I shall be God for you and you will be a people for me. [13]I am Yahweh your God who got you out of the country of Misrayim, from being servants to them. I broke the bars of your yoke and let you walk tall.

Warnings

[14]But if you don't listen to me and don't act on all these orders, [15]if you reject my decrees and your soul spurns my rulings so as
not to act on all my orders and so as to contravene my pact, [16]I shall also do this to you. I shall appoint terror over you, wasting
away and fever, finishing off the eyes and consuming the life. You will sow your seed with empty results; your enemies will eat it.
[17]I shall set my face against you and you will take a beating before your enemies. Your foes will hold sway over you and you will
flee when there's no one pursuing you.
[18]And if for all these things you don't listen to me, I shall continue disciplining you sevenfold for your wrongdoings. [19]I shall
break the majesty of your vigour. I shall make your heavens like iron and your land like copper. [20]Your energy will be used up
with empty results. Your land won't give its produce. The trees in the land won't give their fruit.
[21]If you walk contrary with me and are not willing to listen to me, I shall add a sevenfold calamity against you in accordance
with your wrongdoings. [22]I shall send off creatures of the wild against you and they will make you childless and cut off your
animals. They will reduce you so your roads become desolate.
[23]And if through these things you don't accept discipline in relation to me, and you walk contrary with me, [24]I myself too will
walk contrary with you. I myself will also strike you down sevenfold for your wrongdoings. [25]I shall bring a sword against you,
taking the redress in the pact. You'll gather into your towns, and I'll send off an epidemic among you and you'll be given into an
enemy's hand. [26]When I break your staff of bread, ten women will bake your bread in one oven, and give back your bread by
weight. You'll eat but you won't be full.

More warnings

[27]And if because of this you don't listen to me and you walk contrary with me, [28]I'll walk with you in contrary wrath. I myself
will again discipline you sevenfold for your wrongdoings. [29]You will eat the flesh of your sons and you will eat the flesh of your
daughters. [30]I shall annihilate your shrines and cut down your incense stands and put your carcases on your idols' carcases.
I myself will renounce you [31]and make your towns a waste. I'll make your sanctuaries desolate. I won't smell your nice smells.
[32]I myself will make your country desolate; your enemies who live in it will be desolate at it. [33]I shall scatter you among the
nations and draw a sword after you. Your country will become a desolation. Your towns will become a waste.
[34]Then the country will make amends for its sabbaths, through all the time of desolation while you're in your enemies' country.
Then the country will stop [*shabat*], and make up for its sabbaths. [35]All the time of desolation it will stop what it didn't stop
during your sabbaths when you were living on it.
[36]Those who remain among you: I'll bring faintness into their heart in their enemies' countries. The sound of a leaf being blown
away will chase them. They'll flee as people do from the sword, and they'll fall when there's no one chasing. [37]They'll collapse
over one another as if before the sword when there's no one chasing. You won't have the ability to stand before your enemies.

More promises

[38]So you will perish among the nations. Your enemies' country will devour you. [39]Those who remain among you will rot
through their waywardness in your enemies' countries. Yes, through their ancestors' waywardness they will rot with them.
[40]But they will confess their waywardness and their ancestors' waywardness in their trespass that they committed against me;
and also they walked contrary with me. [41]When I also walk contrary with them and bring them into their enemies' country, if by
chance their foreskinned mind bows down and then they make amends for their waywardness, [42]I shall be mindful of my pact
with Ya'aqob [Jacob], and also my pact with Yitshaq [Isaac] and also my pact with Abraham. I shall be mindful, and I shall be
mindful of the country.
[43]The country will be left by them so it may make amends for its sabbaths by being desolate without them, and they themselves
will make amends for their waywardness because – yes, because they rejected my rulings and their soul renounced my decrees.
[44]But even for this, when they are in their enemies' country I won't reject them and I won't renounce them so as to finish them
off, contravening my pact with them, because I am Yahweh their God. [45]I shall be mindful for them of the pact with the original
people whom I got out of the country of Misrayim before the eyes of the nations, to be God for them. I am Yahweh."'
[46]These are the decrees, the rulings and the instructions that Yahweh gave between him and the Yisra'elites at Mount Sinay
through Mosheh.

Promises to God

27 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]'Speak to the Yisra'elites: "When an individual fulfils a pledge to Yahweh on the basis of the
evaluation of persons, [3]the evaluation is to be:
A male from the age of twenty years until the age of sixty years, the evaluation is to be fifty silver sheqels (by the sanctuary
sheqel).
[4]If it's a female, the evaluation is to be thirty sheqels.
[5]If it's someone from the age of five years until the age of thirty years, the evaluation is to be: a male twenty sheqels, for a
female ten sheqels.
[6]If it's someone from the age of one month until the age of five years, the evaluation is to be: a male five silver sheqels; for a
female the evaluation is to be three silver sheqels.
[7]If it's someone the age of sixty years and upwards: if it's a male, the evaluation is to be fifteen sheqels, and for a female ten
sheqels.

[8]If someone has done too badly for the evaluation, they're to get him to stand before the priest and the priest will evaluate him; the priest is to evaluate him on the basis of what the means of the pledge-maker stretch to.

[9]If it's an animal, one of the ones that people may present as an offering for Yahweh, all of what someone gives for Yahweh is to be sacred; [10]he will not exchange it and he will not substitute for it, good for bad or bad for good, and if he does actually substitute one animal for another, it and its substitute will be sacred.
[11]If it's any taboo animal, one of the ones that people don't present as an offering for Yahweh, he's to get the animal to stand before the priest [12]and the priest will evaluate it; whether good or bad, it's to be in accordance with the priest's evaluation, [13]and if he actually restores it, he's to add a fifth to the evaluation.

On making things sacred

[14]If an individual makes his house sacred, as a thing sacred for Yahweh, the priest is to evaluate it. Whether good or bad, as the priest evaluates it, so it will stand. [15]If the person who makes it sacred restores his house, he's to add to it a fifth of the silver of the evaluation, and it will be his.
[16]If an individual makes sacred for Yahweh some of the field that's his holding, the evaluation is to be on the basis of its seed: ten barrels of barley seed to fifty silver sheqels. [17]If he makes his field sacred from the ram's horn year, it will stand in accordance with the evaluation. [18]But if he makes his field sacred after the ram's horn year, the priest is to count the silver on the basis of the years that remain until the ram's horn year, and the evaluation will decrease.
[19]If the person who made it sacred actually restores the field, he's to add to it a fifth of the silver of the evaluation, and it will stand for him. [20]If he doesn't restore the field, or if he's sold the field to another man, it can't be restored any more. [21]When the field goes out in the ram's horn year, it will be sacred for Yahweh, like a field that's been devoted. It will belong to the priest as his holding.
[22]If he makes sacred for Yahweh a field he bought that's not a field belonging to his holding, [23]the priest is to count for him the proportion of the evaluation until the ram's horn year and he's to give the evaluation on that day as something sacred for Yahweh. [24]In the ram's horn year the field is to go back to the one from whom he bought it, to the one whose holding in the country it is.
[25]Every evaluation is to be by the sanctuary sheqel; the sheqel is to be twenty grams.

Things that belong to God

[26]However, a firstborn (which is born first for Yahweh) among animals: an individual will not make it sacred, whether ox or sheep. It belongs to Yahweh. [27]But if it's among taboo animals he may redeem it at the evaluation and add to it a fifth of it. If it's not restored, it's to be sold at the evaluation. [28]However, anything that an individual devotes to Yahweh from all that belongs to him, from human beings or animals or fields in his holding, will not be sold and will not be restored. Anything that's devoted is especially sacred for Yahweh. [29]No one who is devoted from among human beings will be redeemed. He's absolutely to be put to death.
[30]Every tenth of the land, from the land's seed, from the trees' fruit, belongs to Yahweh. It's sacred for Yahweh. [31]If an individual actually restores some of his tenth, he's to add to it a fifth of it. [32]Every tenth of herd and flock, every one that passes under the club, the tenth is to be sacred for Yahweh. [33]A person will not seek out between good and bad and he will not exchange it. If he actually exchanges it, both it and the exchanged one will be sacred. It will not be restored."'
[34]These are the orders that Yahweh gave Mosheh for the Yisra'elites at Mount Sinay.

Numbers

The book of Numbers takes its name from the two counts of the assembly's members that almost bookend the work as a whole – they come in chapter 1 and chapter 26. These two chapters give virtually the same report of the assembly's total numbers (603,550 men the first time, 601,730 the second time). Considerable significance attaches to that similarity in light of what happens in-between the two counts.

The story of the first count introduces ten chapters that relate ways in which Yahweh gets the Israelites ready to resume their journey to Canaan. The chapters are Israel's marching orders. They thus both close the account of Israel's stay at Sinai and open the account of that journey. So the whole of the second half of Exodus, the entire book of Leviticus and the first third of Numbers all deal with the time at Sinai, which occupies less than a year in the nation's life. The space given to this year reflects how important the time at Sinai is in the Old Testament, and how important are the instructions God gives Israel in connection with its stay at Sinai.

The middle third of Numbers (chapters 11—21) tells of the Israelites' actual journey from Sinai to the edge of Canaan. In contrast to the account of the year at Sinai, this fairly short sequence of chapters covers enough time for a whole generation to pass on. The distance from Mount Sinai to Canaan is only 150 miles, so it should have taken only a couple of weeks, but the Israelites actually took years over it. The reason emerges from the stories that Numbers tells. The journey was characterized by a series of rebellions on Israel's part that led Yahweh to resolve that the generation of Israelites who came out of Egypt should be allowed to die out and not get to Canaan. It would be the next generation that got into the land.

The Old and New Testaments see these stories as full of warnings for Israel and for the Church. Psalm 95 reminds enthusiastic worshippers in the temple about their ancestors' rebellions against Yahweh and that whole generation's consequent failure to reach the settled life in Canaan that was their destiny, with the implication that later generations could lose the land if they follow their ancestors' example. Hebrews 3—4 puts the same warning before people who believe in Jesus. In 1 Corinthians 10 Paul refers back to these stories to make the same point. Believers in Jesus, too, need to be wary about worshipping other gods, engaging in sexual immorality, testing Christ, or grumbling, in the way the exodus-wilderness generation did.

The last third of Numbers (chapters 22—36) sees Israel poised finally to enter Canaan, camped just the other side of the River Jordan. These chapters begin with the blessing of Israel by Bil'am [Baalam], which suggests one way in which we are coming near the end of the story that began with Yahweh's promise of blessing and land to Abraham. Balaam restates Yahweh's promise as Abraham's descendants are about to take possession of this land. The significance of Moses' second count of the people then lies in the fact that the people still number approximately the same as they did when they were at Sinai. Yahweh has preserved them despite their rebellion.

The number of 600,000 or so men, which implies two or three million people when one includes their wives and children, is hardly the actual number of people that were there at the time. Deuteronomy will later comment that Israel is rather a small people, and the figure of two or three million is out of proportion to the population of Egypt or Canaan at this time – or to the population of Israel itself over succeeding centuries. It looks as if something odd has happened to the numbers. One plausible explanation is that the word for 'thousand' is also a word for a family or an army division; the word comes with this sense in Numbers 1.16. Behind these figures, then, might be the idea that Israel numbers 600 families – which makes good sense.

A head count

1 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh [Moses] in the Sinay Wilderness in the appointment tent, on the first of the second month in the second year after they got out of the country of Misrayim [Egypt]: [2]'Take a head count of the entire assembly of the Yisra'elites [Israelites] by their kin-groups, by their ancestral households, according to the number of the names of every male by their heads, [3]from the age of twenty years and upwards, everyone in Yisra'el who goes out in the army. You're to register them by their troops, you and Aharon [Aaron]. [4]An individual person for each clan is to be with you. The individual will be head of his ancestral household.

[5]These are the names of the men who are to stand with you:

for Re'uben, Elitsur ben Shede'ur;

[6]for Shim'on [Simeon], Shelumi'el ben Tsurishadday;
[7]for Yehudah [Judah], Nahshon ben Amminadab;
[8]for Yissakar [Issachar], Netan'el ben Zu'ar;
[9]for Zebulun, Eli'ab ben Helon;
[10]for the sons of Yoseph [Joseph] –
for Ephrayim, Elishama ben Ammihud,
for Menashsheh, Gamli'el ben Pedahtsur;
[11]for Binyamin [Benjamin], Abidan ben Gid'oni;
[12]for Dan, Ahi'ezer ben Ammishadday;
[13]for Asher, Pag'i'el ben Okran;
[14]for Gad, Elyasaph ben De'u'el;
[15]for Naphtali, Ahira ben Enan.'

[16]These were the people named from the assembly as leaders of their ancestral clans. They were the heads of the Yisra'elite divisions.

[17]Mosheh and Aharon got these men who had been designated by their names, [18]and congregated the entire assembly on the first of the second month. They made their descent known on the basis of their kin-groups by their ancestral household according to the number of the names, from the age of twenty years and upwards, head by head. [19]As Yahweh ordered Mosheh, he registered them in the Sinay Wilderness.

From Re'uben to Yissakar

[20]They were:

The descendants of Re'uben, Yisra'el's firstborn
their lines of descent by their kin-groups by their ancestral household
according to the number of the names head by head
every male from the age of twenty years and upwards, everyone who goes out in the army
[21]their register for the clan of Re'uben: 46,500.

[22]For Shim'on's descendants
their lines of descent by their kin-groups by their ancestral household
its register according to the number of the names head by head
every male from the age of twenty years and upwards, everyone who goes out in the army
[23]their register for the clan of Shim'on: 59,300.

[24]For Gad's descendants
their lines of descent by their kin-groups by their ancestral household
according to the number of the names
from the age of twenty years and upwards, everyone who goes out in the army
[25]their register for the clan of Gad: 45,650.

[26]For Yehudah's descendants
their lines of descent by their kin-groups by their ancestral household
according to the number of the names
from the age of twenty years and upwards, everyone who goes out in the army
[27]their register for the clan of Yehudah: 74,600.

[28]For Yissakar's descendants
their lines of descent by their kin-groups by their ancestral household
according to the number of the names
from the age of twenty years and upwards, everyone who goes out in the army
[29]their register for the clan of Yissakar: 54,400.

From Zebulun to Naphtali

[30]For Zebulun's descendants
their lines of descent by their kin-groups by their ancestral household
according to the number of the names
from the age of twenty years and upwards, everyone who goes out in the army
[31]their register for the clan of Zebulun: 57,400.

[32]For Yoseph's descendants:
For Ephrayim's descendants
their lines of descent by their kin-groups by their ancestral household
according to the number of the names
from the age of twenty years and upwards, everyone who goes out in the army
[33]their register for the clan of Ephrayim: 40,500.

[34]For Menashsheh's descendants
their lines of descent by their kin-groups, by their ancestral household
according to the number of the names
from the age of twenty years and upwards, everyone who goes out in the army
[35]their register for the clan of Menashsheh: 32,200.

[36]For Binyamin's descendants
their lines of descent by their kin-groups by their ancestral household
according to the number of the names
from the age of twenty years and upwards, everyone who goes out in the army
[37]their register for the clan of Binyamin: 35,400.

[38]For Dan's descendants
their lines of descent by their kin-groups by their ancestral household
according to the number of the names
from the age of twenty years and upwards, everyone who goes out in the army
[39]their register for the clan of Dan: 62,700.

[40]For Asher's descendants
their lines of descent by their kin-groups by their ancestral household
according to the number of the names
from the age of twenty years and upwards, everyone who goes out in the army
[41]their register for the clan of Asher: 41,500.

[42]For Naphtali's descendants
their lines of descent by their kin-groups by their ancestral household
according to the number of the names
from the age of twenty years and upwards, everyone who goes out in the army
[43]their register for the clan of Naphtali: 53,400.

Levi

[44]This is the register that Mosheh, Aharon and Yisra'el's leaders made (there were twelve, one individual each for his ancestral household). [45]The entire register of the Yisra'elites by their ancestral household from the age of twenty years and upwards, everyone who goes out in the army in Yisra'el: [46]the entire register was 603,550.
[47]The Levites were not registered among them by their ancestral clan. [48]Yahweh had spoken to Mosheh: [49]'Only, you will not register the clan of Levi or take their head count among the Yisra'elites. [50]You yourself appoint the Levites over the affirmation dwelling, over all its articles and over everything that belongs to it. They're to carry the dwelling and all its articles and they're to minister to it. They're to camp round the dwelling. [51]When the dwelling sets out, the Levites are to take it down, and when the dwelling camps, the Levites are to set it up. An outsider who comes near is to be put to death.
[52]The Yisra'elites are to camp each with his camp, each with his standard, by their companies. [53]But the Levites are to camp round the affirmation tent, so fury doesn't come on the Yisra'elite assembly. The Levites are to keep the charge of the affirmation dwelling.'
[54]The Yisra'elites acted in accordance with all that Yahweh ordered Mosheh; so they acted.

The order for the journey: Levi at the centre

2 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh and to Aharon: [2]'The Yisra'elites are to camp each by his standard with the ensigns of their ancestral households. They're to camp at a distance round the appointment tent.'

[3]The people camping to the front, to the east: the standard of Yehudah's camp, by their companies.
The Yehudahites' leader: Nahshon ben Amminadab.
[4]His company, their register: 74,600.
[5]Camping by it, the clan of Yissakar.
The Yissakarites' leader: Netan'el ben Tsu'ar.
[6]His company, their register: 54,400.
[7]The clan of Zebulun.
The Zebulunites' leader: Eli'ab ben Helon.
[8]His company, their register: 57,400.
[9]The entire register of Yehudah's camp: 186,400 by their companies.
They're to move on first.

[10]The standard of Re'uben's camp, to the south, by their companies.
The Re'ubenites' leader: Elitsur ben Shede'ur.
[11]His company, their register: 46,500.
[12]Camping by it, the clan of Shim'on.
The Shim'onites' leader: Shelumi'el ben Tsuri-shadday.
[13]His company, their register: 59,300.
[14]And the clan of Gad.
The Gadites' leader: Elyasaph ben Re'u'el.
[15]His company, their register: 45,650.
[16]The entire register of Re'uben's camp: 151,450 by their companies.
They're to move on second.

[17]The appointment tent, the Levites' camp, is to set out in the middle of the camps. As they camp, so they're to move on, each in its own place, by their standards.

The order for the journey: the arrangement completed

[18]The standard of Ephrayim's camp by their companies, to the west.
The Ephrayimites' leader: Elishama ben Ammihud.
[19]His company, their register: 40,500.
[20]By it, the clan of Menashsheh.
The Menashshites' leader: Gamli'el ben Pedahtsur.
[21]His company, their register: 32,200.
[22]And the clan of Binyamin.
The Binyaminites' leader: Abidan ben Gid'oni.
[23]His company, their register: 35,400.
[24]The entire register of Ephrayim's camp: 108,100 by their companies.
They're to move on third.
[25]The standard of Dan's camp, to the north, by their companies.
The Danites' leader: Ahi'ezer ben Ammishadday.
[26]His company, their register: 62,700.
[27]Camping by it, the clan of Asher.
The Asherites' leader: Pag'i'el ben Okran.
[28]His company, their register: 41,500.
[29]And the clan of Naphtali.
The Naphtalites' leader: Ahira ben Enan.
[30]His company, their register: 53,400.
[31]The entire register of Dan's camp: 157,600.
They're to move on last, by their standards.

[32]This was the register of the Yisra'elites by their ancestral households. The entire register of the camps by their companies: 603,550. [33]The Levites were not registered among the Yisra'elites, as Yahweh ordered Mosheh.
[34]So the Yisra'elites acted in accordance with all that Yahweh ordered Mosheh. In this way they camped by their standards and in this way they moved on, each by his kin-group according to his ancestral household.

Yahweh's claim on Levi

3 These are Aharon's and Mosheh's lines of descent on the day Yahweh spoke with Mosheh at Mount Sinay. [2]These are the names of Aharon's sons: the firstborn Nadab, and Abihu, El'azar and Itamar. [3]These are the names of Aharon's sons, the anointed priests whom he commissioned to act as priests. [4]Nadab and Abihu died before Yahweh when they presented outside fire before Yahweh in the Sinay Wilderness. They didn't have sons, so El'azar and Itamar acted as priests in the presence of Aharon their father.
[5]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [6]'Present the clan of Levi and have them stand before Aharon the priest to minister to him. [7]They're to keep his charge and the charge of the entire assembly before the appointment tent by performing the service of the dwelling. [8]They're to keep all the articles in the appointment tent, the Yisra'elites' charge, by performing the service of the dwelling. [9]You're to give the Levites to Aharon and to his sons; they're wholly given to him from among the Yisra'elites. [10]Aharon and his sons you're to appoint to keep watch over their priestly work; the outsider who comes near is to be put to death.'
[11]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [12]'Here, I myself have taken the Levites from among the Yisra'elites in place of every firstborn, the one who opens the womb, from the Yisra'elites. The Levites are to be mine, [13]because every firstborn is mine. On the day I struck down every firstborn in the country of Misrayim I made sacred for me every firstborn in Yisra'el, human and animal. They're mine. I am Yahweh.'
[14]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh in the Sinay Wilderness: [15]'Register the Levites by their ancestral households, by their kin-groups. Every male from the age of one month and upwards, you're to register them.' [16]So Mosheh registered them at Yahweh's bidding, as he was ordered. [17]These were Levi's sons by their names: Gershon, Qehat and Merari. [18]These were the names of Gershon's sons by their kin-groups: Libni and Shim'i; [19]Qehat's sons by their kin-groups: Amram and Yitshar, Hebron and Uzzi'el; [20a]Merari's sons by their kin-groups: Mahli and Mushi.

Levi's kin-groups

[20b]These were Levi's kin-groups by their ancestral households.

[21]Gershon's:
the Libnite kin-group and the Shim'ite kin-group: they were the Gershonite kin-groups.
[22]Their register by number, every male from the age of one month and upwards – their register: 7,500.
[23]The Gershonite kin-groups were to camp behind the dwelling, to the west.
[24]The leader of the Gershonite ancestral household was El'asaph ben La'el.
[25]The Gershonites' charge in the appointment tent: the dwelling and the tent, its covering, the curtain for the entrance of the appointment tent, [26]the courtyard hangings, the curtain for the entrance of the courtyard which is next to the dwelling and next

to the altar all round, and its ropes, in respect of its entire service.

[27]Qehat's:
the Amramite kin-group, the Yitsharite kin-group, the Hebronite kin-group and the Uzzi'elite kin-group: they were the Qehatite kin-groups.
[28]By the number of every male from the age of one month and upwards: 8,600, keeping the charge of the sacred things.
[29]The kin-groups of the Qehatites were to camp on the side of the dwelling to the south.
[30]The leader of the ancestral household of the Qehatite kin goups was Elitsaphan ben Uzzi'el.
[31]Their charge: the chest, the table, the candelabrum, the altars, the sacred articles with which people would minister, the curtain and its entire service.
[32]The senior Levite leader, El'azar ben Aharon the priest: appointment over the people who keep the charge of the sacred things.

[33]Merari's:
the Mahlite kin-group and the Mushite kin-group: they were the Merarite kin-groups.
[34]Their register by number, every male from the age of one month and upwards: 6,200.
[35]The leader of the ancestral household of the Mararite kin-groups: Tsuri'el ben Abihayil.
They were to camp on the side of the dwelling to the north.
[36]The appointment regarding the charge of the Merarites: the dwelling's planks, its bars, its posts, its sockets, all its articles and all its service; [37]and the courtyard posts all round, their sockets, their pegs and their ropes.

The count of the firstborn

[38]The people camping before the dwelling, in front, before the appointment tent, to the east: Mosheh and Aharon and his sons, having charge of the sanctuary in connection with the Yisra'elites' charge (an outsider who drew near was to be put to death). [39]The entire register of the Levites, which Mosheh and Aharon made at Yahweh's bidding, by their kin-groups, every male from the age of one month and upwards: 22,000.
[40]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Register every firstborn male belonging to the Yisra'elites from the age of one month and upwards and get the number of their names; [41]and take the Levites for me (I am Yahweh) in place of every firstborn among the Yisra'elites, and the Levites' animals in place of every firstborn among the Yisra'elites' animals.' [42]So Mosheh registered, as Yahweh ordered him, every firstborn among the Yisra'elites. [43]Every firstborn male by the number of the names from the age of one month and upwards, by their register: 22,273.
[44]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [45]'Take the Levites in place of every firstborn among the Yisra'elites, and the Levites' animals in place of their animals. The Levites are to be mine. I am Yahweh. [46]As the redemption price for the 273 from the firstborn of the Yisra'elites who are surplus, above and beyond the Levites: [47]you're to take five sheqels each per head. You're to take it by the sanctuary sheqel (a sheqel is twenty grams). [48]You're to give the silver to Aharon and to his sons as the redemption price for those who are surplus among them.'
[49]So Mosheh took the redemption silver from those who were surplus, above and beyond those redeemed by the Levites. [50]From the firstborn of the Yisra'elites he took the 1,365 by the sanctuary sheqel, [51]and Mosheh gave the redemption silver to Aharon and to his sons at Yahweh's bidding, as Yahweh ordered Mosheh.

Dismantling the camp

4 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh and Aharon: [2]'Take a head count of the Qehatites from among the Levites, by their kin-groups, by their ancestral household, [3]from the age of thirty years and upwards until the age of fifty years, everyone coming in for duty to do work in the appointment tent. [4]This is the service of the Qehatites in the appointment tent: the especially sacred things.
[5]Aharon and his sons are to come in when the camp is setting off, take down the screen curtain and cover the affirmation chest with it. [6]They're to put a dolphin-skin covering on it, spread an all-blue cloth on top and place its poles. [7]Over the presence table they're to spread a blue cloth and put on it the dishes, the ladles, the pitchers and the libation bowls; and the regular bread is to be on it. [8]They're to spread over them a bright crimson cloth, cover it with a dolphin-skin covering and place its poles.
[9]They're to get a blue cloth and cover the candelabrum for lighting, its lamps, its tongs, its pans and all its oil containers with which they minister to it. [10]They're to put it and all its articles into a dolphin skin covering and put them on a frame. [11]Over the gold altar they're to spread a blue cloth, cover it with a dolphin-skin covering and place its poles.

The need to be wary

[12]They're to get all the articles for the ministry in which they minister in the sacred place, put them into a blue cloth, cover them with a dolphin-skin covering and put them on a frame. [13]They're to clear the altar of waste and spread on it a purple cloth. [14]They're to put on it all the utensils with which they minister on it, the pans, the forks, the shovels and the basins, all the altar's utensils, spread over it a dolphin-skin covering and place its poles.
[15]Aharon and his sons are to finish covering the sacred things and all the sacred articles when the camp is moving on, and after that the Qehatites are to come in to carry them. They will not touch the sacred things, and die. These things are for carrying by the Qehatites, in the appointment tent.

[16]The appointment of El'azar ben Aharon the priest: the lighting oil, the aromatic incense, the regular grain offering and the anointing oil; appointment over the entire dwelling and everything that's in it – the sacred place and its articles.'
[17]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh and to Aharon: [18]'Don't let the clan of Qehatite kin-groups be cut off from among the Levites. [19]Do this for them, and they will live and not die when they come up to the things that are especially sacred. Aharon and his sons are to go in and place each individual over his service, for his carrying. [20]But they're not to come in to look as people are demolishing the sacred place, and die.'

The Gershonites and the Merarites

[21]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [22]'Take a head count of the Gershonites, them too, by their ancestral household, by their kin-groups. [23]From the age of thirty years and upwards to the age of fifty years you're to register them, everyone coming in to do duty by performing service in the appointment tent. [24]This is the service of the Gershonite kin-groups in serving and in carrying: [25]they're to carry the pieces of the dwelling, the appointment tent and its covering, the dolphin-skin covering that's on it, on top, the curtain for the appointment tent entrance, [26]the courtyard hangings, the curtain for the entrance of the courtyard gateway which is next to the dwelling and next to the altar all round, its ropes, all the articles in their service and everything that's done in connection with them; so they will serve.
[27]It's at the bidding of Aharon and his sons that all the Gershonites' service is to happen, as regards all their carrying and as regards all their service. You're to appoint them over them in having charge of all their carrying. [28]This is the service of the Gershonites' kin-groups in the appointment tent and their charge at the direction of Itamar ben Aharon the priest.
[29]The Merarites: you're to register them by their kin-groups, by their ancestral household. [30]From the age of thirty years and upwards until the age of fifty years you're to register them, everyone coming in for duty, to perform the service of the appointment tent. [31]This is their charge in their carrying, in connection with all their service in the appointment tent: the dwelling's planks, its bars, its posts, its sockets, [32]the courtyard's posts all round, their sockets, their pegs and their ropes. For all their articles and for all their service and by their names you're to register the articles in their charge, their carrying. [33]These are the service of the Merarite kin-groups as regards all their service in the appointment tent at the direction of Itamar ben Aharon the priest.'

The register of the Levite kin-groups

[34]So Mosheh, Aharon and the assembly's leaders registered the Qehatites by their kin-groups and by their ancestral household, [35]from the age of thirty years and upwards until the age of fifty years, everyone coming in for duty for service in the appointment tent. [36]Their register by their kin-groups was 2,750. [37]This was the register of the Qehatite kin-groups, everyone serving in the appointment tent, which Mosheh and Aharon made at Yahweh's bidding through Mosheh.
[38]The register of the Gershonites by their kin-groups and by their ancestral household, [39]from the age of thirty years and upwards until the age of fifty years, everyone coming in for duty for service in the appointment tent: [40]their register by their kin-groups, by their ancestral household, was 2,630. [41]This was the register of the kin-groups of the Gershonites, everyone serving in the appointment tent, which Mosheh and Aharon made at Yahweh's bidding.
[42]The register of the kin-groups of the Merarites by their kin-groups, by their ancestral household, [43]from the age of thirty years and upwards until the age of fifty years, everyone coming for duty for service in the appointment tent: [44]their register by their kin-groups was 3,200. [45]This was the register of the kin-groups of the Merarites, which Mosheh and Aharon made at Yahweh's bidding through Mosheh.
[46]The entire register that Mosheh and Aharon and the Yisra'elite leaders made, the Levites by their kin-groups and by their ancestral household, [47]from the age of thirty years and upwards until the age of fifty years, everyone coming in to serve (the service of serving and the service of carrying) in the appointment tent: [48]their register was 5,580. [49]At Yahweh's bidding they registered them through Mosheh, each individual according to his service and to his carrying, his register that Yahweh ordered Mosheh.

Breaking faith

5 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]'Order the Yisra'elites that they send off from the camp anyone who's been made scaly, anyone who's discharging and anyone who's taboo through a [dead] person. [3]Male and female, you're to send them off. You're to send them off outside the camp so they won't make taboo the camp of the people among whom I'm dwelling.' [4]The Yisra'elites did so; they sent them off outside the camp. As Yahweh spoke to Mosheh, so the Yisra'elites did.
[5]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [6]'Speak to the Yisra'elites: if a man or a woman does one of all the things that are wrong to a human being, thus breaking faith with Yahweh, the person is liable. [7]They're to confess their wrong that they did. He's to make reparation for its sum total, add to it a fifth of it and give it to the person to whom he's liable. [8]If the person doesn't have a restorer to make reparation to, the reparation that's made belongs to Yahweh, to the priest, in addition to the ram of complete expiation with which he makes expiation for him.
[9]Every contribution in connection with all the sacred things belonging to the Yisra'elites that they present to the priest is to be his. [10]Each one, his sacred things are to be his; what the person gives the priest is to be his.'

Breaking faith in the context of marriage

[11]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [12]‘Speak to the Yisra’elites: “When an individual’s wife goes off and breaks faith with him, [13]and
someone has slept with her and they had sex but it was concealed from the eyes of her husband and she’s kept it secret, but she
has made herself taboo but there’s no witness against her and she was not caught, [14]but a jealous spirit has come over him and
he’s become jealous in respect of his wife when she has made herself taboo; or a jealous spirit has come over him and he’s
become jealous in respect of his wife when she hasn’t made herself taboo: [15]the man is to bring his wife to the priest, and to bring
as an offering for her a tenth of a barrel of barley flour; he will not pour oil on it and he will not put frankincense on it, because
it’s a grain offering of jealousy, a grain offering of mindfulness, which makes someone mindful of waywardness.
[16]The priest is to present her and get her to stand before Yahweh. [17]The priest is to get sacred water in a clay container. The
priest is to get some of the earth that’s on the dwelling floor and the priest is to put it in the water. [18]The priest is to get the woman
to stand before Yahweh and to bare the woman’s head and put on her palms the grain offering of mindfulness, the grain offering
of jealousy. In the priest’s hand is to be the bitter water that brings a curse. [19]The priest is to get her to swear: he’s to say to the
woman, ‘If no one has slept with you, and if you haven’t gone off in taboo while married to your husband, you can be free of guilt
from this bitter water that brings a curse.

A spirit of jealousy

[20]But you: when you’ve gone off while married to your husband and you’ve made yourself taboo, and a man other than your
husband has had sex with you [21](the priest is to get the woman to swear the avowed oath, and the priest is to say to the woman),
may Yahweh make you a vow and an oath among your people, when Yahweh makes your thigh fall and your womb swell. [22]May
this water that brings a curse come into your insides so as to make your womb swell and your thigh fall.’ And the woman is to
say, ‘Yes, yes’. [23]The priest is to write these vows on a document and wipe them off into the bitter water, [24]and get the woman to
drink the bitter water that brings a curse, so the water that brings a curse may come into her, becoming bitter.
[25]The priest is to get from the woman’s hand the grain offering of jealousy, lift up the grain offering before Yahweh and present
it at the altar. [26]The priest is to scoop the commemorative portion from the grain offering and turn it into smoke at the altar.
Afterwards, he’s to get the woman to drink the water.
[27]When he’s got her to drink the water, if she’s made herself taboo and broken faith with her husband, the water that brings a
curse, becoming bitter, will come into her, her womb will swell and her thigh fall, and the woman will become the exemplar for a
vow among her people. [28]But if she hasn’t made herself taboo and she’s pure, she’ll be free of guilt and she’ll be fruitful.
[29]This is the instruction regarding incidences of jealousy, when a woman goes off while married to her husband and becomes
taboo, [30]or a jealous spirit comes over a man and he becomes jealous in respect of his wife and gets the woman to stand before
Yahweh and the priest acts on this entire instruction toward her. [31]The man will be free of guilt for waywardness when that
woman carries her waywardness.”’

The Nazirite pledge

6 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]‘Speak to the Yisra’elites: “When a man or woman makes himself distinct to make a pledge as a
consecrated person, to be consecrated for Yahweh, [3]he’s to stay consecrated from wine and liquor. He will not drink wine
vinegar or liquor vinegar, he will not drink grape juice and he will not eat grapes, fresh or dried. [4]All the time of his consecration
he will not eat anything that’s made from the grapevine, either seeds or skin.
[5]All the time of his consecration pledge, no razor will pass over his head; until the fulfilling of the time that he is consecrated
for Yahweh, he’s to be sacred, growing the locks of the hair of his head. [6]All the time of his being consecrated for Yahweh he will
not come in to a dead person. [7]For his father and for his mother, for his brother and for his sister: he will not make himself taboo
for them when they die, because his consecration for his God is on his head. [8]All the time of his consecration, he’s sacred for
Yahweh.
[9]When someone does die near him suddenly, unexpectedly, and makes the head of his consecration taboo, he’s to shave his
head on the day he becomes pure. He’s to shave it on the seventh day, [10]and on the eighth day he’s to bring two doves or two
young pigeons to the priest at the entrance of the appointment tent. [11]The priest is to make one into a decontamination and one
into a burnt offering, and he’s to make expiation for him for the wrongdoing in connection with the [dead] person. On that day
he’s to make his head sacred [12]and put into effect his time of consecration for Yahweh. He’s to bring a year-old lamb as a
reparation. The previous time will fall away, because his consecration became taboo.

Yahweh bless you and keep you

[13]This is the instruction for the consecrated person. On the day of the fulfilling of his consecration time, they’re to bring him to
the entrance of the appointment tent. [14]He’s to bring as his offering for Yahweh a year-old lamb, one that’s whole, as a burnt
offering; a year-old ewe, one that’s whole, as a decontamination; a ram, one that’s whole, as a well-being sacrifice; [15]a basket of
flatbread made from fine flour, loaves mixed with oil; flat wafers spread with oil; their grain offering; and their libations.
[16]The priest is to present them before Yahweh, make the decontamination and its burnt offering, [17]and make the ram a well-
being sacrifice for Yahweh, along with the basket of flatbread. The priest is to make its grain offering and its libation. [18]The
consecrated person is to shave the head of his consecration at the entrance of the appointment tent. He’s to get the hair from the
head of his consecration and put it on the fire that’s under the well-being sacrifice.
[19]The priest is to get the ram’s shoulder, boiled, a loaf of flatbread from the basket and a flat wafer, and put them on the palms
of the consecrated person, after his shaving of his consecration. [20]The priest is to elevate them as an elevation offering before

Yahweh. It's sacred for the priest, along with the breast of the elevation offering and along with the thigh of the contribution. Afterwards, the consecrated person may drink wine.
[21]This is the instruction concerning the consecrated person. Someone who pledges his offering to Yahweh along with his consecration, apart from what his means stretch to: on the basis of his pledge, that which he pledges, so he's to do, along with the instruction for his consecration."'
[22]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [23]'Speak to Aharon and to his sons: "In this way you're to bless the Yisra'elites, saying to them:

[24]Yahweh bless you and keep you!
[25]Yahweh shine his face towards you and be gracious to you!
[26]Yahweh lift his face towards you and make things be well for you!

[27]They're to put my name on the Yisra'elites so I myself bless them."'

Provision for the sanctuary

7 On the day Mosheh finished setting up the dwelling, he anointed it and made it sacred with all its articles, and the altar with all its articles – he anointed them and made them sacred. [2]The Yisra'elite leaders, the heads of their ancestral household (they were the leaders of the clans, who stood over their register) presented [3]and brought their offering before Yahweh: six covered wagons and twelve cattle, a wagon for two leaders and an ox for each. They presented them before the dwelling, [4]and Yahweh said to Mosheh, [5]'Receive them from them so they can perform service for the appointment tent, and give them to the Levites, each on the basis of his service.'
[6]So Mosheh received the wagons and the cattle, and gave them to the Levites. [7]Two wagons and four cattle he gave to the Gershonites on the basis of their service. [8]Four wagons and eight cattle he gave to the Merarites on the basis of their service, at the direction of Itamar ben Aharon the priest. [9]To the Qehatites he didn't give any, because the service of the sanctuary was upon them; they would carry it on their shoulder. [10]The leaders presented the altar's dedication gift on the day it was anointed. When the leaders presented their offering before the altar, [11]Yahweh said to Mosheh: 'One leader each day, they're to present their offering for the altar dedication.'

Offerings by Yehudah, Yissakar, Zebulun

[12]The one who presented his offering on the first day was Nahshon ben Amminadab, of the clan of Yehudah. [13]His offering: a silver dish, its weight 130 sheqels; a silver basin, seventy sheqels by the sanctuary sheqel; the two of them full of fine flour mixed with oil, for a grain offering; [14]a gold ladle of ten sheqels, full of incense; [15]a bull from the herd; a ram; a year-old lamb as a burnt offering; [16]a he-goat from the flock as a decontamination; [17]and as a well-being sacrifice, two cattle, five rams, five he-goats, five year-old lambs. This was the offering of Nahshon ben Amminadab.
[18]On the second day, Netan'el ben Tsu'ar, leader of Yissakar, presented. [19]He presented as his offering a silver dish, its weight 130 sheqels; a silver basin, seventy sheqels by the sanctuary sheqel; the two of them full of fine flour mixed with oil, for a grain offering; [20]a gold ladle of ten sheqels, full of incense; [21]a bull from the herd; a ram; a year-old lamb as a burnt offering; [22]a he-goat from the flock as a decontamination; [23]and as a well-being sacrifice, two cattle, five rams, five he-goats, five year-old lambs. This was the offering of Netan'el ben Tsu'ar.
[24]On the third day, the leader of the Zebulunites, Eli'ab ben Helon. [25]His offering: a silver dish, its weight 130 sheqels; a silver basin, seventy sheqels by the sanctuary sheqel; the two of them full of fine flour mixed with oil, for a grain offering; [26]a gold ladle of ten sheqels, full of incense; [27]a bull from the herd; a ram; a year-old lamb as a burnt offering; [28]a he-goat from the flock as a decontamination; [29]and as a well-being sacrifice, two cattle, five rams, five he-goats, five year-old lambs. This was the offering of Eli'ab ben Helon.

Offerings by Re'uben, Shim'on, Gad

[30]On the fourth day, the leader of the Re'ubenites, Elitsur ben Shede'ur. [31]His offering: a silver dish, its weight 130 sheqels; a silver basin, seventy sheqels by the sanctuary sheqel; the two of them full of fine flour mixed with oil, for a grain offering; [32]a gold ladle of ten sheqels, full of incense; [33]a bull from the herd; a ram; a year-old lamb as a burnt offering; [34]a he-goat from the flock as a decontamination; [35]and as a well-being sacrifice, two cattle, five rams, five he-goats, five year-old lambs. This was the offering of Elitsur ben Shede'ur.
[36]On the fifth day, the leader of the Shim'onites, Shelumi'el ben Tsurishadday. [37]His offering: a silver dish, its weight 130 sheqels; a silver basin, seventy sheqels by the sanctuary sheqel; the two of them full of fine flour mixed with oil, for a grain offering; [38]a gold ladle of ten sheqels, full of incense; [39]a bull from the herd; a ram; a year-old lamb as a burnt offering; [40]a he-goat from the flock as a decontamination; [41]and as a well-being sacrifice, two cattle, five rams, five he-goats, five year-old lambs. This was the offering of Shelumi'el ben Tsurishadday.
[42]On the sixth day, the leader of the Gadites, Elyasaph ben De'u'el. [43]His offering: a silver dish, its weight 130 sheqels; a silver basin, seventy sheqels by the sanctuary sheqel; the two of them full of fine flour mixed with oil, for a grain offering; [44]a gold ladle of ten sheqels, full of incense; [45]a bull from the herd; a ram; a year-old lamb as a burnt offering; [46]a he-goat from the flock as a decontamination; [47]and as a well-being sacrifice, two cattle, five rams, five he-goats, five year-old lambs. This was the offering of Elyasaph ben De'u'el.

Offerings by Ephrayim, Menashsheh, Binyamin

[48]On the seventh day, the leader of the Ephrayimites, Elishama ben Ammihud. [49]His offering: a silver dish, its weight 130 sheqels; a silver basin, seventy sheqels by the sanctuary sheqel; the two of them full of fine flour mixed with oil, for a grain offering; [50]a gold ladle of ten sheqels, full of incense; [51]a bull from the herd; a ram; a year-old lamb as a burnt offering; [52]a he-goat from the flock as a decontamination; [53]and as a well-being sacrifice, two cattle, five rams, five he-goats, five year-old lambs. This was the offering of Elishama ben Ammihud.

[54]On the eighth day, the leader of the Menashshites, Gamli'el ben Pedah-tsur. [55]His offering: a silver dish, its weight 130 sheqels; a silver basin, seventy sheqels by the sanctuary sheqel; the two of them full of fine flour mixed with oil, for a grain offering; [56]a gold ladle of ten sheqels, full of incense; [57]a bull from the herd; a ram; a year-old lamb as a burnt offering; [58]a he-goat from the flock as a decontamination; [59]and as a well-being sacrifice, two cattle, five rams, five he-goats, five year-old lambs. This was the offering of Gamli'el ben Pedah-tsur.

[60]On the ninth day, the leader of the Binyaminites, Abidan ben Gid'oni. [61]His offering: a silver dish, its weight 130 sheqels; a silver basin, seventy sheqels by the sacred sheqel; the two of them full of fine flour mixed with oil, for a grain offering; [62]a gold ladle of ten sheqels, full of incense; [63]a bull from the herd; a ram; a year-old lamb as a burnt offering; [64]a he-goat from the flock as a decontamination; [65]and as a well-being sacrifice, two cattle, five rams, five he-goats, five year-old lambs. This was the offering of Abidan ben Gid'oni.

Offerings by Dan, Asher, Naphtali

[66]On the tenth day, the leader of the Danites, Ahi'ezer ben Ammishadday. [67]His offering: a silver dish, its weight 130 sheqels; a silver basin, seventy sheqels by the sanctuary sheqel; the two of them full of fine flour mixed with oil, for a grain offering; [68]a gold ladle of ten sheqels, full of incense; [69]a bull from the herd; a ram; a year-old lamb as a burnt offering; [70]a he-goat from the flock as a decontamination; [71]and as a well-being sacrifice, two cattle, five rams, five he-goats, five year-old lambs. This was the offering of Ahi'ezer ben Ammishadday.

[72]On the eleventh day, the leader of the Asherites, Pag'i'el ben Okran. [73]His offering: a silver dish, its weight 130 sheqels; a silver basin, seventy sheqels by the sanctuary sheqel; the two of them full of fine flour mixed with oil, for a grain offering; [74]a gold ladle of ten sheqels, full of incense; [75]a bull from the herd; a ram; a year-old lamb as a burnt offering; [76]a he-goat from the flock as a decontamination; [77]and as a well-being sacrifice, two cattle, five rams, five he-goats, five year-old lambs. This was the offering of Pag'i'el ben Okran.

[78]On the twelfth day, the leader of the Naphtalites, Ahira ben Enan. [79]His offering: a silver dish, its weight 130 sheqels; a silver basin, seventy sheqels by the sanctuary sheqel; the two of them full of fine flour mixed with oil, for a grain offering; [80]a gold ladle of ten sheqels, full of incense; [81]a bull from the herd; a ram; a year-old lamb as a burnt offering; [82]a he-goat from the flock as a decontamination; [83]and as a well-being sacrifice, two cattle, five rams, five he-goats, five year-old lambs. This was the offering of Ahira ben Enan.

Mosheh heard God speak

[84]This was the altar's dedication gift on the day of its anointing, from Yisra'el's leaders: silver dishes, twelve; silver basins, twelve; gold ladles, twelve; [85]130 sheqels of silver for each dish; seventy sheqels for each basin; all the silver of the containers, 2,400 sanctuary sheqels; [86]twelve gold ladles full of incense (ten sheqels each ladle by the sanctuary sheqel); all the gold of the ladles, 120 sheqels.

[87]All the herd for the burnt offering, twelve bulls; rams, twelve; year-old lambs, twelve (and their grain offering); he-goats from the flock, twelve, as a decontamination. [88]All the herd for the well-being sacrifice: twenty-four bulls; rams: sixty; he-goats: sixty; year-old lambs: sixty. This was the altar's dedication gift after its anointing.

[89]When Mosheh came into the appointment tent to speak with him, he heard the voice speaking to him from above the expiation cover that was on the affirmation chest, from between the two sphinxes. He spoke to him.

8 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]'Speak to Aharon: "When you put up the lamps, the seven lamps are to give light near the front of the candelabrum."' [3]Aharon did so. He put up its lamps near the front of the candelabrum, as Yahweh ordered Mosheh. [4]This was the workmanship of the candelabrum: it was hammered work of gold, hammered work from its base to its petal. In accordance with the picture that Yahweh had let Mosheh see, so he made the candelabrum.

The dedication of the Levites

[5]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [6]'Get the Levites from among the Yisra'elites and purify them. [7]You're to do this to them to purify them. Spatter decontamination water on them, and they are to pass a razor over their entire flesh and wash their clothes, and they'll become pure. [8]They're to get a bull from the herd and its grain offering, fine flour mixed with oil, and you're to get a second bull from the herd as a decontamination.

[9]You're to present the Levites before the appointment tent and congregate the entire assembly of the Yisra'elites, [10]and present the Levites before Yahweh. The Yisra'elites are to lean their hands on the Levites, [11]and Aharon is to elevate the Levites as an elevation offering before Yahweh from the Yisra'elites, so they may be there to perform service for Yahweh. [12]The Levites are to lean their hands on the bulls' head. Make one as a decontamination and one as a burnt offering for Yahweh, to make expiation for the Levites.

[13]You're to get the Levites to stand before Aharon and before his sons and elevate them as an elevation offering for Yahweh.

[14]You're to make the Levites distinct from among the Yisra'elites. The Levites are to be mine. [15]Afterwards, the Levites are to
come to serve the appointment tent. You're to purify them and elevate them as an elevation offering, [16]because they're irrevocably
given to me from among the Yisra'elites in place of the first issue of every womb, the firstborn of every one of the Yisra'elites.
I've taken them for myself. [17]Because every firstborn among the Yisra'elites is mine, of human beings and of animals.
On the day I struck down every firstborn in the country of Misrayim, I made them sacred for myself. [18]I've taken the Levites in
place of every firstborn of the Yisra'elites, [19]and given the Levites irrevocably to Aharon and to his sons from among the
Yisra'elites to perform the Yisra'elites' service in the appointment tent and to make expiation for the Yisra'elites, so no epidemic
will come on the Yisra'elites through the Yisra'elites' coming up to the sanctuary.'

The Levites' service and semi-retirement

[20]Mosheh, Aharon and the entire Yisra'elite assembly acted towards the Levites in accordance with all that Yahweh ordered
Mosheh for the Levites. The Yisra'elites did so for them. [21]The Levites decontaminated themselves and washed their clothes, and
Aharon elevated them as an elevation offering before Yahweh, and made expiation for them to purify them. [22]Afterwards the
Levites came to perform their services in the appointment tent before Aharon and before his sons. As Yahweh ordered Mosheh
concerning the Levites, so they did for them.
[23]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [24]'This is how it is to be for the Levites. From the age of twenty-five years and upwards they're to
come to do duty in the service of the appointment tent. [25]From the age of fifty years they're to go back from the duty of service.
They will not serve any more. [26]One may minister to his brothers in the appointment tent by keeping watch, but they will not
perform service. Thus you will do for the Levites regarding their charge.
9 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh in the Sinay Wilderness in the second year of their getting out of the country of Misrayim, in the
first month: [2]'The Yisra'elites are to make the Pesah [Passover] at its set time. [3]You're to make it on the fourteenth day of
this month at twilight, at its set time in accordance with all its decrees and in accordance with all it rulings.' [4]So Mosheh spoke to
the Yisra'elites about making the Pesah [5]and they made the Pesah in the first [month], on the fourteenth day of the month, at
twilight, in the Sinay Wilderness. In accordance with all that Yahweh ordered Mosheh, so the Yisra'elites did.

God's flexibility

[6]There were some men who were taboo through a [dead] person and couldn't make the Pesah on that day, so they drew near
before Mosheh and before Aharon on that day. [7]Those men said to him, 'Though we're taboo through a [dead] person, why
should we hold back from presenting Yahweh's offering at its set time among the Yisra'elites?' [8]Mosheh said to them 'Wait so I
can listen to what Yahweh orders for you.'
[9]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [10]'Speak to the Yisra'elites: "When an individual person becomes taboo through a [dead] person or
is on a long journey (one of you or of your future generations) and he makes Pesah for Yahweh, [11]they're to make it in the second
month on the fourteenth day at twilight. With flatbread and bitters they're to eat it. [12]They will not let any of it remain until
morning and they will not break a bone of it: in accordance with every decree for the Pesah they will make it. [13]But the individual
who is pure or hasn't been on a journey and leaves off from making the Pesah: that person shall be cut off from his kin, because
he didn't present Yahweh's offering at its set time. That individual will carry his wrongdoing.
[14]When someone is a resident with you and makes the Pesah for Yahweh: in accordance with the decree for the Pesah and in
accordance with the ruling concerning it, so he is to make it. There's to be one decree for you, both for the resident and for the
native of the country."'

The prompting of the cloud

[15]On the day they set up the dwelling, the cloud covered the dwelling belonging to the affirmation tent. In the evening it would
be over the dwelling, like the appearance of fire, until morning. [16]So it would be regularly: the cloud would cover it, with the
appearance of fire at night. [17]At the bidding of the cloud lifting from over the tent, after this the Yisra'elites would move on, while
at the place where the cloud would dwell, there the Yisra'elites would camp. [18]At Yahweh's bidding the Yisra'elites would move
on, and at Yahweh's bidding they would camp; through the entire time the cloud would dwell over the dwelling, they would
camp.
[19]When the cloud stayed over the dwelling for a long time, the Yisra'elites would keep Yahweh's charge and not move on.
[20]When it was the case that the cloud would be over the dwelling for a period of time, at Yahweh's bidding they would camp and
at Yahweh's bidding they would move on. [21]When it was the case that the cloud was there from evening to morning, as the cloud
lifted in the morning they would move on. Day or night, when the cloud would lift, they would move on.
[22]Whether two days or a month or some time, while the cloud stayed over the dwelling so as to dwell over it, the Yisra'elites
would camp and would not move on, and when it went up they would move on. [23]At Yahweh's bidding they would camp and at
Yahweh's bidding they would move on. They kept Yahweh's charge at Yahweh's bidding through Mosheh.

The signal for the journey

10 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]'Make for yourself two silver trumpets. You're to make them of hammered work and they will
be for you for the calling of the assembly and for the camps' moving on. [3]They will sound out on them, and the entire
assembly is to keep an appointment with you at the entrance of the appointment tent [4](if they sound out on one, the leaders – the

heads of the Yisra'elite divisions – are to keep an appointment with you). [5]You will sound a blast, and the camps that are to the east are to move on. [6]You will sound a second blast, and the camps that are to the south are to move on. They will sound a blast for their setting out. [7]When you call for them as a congregation, you will sound out but you won't give a blast. [8]It will be Aharon's sons, the priests, who blow on the trumpets. They will be for you a permanent decree through your generations.

[9]When you come in battle in your country against someone who attacks you, you're to give a blast on the trumpets so you may be remembered before Yahweh your God and be delivered from your enemies. [10]On your day of celebration, at your set times and at the beginning of your months, you're to sound out on the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over your well-being sacrifices. They will be for you a reminder before your God. I am Yahweh your God.'

[11]In the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth of the month, the cloud went up from above the affirmation dwelling [12]and the Yisra'elites moved on into their journeys from the Sinay Wilderness. Then the cloud dwelt in the Pa'ran Wilderness.

The order of the march

[13]They moved on at the beginning at Yahweh's bidding through Mosheh. [14]At the beginning the Yehudahites' standard moved on by their companies. Over its company was Nahshon ben Amminadab. [15]Over the company of the Yissakarites' clan was Netan'el ben Tsu'ar. [16]Over the company of the Zebulunites' clan was Eli'ab ben Helon. [17]The dwelling would be taken down and the Gershonites and the Merarites (who carried the dwelling) would move on.

[18]The standard of Re'uben's camp would move on by their companies. Over its company was Elitsur ben Shede'ur. [19]Over the company of the Shim'onites' clan was Shelumi'el ben Tsuri Shadday. [20]Over the company of the Gadites' clan was Elyasaph ben De'u'el. [21]The Qehatites (who carried the sanctuary) would move on; people would set up the dwelling for when they came.

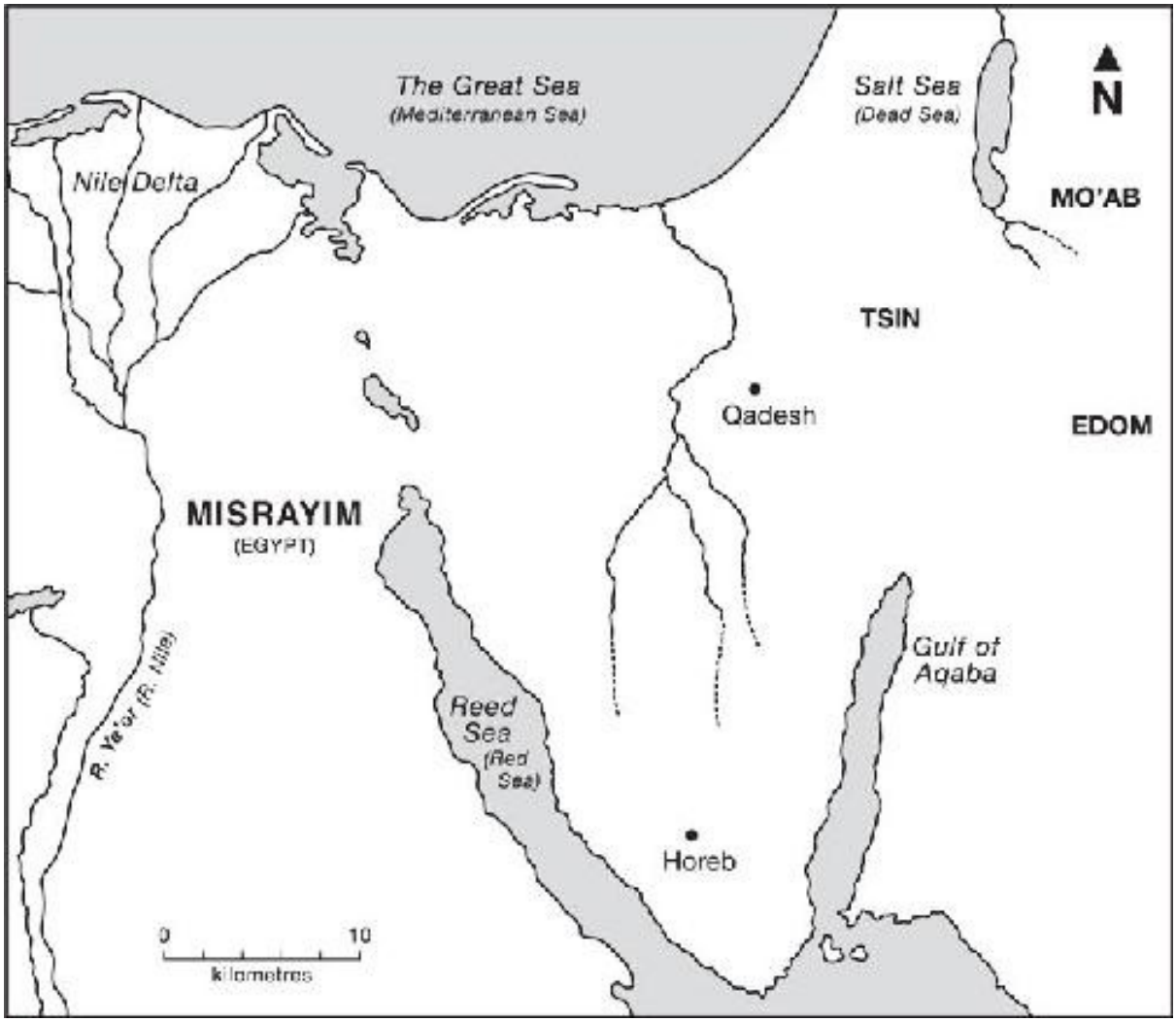
[22]The standard of the Ephrayimites' camp would move on by their companies. Over its company was Elishama ben Ammihud. [23]Over the company of the Menashshites' clan was Gamli'el ben Pedah-tsur. [24]Over the company of the Binyaminites' clan was Abidan ben Gid'oni.

[25]The standard of the Danites' camp would move on, bringing up the rear for all the camps by their companies. Over its company was Ahi'ezer ben Ammi Shadday. [26]Over the company of the Asherites' clan was Pag'i'el ben Okran. [27]Over the company of the Naphtalites' clan was Ahira ben Enan.

[28]These were the Yisra'elites' ways of moving on by their companies. So they moved on.

[29]Mosheh said to Hobab ben Re'u'el the Midyanite, Mosheh's father-in-law, 'We're moving on to the place of which Yahweh said, "I shall give it to you." Go with us and we'll bring good to you, because Yahweh has spoken of good things for Yisra'el.' [30]He said to him, 'I won't go. Instead I'll go to my country, to my homeland.'

[31]He said, 'Please don't abandon us, because of this: you know where we can camp in the wilderness. You will be our eyes. [32]Because you go with us, that good that Yahweh brings with us we'll bring to you.'



Numbers 10: The wilderness

On missing garlic

[33]They moved on from Yahweh's mountain three days' journey, with Yahweh's pact chest moving on before them on the three days' journey to investigate a place to settle down for them, [34]and with Yahweh's cloud over them by day as they moved on from the camp. [35]When the chest moved on, Mosheh said:

Up, Yahweh, so your enemies disperse,
so the people who are hostile to you flee from before you!

[36]When it halted, he would say:

Go back, Yahweh,
to the countless thousands of Yisra'el!

11 But the people became veritable complainers in Yahweh's ears about their bad fortune. Yahweh heard, and his anger raged. Yahweh's fire burned up among them and devoured the edge of the camp. [2]The people cried out to Mosheh and Mosheh pleaded with Yahweh, and the fire died down. [3]They named that place Tab'erah ['Burning'] because Yahweh's fire had burned up among them.

[4]Now the other people that they had collected, who were among them, were full of longing, and the Yisra'elites also again wailed and said, 'If only someone would give us meat to eat! [5]We remember the fish that we could eat in Misrayim for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions and the garlic, [6]but now our throats are dry. There isn't anything before our eyes except this *maan*.' [7]The *maan* was like coriander seed; its appearance was like the appearance of resin. [8]The people went about and gathered it, ground it with millstones or pounded it in a mortar, and cooked it in a pot and made it into loaves. Its taste was like the taste of rich cream. [9]When the dew came down on the camp at night, the *maan* would come down on it.

Like a nurse carrying a baby

[10]Mosheh heard the people wailing in their kin-groups, each person at the entrance of his tent. Yahweh's anger raged right up, and it was bad in Mosheh's eyes.
[11]Mosheh said to Yahweh, 'Why have you dealt badly with your servant? Why have I not found grace in your eyes, that you've put the burden of this entire people on me? [12]Am I the one who conceived this entire people or am I the one who gave birth to it, that you should say to me, "Carry it in your arms, as a nurse carries a baby", to the land that you swore to its ancestors? [13]From where could there be meat for me to give to this entire people when they wail at me, saying "Give us meat so we can eat"? [14]I myself can't carry this entire people alone, because it's too heavy for me. [15]If this is how you're dealing with me, if I've found grace in your eyes, please just kill me, so I may not look at my bad fortune.'
[16]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Collect for me seventy individuals from Yisra'el's elders, people of whom you know that they are elders of the people and overseers of it. Get them to the appointment tent so they take their stand there with you. [17]I shall come down and speak with you there, and draw off some of the spirit that's on you and put it on them, so they can carry the burden of the people with you and you won't carry it alone.

Is Yahweh short-handed?

[18]To the people you're to say, "Make yourselves sacred for tomorrow and you will eat meat, because you've been wailing in Yahweh's ears, 'If only someone would give us meat to eat, because it was good for us in Misrayim.' Yahweh will give you meat, and you'll eat. [19]You'll eat not one day and not two days and not five days and not ten days and not twenty days: [20]for a full month, till it comes out of your nose and it's loathsome to you, because you've rejected Yahweh who is among you, and you've wailed before him, saying 'Why oh why did we come out of Misrayim?'"'
[21]Mosheh said, 'The people that I'm in the middle of are 600,000 men on foot. You said, "I'll give them meat to eat for a full month." [22]Can a flock and a herd be slaughtered for them so that one could find it for them? Or can all the fish in the sea be collected for them so that one could find it for them?' [23]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Is Yahweh's hand short? Now you will see whether my affirmation comes about for you or not.'
[24]Mosheh went out and spoke Yahweh's words to the people. He collected seventy individuals from the elders of the people and got them to stand round the tent. [25]Yahweh came down in a cloud and spoke to him, and drew some of the spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy individual elders. When the spirit alighted on them, they prophesied, but they didn't do it again.

If only all Yahweh's people were prophets

[26]Two men remained in the camp. The name of the first was Eldad and the name of the second was Medad. The spirit alighted on them and they were among those written down, but they had not gone out to the tent. They prophesied in the camp. [27]A boy ran and told Mosheh, 'Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.' [28]Yehoshua [Joshua] ben Nun, Mosheh's minister from his youth, answered: 'My lord Mosheh, restrain them!' [29]Mosheh said to him, 'Are you jealous for me? If only all Yahweh's people were prophets, that Yahweh would put his spirit on them!' [30]And Mosheh joined the camp, he and Yisra'el's elders.
[31]Then a wind moved on from Yahweh, brought quail across from the sea and dropped them over the camp, quite a day's journey on one side and quite a day's journey on the other side, all round the camp, and quite a metre deep on the face of the earth. [32]The people set to, all that day and all night and all the next day, and collected the quail. The person who got little collected a hundred barrels. They spread and spread them for themselves all round the camp. [33]But while the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, Yahweh's anger raged against the people, and Yahweh struck the people down in a very great calamity.
[34]They named that place Qibrot Hatta'avah ['Longing Graves'] because they buried there the people who had been longing. [35]From Qibrot Hatta'avah the people moved on to Hatserot ['Settlements'].
12 They were at Hatserot and Miryam spoke against Mosheh, with Aharon, about the matter of the Kushite [Sudanese] wife he had taken, because he'd taken a Kushite wife. [2]They said, 'Has Yahweh really spoken only through Mosheh? He's also spoken through us, hasn't he.' And Yahweh heard. [3]Now Mosheh as a man was very ordinary, more so than any human being who has been on the face of the earth.

Mosheh's supreme authority

[4]Yahweh suddenly said to Mosheh, to Aharon and to Miryam, 'Go out, the three of you, to the appointment tent.' The three of them went out, [5]and Yahweh came down in the cloud pillar, stood at the tent entrance, and called for Aharon and Miryam. The two of them went out [6]and he said, 'Listen to my words, please. If there's a prophet of yours, I, Yahweh, make myself known to him in a vision, I speak to him in a dream. [7]Not so my servant Mosheh. In my entire household he's trustworthy. [8]I speak to him mouth to mouth, in a vision and not in conundrums. He beholds Yahweh's form. So why were you not afraid to speak against my servant, against Mosheh?'
[9]So Yahweh's anger raged against them and he went, [10]and as the cloud departed from above the tent, there – Miryam was made scaly, like snow. Aharon turned his face to Miryam – there, she was made scaly. [11]Aharon said to Mosheh, 'My lord, please, don't hold against us the wrong with which we acted stupidly, the wrong which we did. [12]Please, she mustn't be like someone dead, whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes out of his mother's womb.'
[13]So Mosheh cried out to Yahweh, 'God, please, heal her, please!' [14]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Were her father simply to spit in her face, would she not be in disgrace for seven days? She's to shut herself outside the camp for seven days, and afterwards join.' [15]So Miryam shut herself outside the camp for seven days, but the people didn't move on until Miryam joined. [16]Afterwards the

people moved on from Hatserot and camped in the Pa'ran Wilderness.

A spy story

13 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]'Send yourself people so they can investigate the country of Kena'an [Canaan], which I'm giving to the Yisra'elites. You're to send one person each per ancestral clan, each one a leader among them.' [3]So Mosheh sent them from the Pa'ran Wilderness, at Yahweh's bidding. All of them were people who were leaders of the Yisra'elites. [4]These are their names:

for the clan of Re'uben, Shammua ben Zakkur;
[5]for the clan of Shim'on, Shaphat ben Hori;
[6]for the clan of Yehudah, Kaleb (Caleb) ben Yephunneh;
[7]for the clan of Yissakar, Yig'al ben Yoseph;
[8]for the clan of Ephrayim, Hoshea ben Nun;
[9]for the clan of Binyamin, Palti ben Raphu;
[10]for the clan of Zebulun, Gaddi'el ben Sodi;
[11]for the clan of Yoseph (for the clan of Menashsheh), Gaddi ben Susi;
[12]for the clan of Dan, Ammi'el ben Gemalli;
[13]for the clan of Asher, Setur ben Mika'el;
[14]for the clan of Naphtali, Nahbi ben Vophsi;
[15]for the clan of Gad, Ge'u'el ben Maki.

[16]These are the names of the people that Mosheh sent to investigate the country. (Mosheh called Hoshea ben Nun 'Yehoshua'.)
[17]Mosheh sent them to investigate the country of Kena'an and said to them, 'Go up here into the Negeb, then go up into the highland. [18]You're to look at the country: what's it like? The people that lives in it: is it strong? Is it weak? Is it few or many? [19]What's the country like that it's living in? Is it good or bad? What are the towns that it lives in – in encampments or in fortifications? [20]What's the country like? Is it rich or poor? Are there trees in it or are there not? You're to assert your strength, and get some of the country's fruit.' The time was the time of the first of the grapes.

The good news and the bad news

[21]So they went up and investigated the country from the Tsin Wilderness as far as Rehob (Lebo Hamat). [22]They went up into the Negeb and came as far as Hebron. (Ahiman, Sheshay and Talmay, the descendants of Anaq, were there; Hebron was built seven years before Tso'an in Misrayim.) [23]They came as far as Cluster Wadi, and cut from there a branch and a cluster of grapes (they carried it on a frame by means of two of them), and some pomegranates and some figs. [24]They called that place Cluster Wadi on account of the cluster that the Yisra'elites cut from there. [25]They came back from investigating the country at the end of forty days.
[26]So they went, and then came to Mosheh and to Aharon and to the entire assembly of the Yisra'elites at Qadesh in the Pa'ran Wilderness, brought back word to them and to the entire assembly, and let them see the country's fruit. [27]They recounted to him, 'We came to the country that you sent us to. Yes, it flows with milk and syrup, and this is its fruit. [28]Only, the people living in the country is substantial, and the towns are fortified, very large. Also, we saw the descendants of Anaq there. [29]Amaleq is living in the Negeb region, the Hittites, Yebusites and Amorites are living in the highland, and the Kena'anites are living by the sea and by the side of the Yarden [Jordan].'
[30]Kaleb hushed the people before Mosheh. He said, 'Let's simply go up and take possession of it, because we can definitely prevail against it.'

Listen to the bad news

[31]But the people who went up with him said, 'We can't go up against the people, because it's stronger than us', [32]and they put out criticism of the country that they had investigated to the Yisra'elites: 'The country that we passed through to investigate is a country that devours the people living in it, and the entire people that we saw within it are people of stature. [33]We saw the Nephilim ['Fallen'] there (the Anaqites were from the Nephilim). In our eyes we were like grasshoppers, and so we were in their eyes.'
14 The entire assembly lifted up their voice and gave it out, and the people wailed that night. [2]All the Yisra'elites protested against Mosheh and against Aharon. The entire assembly said to them, 'If only we had died in the country of Misrayim or if only we had died in this wilderness! [3]Why is Yahweh bringing us into this country to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder. Wouldn't it be good for us to go back to Misrayim?' [4]They said one to another, 'Let's appoint a head, and go back to Misrayim.'
[5]Mosheh and Aharon fell on their faces before the entire assembled congregation of the Yisra'elites. [6]Yehoshua ben Nun and Kaleb ben Yephunneh from the people who had investigated the country tore their clothes [7]and said to the entire assembly of the Yisra'elites: 'The country that we passed through to investigate it is a very, very good country. [8]If Yahweh delights in us, he will bring us to this country and give it to us, a country that flows with milk and syrup. [9]Only you're not to rebel against Yahweh. You're not to be afraid of the people of the country, because they're our bread, their shade has departed from over them, but

Yahweh is with us. Don't be afraid of them.'

Mosheh uses his usual argument

[10]But the entire assembly said to pelt them with stones, while Yahweh's splendour appeared in the appointment tent to all the Yisra'elites, [11]and Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'How long will this people disdain me? How long will they not put their trust in me, for all the signs I've done among them? [12]I'll strike it down with an epidemic and dispossess it, and make you into a bigger and more numerous nation than it.'

[13]Mosheh said to Yahweh, 'But the Misrayimites will hear, because you brought this people up by your energy from among them, [14]and they'll tell the people living in this country. They've heard that you, Yahweh, are among this people, you Yahweh who've appeared in plain sight with your cloud standing over them, you who go before them in a cloud pillar by day and in a fire pillar by night. [15]You can put this people to death like one man, but the nations that have heard report of you will say, [16] "Because Yahweh couldn't bring this people into the country that he swore to them, he's slaughtered them in the wilderness."

[17]So now, may my Lord's energy be great as you spoke: [18]"Yahweh, long-tempered and big in commitment, carrying waywardness and rebellion, but he certainly doesn't treat people as free of guilt, attending to parents' waywardness in connection with children, with thirds and with fourths." [19]Please pardon this people's waywardness in accordance with the greatness of your commitment from Misrayim even as far as here.'

Pardon but punishment

[20]Yahweh said, 'I pardon, in accordance with your words. [21]Yet as I live and as Yahweh's splendour fills the entire world, [22]because all the people who have seen my splendour and my signs that I did in Misrayim and in the wilderness have tested me these ten times and not listened to my voice, [23]if they see the country that I swore to their ancestors . . .

None who disdained me will see it. [24]But my servant Kaleb, as a consequence of the fact that there was another spirit with him – he fully followed after me. I shall bring him into the country that he came to, and his offspring will take possession of it. [25]Since the Amaleqites and the Kena'anites live in the valley, tomorrow turn your face and move on for yourselves into the wilderness by the Reed Sea road.'

[26]So Yahweh spoke to Mosheh and to Aharon: [27]'How long for this bad assembly that protest against me? I've listened to the Yisra'elites' protests that they utter against me. [28]Say to them: "As I live (Yahweh's declaration), if I don't . . .

As you spoke in my ears, so I shall do to you. [29]In this wilderness your carcases will fall, the entire register of you by your entire number, from the age of twenty years and upwards, who have protested against me. [30]If you come into the country that I lifted up my hand [in an oath] to let you dwell in it, except Kaleb ben Yephunneh and Yehoshua ben Nun . . .

[31]Your little ones whom you said would become plunder – I shall bring them in. They will know the country that you've rejected. [32]But your carcases – you will fall in this wilderness.

A useless change of mind

[33]While your children are shepherding in the wilderness for forty years, they will carry your whoring, until your carcases come to an end in the wilderness. [34]In the wilderness, for the days that you investigated the country, forty, one day each per year you will carry your wayward acts, forty years. You will know my antagonism. [35]I, Yahweh, have spoken. If I don't do this to this entire bad assembly that are making an appointment against me . . . In this wilderness they will come to an end. There they will die."'

[36]The people whom Mosheh had sent to investigate the country and who had come back and made the entire assembly protest against him by putting out criticism about the country: [37]the people who put out the bad criticism of the country died in an epidemic before Yahweh. [38]But Yehoshua ben Nun and Kaleb ben Yephunneh lived on, of those people who went to investigate the country.

[39]Mosheh spoke these words to all the Yisra'elites, and the people took up great grieving. [40]They started early in the morning and went up to the mountain ridge, saying 'Here we are, we'll go up to the place that Yahweh said, because we did wrong.' [41]Mosheh said, 'Why are you contravening Yahweh's bidding when that won't succeed? [42]Don't go up, because Yahweh is not among you. Then you won't take a beating before your enemies. [43]Because the Amaleqites and the Kena'anites will be there before you and you'll fall by the sword. Because of the fact that you've turned back from following Yahweh, Yahweh won't be with you.' [44]They insisted on going up to the mountain ridge, but Yahweh's pact chest and Mosheh didn't move away from within the camp, [45]and the Amaleqites and the Kena'anites who were living in that highland came down, and struck them down and crushed them as far as Hormah.

Offerings in the country where they will settle

15 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]'Speak to the Yisra'elites: "When you come into the country where you will have your settlements, which I'm giving you, [3]and you make a gift offering to Yahweh, a burnt offering or a sacrifice, in fulfilling a pledge or as a free offering or at your set times, to make a nice smell for Yahweh, from the herd or from the flock: [4]the person presenting his offering to Yahweh is to present a grain offering of fine flour, a tenth, mixed with a quarter of a gallon of oil. [5]You're also to make wine into a libation, a quarter of a gallon, with the burnt offering or sacrifice, for each sheep. [6]Or for a ram you're to make a grain offering of fine flour, two tenths, mixed with oil, a third of a gallon, [7]and you're to present wine for a

libation, a third of a gallon, a nice smell for Yahweh.
[8]When you make an animal from the herd into a burnt offering or a sacrifice to fulfil a pledge or a well-being sacrifice for Yahweh, [9]they're to present with the animal from the herd a grain offering of fine flour, three tenths, mixed with oil, half a gallon. [10]And you're to present wine as a libation, half a gallon, as a gift offering, a nice smell for Yahweh.
[11]It's to be done in this way with each ox or with each ram or with a young one among the sheep or among the goats, [12]in accordance with the number that you make. In this way you're to make it for each in accordance with their number. [13]Every native is to make these in this way in presenting a gift offering, a nice smell for Yahweh.

The first of the baking

[14]When someone who resides with you as a resident, or who is among you through your generations, makes a gift offering, a nice smell for Yahweh: as you make it, so the congregation is to make it. [15]One decree for you and for someone who is a resident, a permanent decree through your generations: it will be the same for you and for the resident, before Yahweh. [16]There will be one instruction and one ruling for you and for the person who is a resident with you."'
[17]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [18]'Speak to the Yisra'elites: "When you come into the country where I'm bringing you, [19]when you eat of the bread of the country, you're to take up a contribution for Yahweh. [20]The first of your baked goods (a loaf) you're to take up as a contribution for Yahweh. Like the contribution from the threshing floor, so you're to take it up. [21]From the first of your baked goods you're to give a contribution for Yahweh, through your generations.
[22]When you make a mistake and don't act on any of these orders that Yahweh has spoken to Mosheh, [23]anything that Yahweh ordered you by means of Mosheh, from the day that Yahweh ordered it and onwards through your generations: [24]if it was done by mistake, away from the assembly's eyes, the entire assembly is to make a bull from the herd into a burnt offering, as a nice smell for Yahweh, with its grain offering and its libation, in accordance with the ruling, and a he-goat from the flock as a decontamination. [25]The priest is to make expiation for the entire assembly of the Yisra'elites and it will be pardoned them, because it was a mistake and they've brought their offering as a gift offering for Yahweh and as their decontamination before Yahweh, for their mistake. [26]It will be pardoned for the entire assembly of the Yisra'elites and for the person who is a resident among them, because for the entire people it was by mistake.

The intentional and the unintentional

[27]If an individual does wrong by mistake, he's to present a year-old she-goat as a decontamination. [28]The priest is to make expiation for the person who made the mistake by his wrongdoing (by mistake), before Yahweh, to make expiation for him, so it may be pardoned for him. [29]The native among the Yisra'elites, and for the person who is a resident among you: there's to be one instruction for you for one who acts by mistake.
[30]But the person who acts with hand upraised, from natives or residents: Yahweh is the one he's insulting. That person shall be cut off from among his people, [31]because it's Yahweh's word he's scorned and Yahweh's order he's contravened. That person shall absolutely be cut off. There's waywardness on him."'
[32]The Yisra'elites were in the wilderness and they found someone collecting wood on the sabbath day. [33]The people who found him collecting wood presented him to Mosheh, to Aharon and to the entire assembly, [34]and they placed him under keep because it had not been specified what should be done to him. [35]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'The person must absolutely be put to death by the entire assembly pelting him with stones outside the camp.' [36]So the entire assembly took him outside the camp and pelted him with stones so he died, as Yahweh ordered Mosheh.
[37]Yahweh said to Mosheh: [38]'Speak to the Yisra'elites and say to them: they're to make themselves a fringe on the corners of their clothes, through their generations. They're to put on the hem's fringe a purple cord. [39]You will have the fringe and look at it, and be mindful of all Yahweh's orders and do them, and not investigate the things you whore after, following your mind and your eyes, [40]in order that you may be mindful and may act on all my orders, and be sacred for your God. [41]I am Yahweh your God who got you out of the country of Misrayim to be God for you. I am Yahweh your God.'

Ambition

16 Qorah ben Yitshar, son of Qehat son of Levi, got both Datan and Abiram, sons of Eli'ab, and On ben Pelet, son of Re'uben, [2]and they rose up before Mosheh with 250 men from the Yisra'elites, leaders of the assembly, people called for by the assembly, men with a name. [3]They congregated against Mosheh and against Aharon and said to them, 'You have too much, when the entire assembly, all of them, are sacred, and Yahweh is among them! Why do you raise yourselves above Yahweh's congregation?' [4]Mosheh heard, and fell on his face. [5]He spoke to Qorah and to his entire group: 'In the morning Yahweh can let it be acknowledged who is his and who is sacred, and he can have them draw near to him. The one he chooses is the one he will have draw near to him. [6]Do this. Get yourself pans (Qorah and his entire group) [7]and put fire in them and place incense on them before Yahweh, tomorrow. The person whom Yahweh chooses, he's the sacred one. You have too much, sons of Levi.'
[8]Mosheh said to Qorah: 'Please listen, you Levites. [9]Is it too little for you that Yisra'el's God has made you distinct from the Yisra'elite assembly by having you draw near to him to perform the service of Yahweh's dwelling and to stand before the assembly to minister to them? [10]He's had you draw near, you and all your brothers the Levites with you, and you seek the priesthood also. [11]Therefore you and your entire group are making an appointment against Yahweh. And what is Aharon that you protest against him?'
[12]Mosheh sent to call for Datan and Abiram the sons of Eli'ab but they said, 'We won't go up. [13]Is it too little that you brought us up from a country flowing with milk and syrup to let us die in the wilderness, that you also continue to play the ruler over us?

[14]Certainly you haven't brought us into a country flowing with milk and syrup, and given us a domain of fields and vineyards.
Will you gouge out these people's eyes? We won't go up.'

Yahweh must judge

[15]It was very infuriating to Mosheh. He said to Yahweh, 'Don't turn your face to their offering. I haven't taken one donkey
from them. I haven't dealt badly with one of them.'
[16]Mosheh said to Qorah, 'You and your entire company, be before Yahweh, you and they and Aharon, tomorrow. [17]Get, each
person, his pan, put incense on it and present it before Yahweh, each person his pan, 250 pans, and you and Aharon each his pan.'
[18]They got, each person, his pan, put fire on them and placed incense on them, and stood at the entrance of the appointment
tent, as did Mosheh and Aharon. [19]Qorah congregated the entire assembly against them at the entrance of the appointment tent.
Yahweh's splendour appeared to the entire assembly, [20]and Yahweh spoke to Mosheh and to Aharon: [21]'Make yourselves
distinct from among this assembly so I may finish them off in a moment!' [22]They fell on their faces and said, 'God, the God of the
spirits of all flesh! One person does wrong. Are you furious with the entire assembly?'
[23]So Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [24]'Speak to the assembly: "Go up from round the dwelling of Qorah, Datan and Abiram."'
[25]Mosheh got up and went to Datan and Abiram, and the Yisra'elite elders followed him. [26]He spoke to the assembly: 'Please
move away from near the tents of these faithless people and don't touch anything that belongs to them, so you don't get swept
away because of all their wrongdoings.' [27a]So they went up from near the dwelling of Qorah, Datan and Abiram, all round.

A frightening act of creation

[27b]Now Datan and Abiram had come out, standing at the entrance of their tents, with their wives, their children and their little
ones. [28]Mosheh said, 'By this you will acknowledge that it was Yahweh who sent me to do all these things, that they're not from
my mind. [29]If these people die as all human beings die, and what is appointed for all human beings comes to them, then it was not
Yahweh who sent me. [30]But if Yahweh performs an act of creation, and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them and all
who belong to them so that they go down to She'ol alive, then you will know that these men have disdained Yahweh.'
[31]As he finished speaking all these words, the ground that was underneath them split, [32]and the earth opened its mouth and
swallowed them and their households, all who belonged to Qorah and all the property. [33]Those people and all that belonged to
them went down alive to She'ol. The earth covered over them. They perished from among the congregation. [34]All Yisra'el that
was round them fled at the sound they made, because they said, 'So that the earth doesn't swallow us!' [35]And fire came out from
Yahweh and devoured the 250 people presenting the incense.
[36]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [37]'Say to El'azar ben Aharon the priest that he's to take up the pans from within what is burned
and scatter the fire some way away, because they've become sacred. [38]The pans of these who did wrong at the cost of their lives:
they're to make them into beaten sheets as plating for the altar, because people have presented them before Yahweh and they've
become sacred. They're to be a sign for the Yisra'elites.'

Fury goes out from Yahweh

[39]So El'azar the priest got the copper pans that the people who had been burned up had presented, and beat them into plating for
the altar [40]as a reminder for the Yisra'elites that no one who is an outsider who is not from Aharon's offspring is to draw near to
offer incense before Yahweh, so he won't become like Qorah and his company, as Yahweh spoke through Mosheh.
[41]The entire assembly of the Yisra'elites protested against Mosheh and against Aharon next day: 'You put Yahweh's people to
death!' [42]When the assembly congregated against Mosheh and against Aharon, they turned their face to the appointment tent and
there – the cloud covered it and Yahweh's splendour appeared. [43]Mosheh and Aharon came to the front of the appointment tent,
[44]and Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [45]'Get up from among this assembly, so I may finish them off in a moment!' They fell on their
faces, [46]and Mosheh said to Aharon, 'Get the pan and put fire on it from on the altar and place incense and take it quickly to the
assembly and make expiation for them, because fury has gone out from before Yahweh; the epidemic has started.'
[47]Aharon got it, as Mosheh spoke, and ran into the middle of the congregation. There, the epidemic had started among the
people. He put on the incense and made expiation for the people. [48]He stood between the dead and the living, and the epidemic
held back. [49]The people who were dead through the epidemic were 14,700, apart from the people who were dead on account of
Qorah. [50]Aharon went back to Mosheh at the entrance of the appointment tent when the epidemic had held back.

The staff that budded

17 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]'Speak to the Yisra'elites and get from them a staff each per ancestral household from all their
leaders, for the ancestral households, twelve staffs. You're to write each individual's name on his staff, [3]and write Aharon's
name on Levi's staff, because there's one staff for the head of their ancestral household. [4]Set them down in the appointment tent
before the affirmation, where I make an appointment to meet with you. [5]The individual whom I choose, his staff will bud, and I
shall rid myself of the protests of the Yisra'elites which they're uttering against you.'
[6]Mosheh spoke to the Yisra'elites, and all their leaders gave him one staff each per leader, twelve staffs for their ancestral
households, with Aharon's staff among their staffs. [7]Mosheh set the staffs down before Yahweh in the appointment tent. [8]Next
day Mosheh went into the appointment tent and there, Aharon's staff belonging to Levi's household had budded. It had put out
buds and issued blossoms and dealt almonds. [9]Mosheh took out all the staffs from before Yahweh to all the Yisra'elites, and they

looked and got each person his staff.
[10]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Put Aharon's staff back before the affirmation for keeping as a sign for the rebels, so their protests at me may finish, so they don't die.' [11]Mosheh did as Yahweh ordered him; so he did. [12]But the Yisra'elites said to Mosheh, 'Here, we breathe our last, we're lost, all of us are lost! [13]Anyone who comes near Yahweh's dwelling at all will die. Have we come to an end, breathing our last?'

Provision for the priests

18 Yahweh said to Aharon, 'You, your sons and your ancestral household with you carry the sanctuary's waywardness, and you and your sons with you carry your priesthood's waywardness. [2]Also, present with you your brothers, the clan of Levi, your ancestral clan, so they may join [*lavah*] with you and minister to you, as you and your sons with you are before the affirmation tent. [3]They're to keep your charge and the charge of the entire tent, yet they're not to draw near to the articles of the sanctuary or to the altar, so both they and you don't die. [4]They're to join with you and keep charge of the appointment tent, in relation to all the service of the tent. No outsider is to draw near to you.
[5]You're to keep charge of the sanctuary and charge of the altar, so there won't be fury on Yisra'el again. [6]I myself, I here take your brothers the Levites from among the Yisra'elites for you as a gift given to Yahweh to perform the service of the appointment tent [7]while you and your sons with you keep your priesthood in relation to every matter involving the altar and what is inside the curtain. So you will serve. I make your priesthood a service that is a gift. But the outsider who comes near is to be put to death.'
[8]Yahweh spoke to Aharon: 'I myself: I here give you charge of my contributions, in relation to all the sacred things belonging to the Yisra'elites. To you I give them in connection with your anointing, and to your sons, as a permanent decree. [9]This will be yours from the things that are especially sacred, from the fire: every offering of theirs, with every grain offering of theirs, with every decontamination of theirs and with every reparation of theirs, which they render to me as especially sacred things. It belongs to you and to your sons. [10]You may eat of the especially sacred things. Any male may eat it. It's to be sacred for you.

The sacred gifts

[11]And this will be yours: the contribution that they give, including every elevation offering by the Yisra'elites, I give them to you and to your sons and to your daughters with you, as a permanent decree. Anyone who is pure in your household may eat it. [12]All the "fat" of fresh oil and all the "fat" of new wine, and grain: the first of them, which they give to Yahweh, I give them to you. [13]The first products of everything that will be in their country which they bring to Yahweh will be yours. Anyone who is pure in your household may eat them.
[14]Everything devoted in Yisra'el will be yours. [15]Every opener of the womb of any being that people present to Yahweh, among human beings and among animals, will be yours; however, you will definitely redeem the firstborn of a human being, and you will redeem the firstborn of a pure animal. [16]His redemption: at one month old you're to redeem at the evaluation of five silver sheqels by the sanctuary sheqel (it is twenty grams). [17]However, the firstborn of an ox or the firstborn of a sheep or the firstborn of a goat you will not redeem. They're sacred. You're to toss their blood on the altar and burn their fat into smoke as a gift offering, as a nice smell for Yahweh. [18]But their flesh will be yours; like the breast of the elevation offering and the right thigh, it will be yours.
[19]Every contribution of things that are sacred that the Yisra'elites take up for Yahweh I give to you, and to your sons and to your daughters with you, as a permanent decree. It's a permanent salt pact before Yahweh for you and for your offspring with you.'

The tithes

[20]Yahweh said to Aharon, 'In their country you will not have a domain. There will be no share for you among them. I am your share, your domain, among the Yisra'elites. [21]And to the Levites I here give every tenth in Yisra'el as a domain in return for their service that they're performing, the service of the appointment tent. [22]The Yisra'elites will no more draw near the appointment tent, carrying wrongdoing that would mean they die. [23]The Levite – he will perform the service of the appointment tent, but they – they will carry their waywardness (a permanent decree through your generations). But among the Yisra'elites they will not receive a domain, [24]because the Yisra'elites' tenth, which they take up for Yahweh as a contribution, I give to the Levites as a domain. That's why I've said regarding them, among the Yisra'elites they will not receive a domain.'
[25]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [26]'And to the Levites you're to speak and to say to them: "When you get from the Yisra'elites the tenth which I've given you from them as your domain, you're to take up from it a tenth of the tenth as a contribution for Yahweh. [27]It will be deemed for you as your contribution, like the grain from the threshing floor and like the fullness from the vat. [28]So you yourselves are also to take up Yahweh's contribution from all your tenths which you get from the Yisra'elites, and you're to give Yahweh's contribution from them to Aharon the priest. [29]From all your gifts you're to take up the entire contribution for Yahweh from it, the sacred part of it from all its 'fat'. "
[30]You're to say to them, "When you take up its 'fat' from it, it will be deemed for the Levites like the yield of the threshing floor and the yield of the vat. [31]You may eat it in any place, you and your household, because it's wages for you in return for your service in the appointment tent. [32]You won't carry any wrongdoing on account of it when you've taken up its 'fat' from it. But you will not treat the sacred things of the Yisra'elites as ordinary, so you don't die."'

Death defiles

19 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh and to Aharon: [2]‘This is a decree of instruction that Yahweh has ordered: “Speak to the Yisra’elites
that they get you a red cow that’s whole, one in which there’s no defect and on which no yoke has come. [3]You’re to give it to
El’azar the priest and they’re to take it outside the camp and slaughter it before him. [4]El’azar the priest is to get some of its blood
with his finger and spatter some of its blood seven times in front, before the appointment tent.

[5]They’re to burn the cow before his eyes; they’re to burn its skin, its flesh and its blood, along with its intestines. [6]The priest is
to get cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet yarn, and throw them into the middle of the fire burning the cow. [7]The priest is to wash his
clothes and bathe his flesh in water, and afterwards to go into the camp. The priest will be taboo until the evening [8]and the person
who burned it – he’s to wash his clothes in water and bathe his flesh in water and he’ll be taboo until the evening.

[9]A person who’s pure is to gather the cow’s ashes and set them down outside the camp in a pure place. The assembly of the
Yisra’elites is to have them for keeping as water for flowing. It will be a decontamination. [10]The one who gathers the cow’s ashes
is to wash his clothes and he will be taboo until the evening. It will be a permanent decree for the Yisra’elites and for the person
who is a resident among you.

[11]Someone who touches the dead body of any human person will be taboo for seven days. [12]If he decontaminates himself with
it on the third day and on the seventh day, he will become pure. If he doesn’t decontaminate himself on the third day and on the
seventh day, he will not become pure. [13]Anyone who touches the dead body of a human person who dies and doesn’t
decontaminate himself makes Yahweh’s dwelling taboo. That person shall be cut off from Yisra’el. Because the water for flowing
hasn’t been tossed over him, he will be taboo. His taboo will still be on him.

Purification from defilement

[14]This is the instruction. When a human being dies in a tent, anyone going into the tent and anyone who’s in the tent will be
taboo for seven days. [15]Every open container with no lid fastened on it is taboo. [16]Anyone who touches on the face of the fields
someone run through by the sword or someone who has died or a human bone or a grave will be taboo for seven days.

[17]They’re to get for the taboo person some of the ashes from the decontamination burning and put fresh water on it in a
container. [18]A pure person is to get hyssop and dip it in the water and spatter it on the tent and on all the containers and on the
individuals who were there and on the one who touched the bone or the person run through or the person who died or the grave.

[19]The pure person is to spatter it on the taboo person on the third day and on the seventh day so he will decontaminate him on
the seventh day. He’s to wash his clothes and bathe in water, and he will become pure in the evening. [20]An individual who
becomes taboo and doesn’t decontaminate himself: that person shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he has
made Yahweh’s sanctuary taboo. The water for flowing hasn’t been tossed over him. He’s taboo. [21]It’s to be a permanent decree
for them.

The one who spatters the water for flowing is to wash his clothes. One who touches the water for flowing will be taboo until the
evening. [22]Everything that the taboo person touches will become taboo and the person who touches him will become taboo until
the evening.”’

Mosheh’s one mistake

20 The Yisra’elites, the entire assembly, came to the Tsin Wilderness in the first month, and the people lived at Qadesh. Miryam
died there and was buried there.

[2]But there was no water for the assembly, and they congregated against Mosheh and against Aharon. [3]The people got into an
argument with Mosheh: ‘If only we had breathed our last when our brothers breathed their last before Yahweh! [4]Why have you
brought Yahweh’s congregation into this wilderness to die there, us and our animals? [5]Why did you get us to go up from
Misrayim to bring us to this bad place, not a place of seed or fig or vine or pomegranate? And there’s no water to drink.’

[6]Mosheh and Aharon came from before the congregation to the entrance of the appointment tent and fell on their faces.
Yahweh’s splendour appeared to them [7]and Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [8]‘Get the staff and congregate the assembly, you and
Aharon your brother, and speak to the cliff before their eyes and it will give its water; you will make water come out of the cliff
for them and provide drink for the assembly and their animals.’ [9]So Mosheh got the staff from before Yahweh as he ordered him,
[10]and Mosheh and Aharon gathered the congregation before the cliff, and he said to them, ‘Please listen, you rebels! Are we to
make water come out of this cliff for you?’

[11]Mosheh lifted up his hand and struck the cliff with his staff, twice. Much water came out, and the assembly and their animals
drank. [12]But Yahweh said to Mosheh and to Aharon, ‘Because you didn’t trust in me so as to make me sacred before the
Yisra’elites’ eyes, therefore you won’t bring this congregation into the country that I’m giving them.’

[13]That’s Meribah [‘Argument’] Water, where the Yisra’elites got into an argument with Yahweh, and he showed his sacredness
among them.

Seeking to live peacefully

[14]Mosheh sent envoys from Qadesh to the king of Edom: ‘Your brother Yisra’el has said this: you yourself know all the
hardship that has befallen us. [15]Our ancestors went down into Misrayim and we lived in Misrayim for a long time, but the
Misrayimites dealt badly with us and our ancestors. [16]We cried out to Yahweh and he listened to our voice. He sent an envoy and
got us out of Misrayim. So here we are, in Qadesh, a town on the edge of your border. [17]May we please pass through your
country. We won’t pass through field or through vineyard, and we won’t drink water from wells. We’ll go along the King’s Road.
We won’t turn off right or left till we pass through your border.’

[18]But Edom said to him, ‘You’re not to pass through me or I’ll come out with the sword to meet you.’ [19]The Yisra’elites said to

him, ‘We’ll go up by the causeway. If we drink your water, I and my livestock, I’ll give you its price. It’ll be nothing as we’ll pass through only on foot.’ [20]But he said, ‘You will not pass through.’ Edom went out to meet him with a substantial company, with a strong hand. [21]So Edom refused to let Yisra’el pass through its border, and Yisra’el turned from it.

[22]So they moved on from Qadesh and the Yisra’elites came, the entire assembly, to Mount Hor. [23]Yahweh said to Mosheh and to Aharon at Mount Hor, on the border of the country of Edom, [24]‘Aharon is to join his kin, because he will not come into the country that I’m giving to the Yisra’elites, on account of the fact that you [two] rebelled against my bidding about Meribah Water. [25]Get Aharon and El’azar his son and take them up Mount Hor. [26]Get Aharon to take off his garments, and get El’azar his son to put them on. Aharon will be gathered and die there.’

Aharon joins his ancestors

[27]Mosheh did as Yahweh ordered. They went up Mount Hor before the eyes of the entire assembly [28]and Mosheh got Aharon to take off his garments and got El’azar his son to put them on. Aharon died there on the top of the mountain, and Mosheh and El’azar came down from the mountain. [29]The assembly saw that Aharon had breathed his last, and they bewailed Aharon for thirty days, the entire Yisra’elite household.

21 The Kena’anite, the king of Arad, who lived in the Negeb, heard that Yisra’el was coming by the Atarim road, and he battled against Yisra’el and took some of them captive. [2]Yisra’el made a pledge to Yahweh: ‘If you actually give this people into my hand, I will devote their towns.’ [3]Yahweh listened to Yisra’el’s voice and gave the Kena’anites over, and they devoted [*haram*] them and their towns. So they named the place Hormah.

[4]They moved on from Mount Hor by the Reed Sea road to go round the country of Edom. The people’s spirit became short on the way [5]and the people spoke against God and against Mosheh: ‘Why did you bring us up from Misrayim to die in the wilderness, because there’s no bread and there’s no water and our appetite is dismayed about the pathetic bread?’ [6]Yahweh sent off against the people venomous snakes that bit the people, and a large company from Yisra’el died. [7]The people came to Mosheh and said, ‘We did wrong in that we spoke against Yahweh and against you. Plead with Yahweh to remove the snakes from us.’ Mosheh pleaded on behalf of the people [8]and Yahweh said to Mosheh, ‘Make yourself a venomous thing and put it on a standard. Anyone who’s bitten but looks at it will live.’ [9]So Mosheh made a copper snake and placed it on a standard, and if a snake bit an individual, he would look to the copper snake and live.

Sihon king of the Amorites

[10]The Yisra’elites moved on and camped at Obot, [11]then moved on from Obot and camped at Iyyim in the Regions Across, in the wilderness over against Mo’ab on the east. [12]From there they moved on and camped by Wadi Zered. [13]From there they moved on and camped across the Arnon, which is in the wilderness that extends from the Amorite border . . .

(because the Arnon is the border of Mo’ab, between Mo’ab and the Amorites; [14]that’s why it’s said in the Document about Yahweh’s Battles, ‘Waheb in Suphah and the wadis; the Arnon [15]and the slope of the wadis that stretches to the Ar settlement and lies at Mo’ab’s border’)

[16]. . . and from there to Be’er [‘Well’] . . .

(that’s the well of which Yahweh said to Mosheh, ‘Gather the people and I’ll give them water’, [17]then Yisra’el sang this song:

Go up, well – sing for it,
[18]well that the officials dug,
That the important ones among the people sank,
with a sceptre, with their staffs)

and from the wilderness to Mattanah, [19]and from Mattanah to Nahali’el, and from Nahali’el to Bamot, [20]and from Bamot to the ravine that’s in Mo’ab’s region, to the top of Pisgah, which overlooks The Wasteland.

[21]Yisra’el sent envoys to Sihon, king of the Amorites: [22]‘I want to pass through your country. We won’t turn off into your field or into your vineyard. We won’t drink water from your well. We’ll go by the King’s Road till we pass through your border.’ [23]But Sihon didn’t let Yisra’el pass though his border. Sihon gathered his entire company and went out to meet Yisra’el, into the wilderness. He came to Yahats and battled against Yisra’el. [24]But Yisra’el struck him down with the mouth of the sword and took possession of his country from the Arnon as far as the Yabboq, as far as the Ammonites, because the Ammonites’ border was strong. [25]Yisra’el took all these towns.

Og king of Bashan

So Yisra’el lived in all the Amorites’ towns, in Heshbon and in all its daughter-towns, [26]because Heshbon was the town of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and he had battled against the former king of Mo’ab and taken his entire country from his hand as far as the Arnon. [27]That’s why the poets say:

Come to Heshbon, which is built up,
and which is founded, Sihon’s town.
[28]Because fire went out from Heshbon,

flame from Sihon's township,
Devouring Ar in Mo'ab,
the masters of the Arnon Heights.
[29]Ah, you, Mo'ab,
you were lost, people of Kemosh!
He gave over his sons, the survivors,
his daughters into captivity,
to the king of the Amorites, Sihon.
[30]But their dominion is lost,
Heshbon as far as Dibon.
We wrought desolation as far as Nophah,
which is as far as Medeba.

[31]So Yisra'el lived in the country of the Amorites. [32]Mosheh sent people to investigate Ya'zer, and they captured its daughter-villages and dispossessed the Amorites who were there.
[33]Then they turned the face and went up the Bashan road, and Og king of Bashan came out to meet them, he and his entire company, for a battle at Edre'i. [34]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Don't be afraid of him, because I give him, his entire company and his country into your hand. You're to do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites who was living in Heshbon.' [35]They struck down him, his sons and his entire company until they let no survivor remain to him, and they took possession of his country.
22 Then the Yisra'elites moved on and camped in the Mo'ab steppes across the Yarden from Yeriho [Jericho].

Balaq panics

[2]Balaq ben Tsippor saw all that Yisra'el had done to the Amorites, [3]and Mo'ab was in great dread before the people because it was numerous. So Mo'ab was dismayed about the Yisra'elites, [4]and Mo'ab said to the elders of Midyan, 'The congregation will now lick up everything around us like an ox licks up the grass in the fields.'
Balaq ben Tsippor was king of Mo'ab at that time [5]and he sent envoys to Bil'am [Balaam] ben Be'or in Petor, which is by the river, the country of his kinsfolk, to call for him: 'Here, a people has come out of Misrayim – here, it has covered the face of the earth, and it's living near me. [6]So now please curse this people for me, because it's more numerous than me. Maybe I'll be able to strike it down and drive it out of the country, because I know that the one whom you bless is blessed and the one whom you curse is cursed.'
[7]So Mo'ab's elders and Midyan's elders went with divination material in their hand, came to Bil'am and spoke Balaq's words to him. [8]He said to them, 'Stay the night here tonight and I'll bring back word to you as Yahweh speaks to me.' So the officials from Mo'ab stayed with Bil'am.
[9]God came to Bil'am and said, 'Who are these people with you?' [10]Bil'am said to God, 'Balaq ben Tsippor, king of Mo'ab, has sent to me: [11]"Here is the people that came out of Misrayim, and it has covered the face of the earth. Come now and damn it for me. Maybe I'll be able to do battle against it and drive it out."' [12]God said to Bil'am, 'You will not go with them. You will not curse the people, because it's blessed.'

Bil'am says no then yes

[13]Bil'am got up in the morning and said to Balaq's officials, 'Go to your country, because Yahweh has refused to let me go with you.' [14]So the officials of Mo'ab set off and came to Balaq and said, 'Bil'am refused to go with us.'
[15]Balaq once again sent officials, more and more honoured than these. [16]They came to Bil'am and said to him, 'Balaq ben Tsippor has said this: please don't hold back from going to me, [17]because I shall definitely honour you much, and everything that you say I will do. Please go and damn this people for me.' [18]Bil'am answered Balaq's servants, 'If Balaq were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I couldn't contravene the bidding of Yahweh my God, in doing something small or big. [19]But now, please stay here, you too, tonight, so I may know what Yahweh may further speak with me.'
[20]God came to Bil'am in the night and said to him, 'If the people have come to call for you, set off, go with them, but only the word that I speak to you – it is what you are to do.' [21]So Bil'am got up in the morning, saddled his donkey and went with the officials of Mo'ab.
[22]But Yahweh's anger raged because he was going, and Yahweh's envoy took his stand on the road as an adversary to him. He was riding on his donkey and his two boys were with him. [23]The donkey saw Yahweh's envoy standing in the road with his drawn sword in his hand, so the donkey turned away from the road and went into the fields. Bil'am struck the donkey to turn it away on to the road. [24]Then Yahweh's envoy stood in a vineyards lane, with a barrier this side and a barrier that side. [25]The donkey saw Yahweh's envoy and squeezed itself against the wall, and squeezed Bil'am's foot against the wall. He again struck her.

The donkey speaks

[26]Again Yahweh's envoy passed on and stood in a narrow place where there was no room to turn away right or left, [27]and the donkey saw Yahweh's envoy and lay down under Bil'am. Bil'am's anger raged and he struck the donkey with his stick.
[28]Yahweh opened the donkey's mouth and she said to Bil'am, 'What have I done to you, that you've struck me these three times?' [29]Bil'am said to the donkey, 'Because you've acted abusively to me! If only there were a sword in my hand, because I would now kill you.' [30]The donkey said to Bil'am, 'Am I not the donkey that you've ridden on ever since you had me until this

day? Have I at all shown myself in the habit of doing this to you?' He said, 'No.'
[31]Yahweh opened Bil'am's eyes and he saw Yahweh's envoy standing in the road with his drawn sword in his hand, and he bent his head and bowed low on his face. [32]Yahweh's envoy said to him, 'Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Here, I'm the one who came out as an adversary, because the journey before me was urgent. [33]The donkey saw me and turned away before me these three times. If she hadn't turned away from before me, then I would rather also have killed you now but kept her alive.' [34]Bil'am said to Yahweh's envoy, 'I did wrong, because I didn't know that you were standing to meet me in the road. So now, if it's bad in your eyes, I'll go back.' [35]Yahweh's envoy said to Bil'am, 'Go with the people. But you're to speak nothing but the word that I speak to you.' So Bil'am went with Balaq's officials.

Balaq instructs Bil'am

[36]Balaq heard that Bil'am was coming and went out to meet him at Mo'ab Town, which is on the Arnon border, which is at the farthest point of the border. [37]Balaq said to Bil'am, 'I sent urgently to you to call for you, didn't I. Why didn't you go to me? Am I truly unable to honour you?' [38]Bil'am said to Balaq, 'Here, I've come to you now. Am I really able to speak anything? The word that God puts in my mouth: I shall speak it.'
[39]Bil'am went with Balaq, and they came to Hutstsot Township. [40]Balaq sacrificed cattle and sheep and sent them off to Bil'am and to the officials who were with him. [41]In the morning Balaq got Bil'am and took him up Master's Heights. From there he looked at the edge of the people.
23 Bil'am said to Balaq, 'Build me seven altars here and make an offering for me here of seven bulls and seven rams.' [2]Balaq did as Bil'am spoke, and Balaq and Bil'am offered up a bull and a ram on each altar. [3]Bil'am said to Balaq, 'Take your stand by your burnt offering and I shall go. Maybe Yahweh will come to meet me, and whatever is the word that he lets me see, I shall tell you.'
He went to a bare place. [4]And God met with Bil'am. He said to him, 'I've laid out seven altars and offered up a bull and a ram on each altar.' [5]And Yahweh put a thing in Bil'am's mouth and said, 'Go back to Balaq and speak in this way.' [6]He went back to him. There he was, standing by his burnt offering, he and all the officials of Mo'ab.

Bil'am's message

[7]He took up his poem:

From Aram Balaq led me,
Mo'ab's king from the eastern mountains:
'Go, curse Jacob for me;
go, condemn Yisra'el.'
[8]How can I slight what God has not slighted,
how can I condemn what God has not condemned?
[9]For from the top of the crags I see him,
from the hills I behold him.
There, a people that dwells apart,
that does not think of itself as one of the nations.
[10]Who can count the earth of Ya'aqob [Jacob],
or the number of Yisra'el's dust cloud?
May I myself die the death of the upright;
may my future be like his!

[11]Balaq said to Bil'am, 'What have you done to me? It was to slight my enemies that I got you. Here, you've greatly blessed them!' [12]He answered, 'It's what Yahweh puts in my mouth that I keep watch to speak, isn't it.' [13]So Balaq said to him, 'Please get yourself with me to another place where you can see him. From there you will see only the edge of them. You won't see all of them. You can slight them for me from there.' [14]He took him to Lookouts Field, to the top of Pisgah, built seven altars, and offered up a bull and a ram on each altar. [15]He said to Balaq, 'Take your stand in this way by your offering. I myself will seek a meeting here.'
[16]Yahweh met with Bil'am and put a word in his mouth, and said, 'Go back to Balaq and speak in this way.' [17]He came to him and there he was, standing by his offering, the officials of Mo'ab with him. Balaq said to him, 'What did Yahweh say?'

Balaq tries again

[18]Bil'am took up his poem:

Get up, Balaq, listen;
give ear to me, ben Tsippor.
[19]God is not a human person so he lies,
a human being so he relents.
Would he say and not do,
speak and not implement it?
[20]Here, 'Bless' I received;

when he blesses, I can't turn it back.
[21]He has not envisaged trouble in Ya'aqob,
he has not visualized oppression in Yisra'el.
Yahweh its God is with it,
the acclamation of a king is in it,
[22]God who got them out of Misrayim
is like an oryx's horns for it.
[23]Because there's no spell against Ya'aqob,
no magic against Yisra'el.
It is said just once about Ya'aqob,
and about Yisra'el, what God is doing.
[24]Here – a people that gets up like a cougar,
raises itself like a lion.
It doesn't lie down until it eats prey
and drinks the blood of people who have been run through.

[25]Balaq said to Bil'am, 'Neither properly slight them nor properly bless them.' [26]Bil'am answered Balaq, 'I've spoken to you, haven't I: "Everything that Yahweh speaks with me, I must do."' [27]Balaq said to Bil'am, 'Please do go, I'll take you to another place. Maybe it will be all right in God's eyes to slight them for me from there.' [28]So Balaq took Bil'am to the top of Pe'or, which overlooks the face of The Wasteland. [29]Bil'am said to Balaq, 'Build me seven altars here and make an offering of seven bulls and seven rams for me.' [30]Balaq did as Bil'am said, and offered up a bull and a ram on each altar.

Ya'aqob's good tents

24 Bil'am had seen that it was good in Yahweh's eyes to bless Yisra'el, and he didn't go as on other times to find spells but set his face towards the wilderness. [2]Bil'am lifted his eyes and saw Yisra'el dwelling by its clans, and God's spirit came on him.
[3]He took up his poem:

A declaration of Bil'am ben Be'or,
a declaration of a man who is opened of eye,
[4]A declaration of one who hears God's words,
one who beholds Shadday's vision,
falling, with eyes uncovered:
[5]How good are your tents, Ya'aqob,
your dwellings, Yisra'el,
[6]Like wadis that spread out,
like gardens by a river,
Like aloes that Yahweh has planted,
like cedars by water.
[7]Water will flow from its branches,
its seed will be in much water.
Its king will rise above Agag,
its kingdom will go up high.
[8]God who brought it out of Misrayim
is like an oryx's horns to it.
It will devour nations, its attackers,
crush their bones, hit with its arrows.
[9]It bent down, lay like a lion,
like a cougar: who would rouse it?
The people who bless you – such a person is blessed,
the people who curse you – such a person is cursed!

[10]Balaq's anger raged against Bil'am and he struck the palms of his hands. Balaq said to Bil'am, 'I called for you to damn my enemies, but here, you've actually blessed, these three times! [11]So take flight for your life now to your own place. I said I would really honour you, but here, Yahweh has held you back from honour.'
[12]Bil'am said to Balaq, 'I also spoke to your envoys whom you sent to me, didn't I: [13]"If Balaq were to give me his house full of gold and silver, I couldn't contravene Yahweh's bidding by doing good or bad out of my own mind. What Yahweh speaks, I shall speak." [14]So now: here I am, going to my people. Come, I shall counsel you about what this people will do to your people in a later time.'

Bil'am's last words

[15]He took up his poem:

A declaration of Bil'am ben Be'or,
a declaration of a man who is opened of eye,

[16]A declaration of one who hears God's words,
who has knowledge from the One on High,
One who beholds Shadday's vision,
falling, with eyes uncovered:
[17]I see it, but not now;
I behold it, but not near.
A star has made a way from Ya'aqob,
a staff has risen from Yisra'el.
It has hit Mo'ab's crown,
the skull of all the Setites.
[18]Edom has become a possession,
Se'ir has become a possession, of its enemies,
While Yisra'el is acting forcefully;
[19]from Ya'aqob one will hold sway
and obliterate what survives of the town.

[20]He saw Amaleq and took up his poem:

If Amaleq is first among the nations,
but its future: it will perish permanently.

[21]He saw the Qenites and took up his poem:

Your settlement is powerful,
your nest placed in the cliff.
[22]Yet Qayin will be for burning up,
for how long will Ashshur take you captive?

[23]He took up his poem:

Ah, who will live
apart from God's determining it?
[24]Ships from Kittim's shore
will humble Ashshur.
They will humble Eber,
but it, too, will perish permanently.

[25]Bil'am set off and went and turned back to his place, and Balaq, too, went on his way.

25 But while Yisra'el lived at Acacias, the people started whoring with the Mo'abite women. [2]They called the people to their gods' sacrifices, and the people ate and bowed low to their gods. [3]So Yisra'el bound itself to Master-of-Pe'or, and Yahweh's anger raged against Yisra'el. [4]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Get all the heads of the people and execute them for Yahweh in the light of the sun, so Yahweh's angry rage may turn back from Yisra'el.' [5]So Mosheh said to Yisra'el's leaders, 'Each of you kill his men who bound themselves to Master-of-Pe'or.'

The passion of Pinhas and of Yahweh

[6]And there, a man from among the Yisra'elites came and presented a Midyanite woman to his brothers before the eyes of Mosheh and before the eyes of the entire assembly of the Yisra'elites; they were wailing at the entrance of the appointment tent. [7]Pinhas ben El'azar, the son of Aharon the priest, saw it, got up from among the assembly, took a spear in his hand, [8]came after the Yisra'elite man into the pavilion and thrust the two of them through, the Yisra'elite man and the woman, through to her insides.

The epidemic held back from the Yisra'elites, [9]but the people who died through the epidemic were 24,000.

[10]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [11]'Pinhas ben El'azar, the son of Aharon the priest – he's turned back my wrath from the Yisra'elites by his showing my passion among them, so I didn't finish off the Yisra'elites in my passion. [12]Therefore say: here, I am giving him my pact that things will be well. [13]It will be for him and for his offspring after him as a permanent priestly pact, on account of the fact that he was passionate for his God and made expiation for the Yisra'elites.'

[14]The name of the Yisra'elite man struck down (the one who was struck down with the Midyanite woman) was Zimri ben Salu, leader of an ancestral household belonging to the Shim'onites. [15]The name of the Midyanite woman who was struck down was Kozbi bat Tsur; he was head of the clans in an ancestral household in Midyan.

[16]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [17]'Attack the Midyanites, strike them down, [18]because they were attacking you with their wiles which they practised towards you, on account of Pe'or and on account of Kozbi, the daughter of a Midyanite leader, their sister, who was struck down on the day of the epidemic on account of Pe'or.'

Another head count: Re'uben, Shim'on, Gad

26 After the epidemic, Yahweh said to Mosheh and to El'azar ben Aharon the priest, [2]'Take a head count of the entire assembly

of the Yisra'elites from the age of twenty years and upwards by their ancestral household, everyone in Yisra'el who goes out in the army.' [3]Mosheh and El'azar the priest spoke with them in the Mo'ab steppes by the Yarden at Yeriho: [4]'From the age of twenty years and upwards . . .', as Yahweh ordered Mosheh.
The Yisra'elites who came out of the country of Misrayim:

[5]Re'uben, Yisra'el's firstborn – Re'uben's descendants:
of Hanok, the Hanokite kin-group; of Pallu, the Pallu'ite kin-group; [6]of Hetsron, the Hetsronite kin-group; of Karmi, the Karmite kin-group.
[7]These were the kin-groups of the Re'ubenites. Their register was 43,730.
[8]Sons of Pallu: Eli'ab.
[9]Sons of Eli'ab: Nemu'el, Datan and Abiram.
Datan and Abiram were the people called for by the assembly who campaigned against Mosheh and against Aharon within Qorah's group when they campaigned against Yahweh, [10]and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them with Qorah, when the company died, when fire devoured the 250 people and they became a banner. [11](Qorah's sons didn't die.)

[12]Shim'on's descendants by their kin-groups:
of Nemu'el, the Nemu'elite kin-group; of Yamin, the Yaminite kin-group; of Yakin, the Yakinite kin-group; [13]of Zerah, the Zarhite kin-group; of Sha'ul, the Sha'ulite kin-group.
[14]These were the kin-groups of the Shim'onites. 22,200.

[15]Gad's descendants by their kin-groups:
of Tsephon, the Tsephonite kin-group; of Haggi, the Haggite kin-group; of Shuni, the Shunite kin-group; [16]of Ozni, the Oznite kin-group; of Eri, the Erite kin-group; [17]of Arod, the Arodite kin-group; of Ar'eli, the Ar'elite kin-group.
[18]These were the kin-groups of the Gadites. By their register: 40,500.

Yehudah, Yissakar, Zebulun, Menashsheh, Ephraim

[19]Yehudah's sons: Er and Onan. Er and Onan died in the country of Kena'an.
[20]Yehudah's descendants by their kin-groups were:
of Shelah, the Shelahite kin-group; of Perets, the Partsite kin-group; of Zerah, the Zarhite kin-group.
[21]Perets's descendants were: of Hetsron, the Hetsronite kin-group; of Hamul, the Hamulite kin-group.
[22]These were the kin-groups of Yehudah. By their register: 76,500.

[23]Yissakar's descendants by their kin-groups:
of Tola, the Tola'ite kin-group; of Puvah, the Punite kin-group; [24]of Yashub, the Yashubite kin-group; of Shimron, the Shimronite kin-group.
[25]These were the kin-groups of Yissakar. By their register: 64,300.

[26]Zebulun's descendants by their kin-groups:
of Sered, the Sardite kin-group; of Elon, the Elonite kin-group; of Yahle'el, the Yahle'elite kin-group.
[27]These were the kin-groups of the Zebulunites. By their register: 60,500.

[28]Yoseph's descendants by their kin-groups, Menashsheh and Ephrayim.

[29]Menashsheh's descendants: of Makir, the Makirite kin-group.
Makir fathered Gil'ad; of Gil'ad: the kin-group of the Gil'adites.
[30]These were Gil'ad's descendants: I'ezer, the I'ezrite kin-group; of Heleq, the Helqite kin-group; [31]Asri'el, the Asri'elite kin-group; Shekem, the Shekemite kin-group; [32]Shemida, the Shemida'ite kin-group; Hepher, the Hephrite kin-group.
[33]Tselophhad ben Hepher – he had no sons, only daughters; the names of Tselophhad's daughters were Mahlah, No'ah, Hoglah, Milkah and Tirtsah.
[34]These were the kin-groups of Menashsheh. And their register: 52,700.

[35]These were Ephrayim's descendants by their kin-groups:
of Shutelah, the Shutalhite kin-group; of Beker, the Bakrite kin-group; of Tahan, the Tahanite kin-group.
[36]These were Shutelah's descendants: of Eran, the Eranite kin-group.
[37]These were the kin-groups of Ephrayim's descendants. By their register: 32,500.
These were Yoseph's descendants by their kin-groups.
[38]Binyamin's descendants by their kin-groups:
of Bela,the Bal'ite kin-group; of Ashbel, the Ashbelite kin-group; of Ahiram, the Ahiramite kin-group; [39]of Shephupham, the Shephuphamite kin-group; of Hupham, the Huphamite kin-group.
[40]Bela's sons were Ard and Na'aman.
The Ardite kin-group; of Na'aman, the Na'amanite kin-group.
[41]These were Binyamin's descendants by their kin-groups. And by their register: 45,600.

Dan, Asher, Naphtali, Levi

[42]These were Dan's descendants by their kin-groups:
of Shuham, the Shuhamite kin-group.
These were the kin-groups of Dan by their kin-groups.
[43]All the kin-groups of the Shuhamites, by their register: 64,400.

[44]Asher's descendants by their kin-groups:
of Imnah, the Imnahite kin-group; of Yishvi, the Yishvite kin-group; of Beri'ah, the Beri'hite kin-group.
[45]Of Beri'ah's descendants: of Heber, the Hebrite kin-group; of Malki'el, the Malki'elite kin-group.
[46]The name of Asher's daughter was Serah.
[47]These were the kin-groups of Asher's descendants. By their register: 53,400.

[48]Naphtali's descendants by their kin-groups:
of Yahtse'el, the Yahtse'elite kin-group; of Guni, the Gunite kin-group; [49]of Yetser, the Yitsrite kin-group; of Shillem, the Shillemite kin-group.
[50]These were the kin-groups of Napthali by their kin-groups. And by their register: 45,400.

[51]This was the register of the Yisra'elites: 601,730.
[52]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [53]'To these people the country is to be shared out as a domain by the number of the names. [54]For a big group, you're to make its domain big, and for a small group, you're to make its domain small. Each is to be given its domain in accordance with its register. [55]Only, the country is to be shared out by lot. By the names of the ancestral clans they're to have a domain. [56]In accordance with the lot its domain is to be shared out, between big and small.'

[57]This was the register of the Levites by their kin-groups:
of Gershon, the Gershonite kin-group; of Qehat, the Qehatite kin-group; of Merari, the Merarite kin-group.
[58]These were the kin-groups of Levi:
the Libnite kin-group, the Hebronite kin-group, the Mahlite kin-group, the Mushite kin-group, the Qorahite kin-group
Qehat fathered Amram, [59]and the name of Amram's wife was Yokebed bat Levi, to whom [her mother] gave birth for Levi in Misrayim. She gave birth to Aharon, Mosheh and Miryam their sister for Amram. [60]To Aharon were born Nadab and Abihu, El'azar and Itamar, [61]but Nadab and Abihu died when they presented outside fire before Yahweh.
[62]Their register was 23,000, every male from one month and upwards, because they were not registered among the Yisra'elites, because no domain was given to them among the Yisra'elites.

Five pushy women

[63]This was the register by Mosheh and El'azar the priest that they made of the Yisra'elites in the Mo'ab steppes by the Yarden at Yeriho. [64]Among these there was not one person from the register by Mosheh and Aharon the priest that they made of the Yisra'elites in the Sinay Wilderness, [65]because Yahweh had said to them, 'They will definitely die in the wilderness.' Not one of them remained except Kaleb ben Yephunneh and Yehoshua ben Nun.
27 The daughters of Tselophhad ben Hepher, son of Gil'ad son of Makir son of Menashsheh, of the kin-group of Menashsheh ben Yoseph, presented themselves. These are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, No'ah, Hoglah, Milkah and Tirtsah. [2]They stood before Mosheh, before El'azar the priest, and before the leaders and the entire assembly, at the entrance of the appointment tent, and said, [3]'Our father died in the wilderness. He was not among the group who kept an appointment against Yahweh, in Qorah's group, because he died for his own wrongdoing. He had no sons. [4]Why should our father's name disappear from among his kin-group because he had no son? Give us a holding among our father's brothers.'
[5]Mosheh presented their case before Yahweh, [6]and Yahweh said to Mosheh, [7]'The daughters of Tselophhad are speaking correctly. Do give them a holding, a domain among their father's brothers. Pass their father's domain over to them.
[8]You're to speak to the Yisra'elites: "When an individual dies and he had no son, you're to pass his domain over to his daughter. [9]If he had no daughter, you're to give his domain to his brothers. [10]If he had no brothers, you're to give his domain to his father's brothers. [11]If his father had no brothers, you're to give his domain to the nearest relative he had from his kin-group, and he will take possession of it. It's to be a ruling decree for the Yisra'elites, as Yahweh ordered Mosheh."'

Appointing a new leader

[12]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Go up this mountain in the Regions Across and look at the country that I'm giving the Yisra'elites. [13]When you've looked at it, you too will be gathered to your kin as Aharon your brother was gathered to them, [14]as you rebelled against my bidding when the assembly argued in the Tsin Wilderness, in connection with making me sacred in their eyes by means of the water' (i.e. Meribah Water at Qadesh in the Tsin Wilderness).
[15]Mosheh spoke to Yahweh: [16]'Yahweh, the God of the spirits of all flesh, must appoint an individual over the assembly [17]who will go out before them and come in before them, who will take them out and bring them in, so Yahweh's assembly won't be like a flock that has no shepherd.' [18]Yahweh said to Mosheh, 'Get yourself Yehoshua ben Nun, an individual who has spirit in him. Lean your hand on him. [19]Stand him before El'azar the priest and before the entire assembly and give him orders before their eyes, [20]and put on him some of your dignity in order that the entire assembly of the Yisra'elites may listen. [21]He will stand before

El'azar the priest and he will ask for the decision of the Urim before Yahweh for him. At his bidding they will go out and at his bidding they will come in, he and all the Yisra'elites with him, the entire assembly.' [22]Mosheh did as Yahweh ordered him. He got Yehoshua, stood him before El'azar the priest and before the entire assembly, [23]leaned his hands on him and gave him orders, as Yahweh spoke through Mosheh.

Daily and weekly offerings

28 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]'Order the Yisra'elites: "You're to keep watch about presenting to me my offering, my bread, as my gift offerings, a nice smell for me, at its set time." [3]You're to say to them, "This is the gift offering that you're to present to Yahweh:
lambs a year old that are whole, two per day as a regular burnt offering [4](you're to make one lamb in the morning and to make the second lamb at twilight);
[5]a tenth of a barrel of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with a quarter of a gallon of pressed oil [6](the regular burnt offering made at Mount Sinay, as a nice smell, a gift offering for Yahweh);
[7]its libation a quarter of a gallon for the one lamb (pour it in the sanctuary as a liquor libation for Yahweh);
[8]you're to make the second lamb at twilight; like the morning grain offering and like its libation you're to make it, a gift offering, a nice smell for Yahweh.
[9]On the sabbath day:
two lambs a year old that are whole;
two tenths of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, with its libation;
[10]a burnt offering for each sabbath along with the regular burnt offering and its libation.

New Year and Pesah

[11]At the beginning of your months you're to present
a burnt offering for Yahweh: two bulls from the herd, one ram and seven lambs a year old that are whole;
[12]three tenths of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, for each bull;
two tenths of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, for each ram;
[13]a tenth each of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, for each lamb:
a burnt offering, a nice smell, a gift offering for Yahweh;
[14]and their libations will be half a gallon of wine for a bull, a third of a gallon for a ram and a quarter of a gallon for a lamb. This is the month-by-month burnt offering for the months of the year. [15]And one he-goat from the flock as a decontamination for Yahweh is to be made, along with the regular burnt offering, with its libation.
[16]In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, is Pesah for Yahweh, [17]and on the fifteenth day of this month there is a festival. For seven days flatbread is to be eaten. [18]On the first day, a sacred occasion. You will not do any servile work. [19]You're to present
a gift offering, a burnt offering, for Yahweh: two bulls from the herd, one ram, and seven lambs a year old; they're to be ones of yours that are whole;
[20]their grain offering: you're to make fine flour mixed with oil, three tenths for a bull and two tenths for a ram; [21]you're to make a tenth for each lamb, for the seven lambs;
[22]one he-goat from the flock as a decontamination, to make expiation for you.
[23]You're to make these apart from the morning burnt offering, which is for the regular burnt offering. [24]You're to make ones like these each day for seven days as a meal, a gift offering, a nice smell for Yahweh. It's to be made along with the regular burnt offering, with its libation.
[25]On the seventh day it's to be a sacred occasion for you. You will not do any servile work.

The Shabu'ot Festival and the seventh month

[26]On the day of the first products, when you present a new grain offering for Yahweh, during your Shabu'ot Festival, it's to be a sacred occasion for you. You will not do any servile work. [27]You're to present
a burnt offering as a nice smell for Yahweh, two bulls from the herd, one ram, seven lambs a year old;
[28]their grain offering, fine flour mixed with oil, three tenths for each bull, two tenths for each ram, [29]a tenth each for each lamb, for the seven lambs;
[30]one he-goat from the flock to make expiation for you.
[31]You're to make them apart from the regular burnt offering and its grain offering (they are to be ones of yours that are whole), and their libations.
29 In the seventh month on the first of the month it's to be a sacred occasion for you. You will not do any servile work. It's to be for you the day of a horn blast. [2]You're to make
a burnt offering as a nice smell for Yahweh: a bull from the herd, a ram, seven lambs a year old that are whole;
[3]their grain offering: fine flour mixed with oil, three tenths for the bull, two tenths for the ram [4]and one tenth for each lamb, for the seven lambs;
[5]one he-goat from the flock as a decontamination to make expiation for you;
[6]apart from the month's burnt offering and its grain offering, and the regular burnt offering and its grain offering and their libations in accordance with the rulings for them, as a nice smell, a gift offering for Yahweh.

The Pilgrimage Festival celebrations

[7]On the tenth of this seventh month it's to be a sacred occasion for you and you're to humble yourselves. You will not do any work. [8]You're to present for Yahweh
a burnt offering, a nice smell, a bull from the herd, a ram, seven lambs a year old (they're to be ones of yours that are whole);
[9]their grain offering: fine flour mixed with oil, three tenths for the bull, two tenths for each ram [10]and one tenth for each lamb, for the seven lambs;
[11]one he-goat from the flock as a decontamination;
apart from the decontamination for complete expiation and the regular burnt offering and its grain offering, and their libations.
[12]On the fifteenth day of the seventh month it's to be a sacred occasion for you. You will not do any servile work. You're to hold a festival for Yahweh for seven days. [13]You're to present
a burnt offering, a gift offering, a nice smell for Yahweh: thirteen bulls from the herd, two rams, fourteen lambs a year old (they're to be whole);
[14]their grain offering: fine flour mixed with oil, three tenths for each bull for the thirteen bulls, two tenths for each ram for the two rams [15]and one tenth for each lamb for the fourteen lambs;
[16]one he-goat from the flock as a decontamination;
apart from the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its libation.
[17]On the second day:
twelve bulls from the herd, two rams, fourteen lambs a year old (ones that are whole);
[18]their grain offering and their libations for the bulls, for the rams and for the lambs, by their number in accordance with the ruling;
[19]one he-goat from the flock as a decontamination;
apart from the regular burnt offering, its grain offering and their libations.
[20]On the third day:
eleven bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs a year old (ones that are whole);
[21]their grain offering and their libations for the bulls, for the rams and for the lambs, by their number in accordance with the ruling;
[22]one he-goat as a decontamination;
apart from the regular burnt offering, its grain offering and its libation.

Days four to eight

[23]On the fourth day:
ten bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs a year old (ones that are whole);
[24]their grain offering and their libations for the bulls, for the rams and for the lambs, by their number in accordance with the ruling;
[25]one he-goat from the flock as a decontamination;
apart from the regular burnt offering, its grain offering and its libation.
[26]On the fifth day:
nine bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs a year old (ones that are whole);
[27]their grain offering and their libations for the bulls, for the rams and for the lambs, by their number in accordance with the ruling;
[28]one he-goat as a decontamination;
apart from the regular burnt offering, its grain offering and its libation.
[29]On the sixth day:
eight bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs a year old (ones that are whole);
[30]their grain offering and their libations for the bulls, for the rams and for the lambs, by their number in accordance with the ruling;
[31]one he-goat as a decontamination;
apart from the regular burnt offering, its grain offering and its libation.
[32]On the seventh day:
seven bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs a year old (ones that are whole);
[33]their grain offering and their libations for the bulls, for the rams and for the lambs, by their number in accordance with the ruling;
[34]one he-goat as a decontamination;
apart from the regular burnt offering, its grain offering and its libation.
[35]On the eighth day it's to be an assembly for you. You will not do any servile work. [36]You're to present
a burnt offering, a gift offering, a nice smell for Yahweh: a bull, a ram, seven lambs a year old (ones that are whole);
[37]their grain offering and their libations for the bull, for the ram and for the lambs, by their number in accordance with the ruling;
[38]one he-goat as a decontamination;
apart from the regular burnt offering, its grain offering and its libation.
[39]These you're to make for Yahweh at your set times (apart from your pledges and your free offerings) as your burnt offerings, your grain offerings, your libations and your well-being sacrifices."'
[40]Mosheh said it to the Yisra'elites in accordance with everything that Yahweh ordered Mosheh.

Promises that affect other people

30 Mosheh spoke to the heads of the Yisra'elites' clans: 'This is the thing Yahweh has ordered: [2]when a man makes a pledge to Yahweh or swears an oath to take on an obligation for himself, he will not treat his word as ordinary. He's to act in accordance with everything that comes out of his mouth.

[3]When a woman makes a pledge to Yahweh or takes on an obligation, in her father's household in her youth, [4]and her father hears of her pledge or her obligation that she takes on for herself, and her father is silent towards her, all her pledges stand and every obligation of hers that she's taken on herself stands. [5]But if her father restrains her on the day he hears it, none of her pledges or her obligations that she's taken on for herself stand. Yahweh will pardon her because her father has restrained her.

[6]If actually she comes to belong to a husband when there are pledges binding her or an extravagance that came from her lips that she's taken on for herself, [7]and her husband hears and is silent towards her on the day he hears, then her pledges stand and her obligation that she's taken on for herself stands. [8]But if her husband restrains her on the day he hears and contravenes her pledge that was binding her or the extravagance that came from her lips that she had taken on for herself, Yahweh will pardon her. ([9]But the pledge of a widow or a divorcee, everything that she's taken on for herself, stands in respect of her.)

Speak now or for ever hold your peace

[10]If in her husband's household she's made a pledge or taken on an obligation for herself by an oath [11]and her husband has heard and has been silent towards her (he hasn't restrained her), all her pledges stand and every obligation that she's taken on for herself stands. [12]But if her husband does contravene them on the day he hears it, nothing coming from her lips in relation to her pledges or to an obligation that she's taken on for herself stands. Her husband has contravened them and Yahweh will pardon her. [13]Every pledge and every sworn obligation to humble herself, her husband may let stand or her husband may contravene. [14]If her husband remains quite silent towards her from one day to the next, he lets stand all her pledges and all the obligations that are upon her. He lets them stand because he was silent towards her on the day he heard. [15]If he does contravene them after hearing it, he carries her waywardness.'

[16]These are the decrees that Yahweh ordered Mosheh between a husband and his wife, between a father and his daughter in her youth, in her father's household.

Unfinished business

31 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]'Take redress for the Yisra'elites from the Midyanites; afterwards, you will be gathered to your kin.' [3]Mosheh spoke to the people: 'Some men from among you are to equip themselves for war and go against Midyan to carry out Yahweh's redress on Midyan. [4]You're to send off to war a division for each clan, for all the Yisra'elite clans.'

[5]So from the Yisra'elite divisions, a division offered themselves for each clan, twelve divisions equipped for war. [6]Mosheh sent them off to the war, a division for each clan, with Pinhas ben El'azar as the priest for the war, the sacred articles and the trumpets for sounding in his hand. [7]They made war against Midyan as Yahweh ordered Mosheh, slaughtered every male [8]and killed the Midyanite kings: along with the others run through by them, Evi, Reqem, Tsur, Hur and Reba, the five Midyanite kings. And they killed Bil'am ben Be'or with the sword.

[9]The Yisra'elites captured the Midyanite women and their little ones and took as plunder all their animals, all their livestock and all their resources. [10]All their towns among their settlements and all their enclosures they burned in fire. [11]They took all the spoil and all the gains, human beings and animals, [12]and brought the captives, the gains and the spoil to Mosheh and to El'azar the priest, and to the Yisra'elite assembly at the camp in the Mo'ab steppes by the Yarden at Yeriho.

The danger of contamination

[13]Mosheh, El'azar the priest and all the leaders of the assembly came to meet them outside the camp. [14]Mosheh was furious with the people appointed over the force, the divisional officers and the section officers, who had come from battling in the war. [15]Mosheh said to them, 'You've let every female live! [16]Here, at Bil'am's word they were the ones who for the Yisra'elites came to be a means of instigating a trespass against Yahweh in the matter of Pe'or, so that the epidemic came on Yahweh's assembly. [17]So now, kill every male among the little ones and kill every woman who has had sex with someone, who has slept with a man. [18]But all the little ones among the women, who haven't had sex, who haven't slept with a man – let them live for yourselves.

[19]You yourselves, camp outside the camp for seven days. Everyone who killed someone and everyone who touched someone who had been run through – you're to decontaminate yourselves on the third day and on the seventh day, you and your captives. [20]All clothing, every skin article, everything made of goats' hair and every wood article – you're to decontaminate yourelves.'

[21]El'azar the priest said to the strong men who had come to the battle, 'This is the decree of instruction that Yahweh has ordered Mosheh. [22]However, the gold and the silver, the copper and the iron, the tin and the lead, [23]every object that goes through fire, you're to pass through fire and it will become pure. However, it's to decontaminate itself with the water for flowing. Everything that doesn't go through fire is to pass through water. [24]You're to wash your clothes on the seventh day, so you become pure. Afterwards, you may come into the camp.'

Counting the plunder

[25]Yahweh said to Mosheh: [26]'Take the sum total of the gains that were captured, human beings and animals – you and El'azar the priest and the ancestral heads of the assembly. [27]You're to halve the gains between the people who took part in the battle, who

went out to the war, and the entire assembly. [28]But you're to take up a levy for Yahweh from the people who were in the battle,
the people who went out to the war, one living thing in 500, from human beings, from the herd, from donkeys and from the flock.
[29]You're to take it from their half and give it to El'azar the priest as Yahweh's gift. [30]And from the Yisra'elites' half you're to
take one that's withheld from fifty, from human beings, from the herd, from donkeys, from the flock and from all the animals, and
give them to the Levites, who keep charge of Yahweh's dwelling.'
[31]Mosheh and El'azar the priest did as Yahweh ordered Mosheh. [32]The gains, above and beyond the plunder that the war
company took: flock, 675,000; [33]herd, 72,000; [34]donkeys, 61,000; [35]human beings (from the women who had not had sex, who
had not slept with a man), all the people 32,000.
[36]So the half share of the people who went out in the war was: the number of sheep 337,500, [37]so Yahweh's levy from the flock
was 675; [38]the herd 36,000, so Yahweh's levy 72; [39]donkeys 30,500, so Yahweh's levy 61; [40]human beings 16,000, so Yahweh's
levy 32 people. [41]Mosheh gave the levy, Yahweh's gift, to El'azar the priest, as Yahweh had ordered Mosheh.

The levy

[42]From the Yisra'elites' half which Mosheh divided off from the men who went to war, [43]the community's half: from the flock,
337,500; [44]the herd, 36,000; [45]donkeys, 30,500; [46]human beings, 16,000. [47]Mosheh took from the Yisra'elites' half the one
withheld from 50 of the human beings and of the animals and gave them to the Levites who keep charge of Yahweh's dwelling, as
Yahweh had ordered Mosheh.
[48]The people who had been appointed for the army divisions (the divisional officers and the section officers) drew near to
Mosheh. [49]They said to Mosheh, 'Your servants have taken the sum total of the men who were in the battle who were in our
control, and no one has absented himself from us. [50]We are presenting Yahweh's offering, each individual who found a gold
article: a bangle or a bracelet, a ring, an earring or a necklace, for making expiation for ourselves before Yahweh.' [51]Mosheh and
El'azar the priest took the gold from them, all the articles of workmanship. [52]All the gold, the gift that they took up for Yahweh,
came to 16,750 sheqels, from the divisional officers and from the section officers; [53]the people in the army had taken plunder each
individual for himself.
[54]So Mosheh and El'azar the priest took the gold from the divisional officers and from the section officers and brought it into
the appointment tent as a reminder for the Yisra'elites before Yahweh.

Cattle country

32 Now the Re'ubenites and the Gadites had much livestock, very numerous, and they looked at the country of Ya'zer and
Gil'ad: there, the place was a place for livestock. [2]So the Gadites and Re'ubenites came and said to Mosheh, to El'azar the
priest and to the assembly's leaders, [3]'Atarot, Dibon, Ya'zer, Nimrah, Heshbon, El'alah, Sebam, Nebo and Be'on, [4]the region that
Yahweh has struck down before the Yisra'elite assembly, is livestock country, and your servants have livestock.'
[5]So they said, 'If we have found grace in your eyes, may this region be given to your servants as a holding. Don't make us cross
the Yarden.' [6]Mosheh said to the Gadites and to the Re'ubenites, 'Are your brothers to come into battle while you people live
here? [7]Why would you restrain the Yisra'elites' mind from crossing into the country that Yahweh has given them? [8]Your fathers
did so when I sent them from Qadesh Barnea to look at the country. [9]They went up as far as Cluster Wadi and looked at the
country but restrained the Yisra'elites' mind so they wouldn't come into the country that Yahweh had given them. [10]And
Yahweh's anger raged that day and he swore: [11]"If the people who went up from Misrayim, from the age of twenty years and
upwards, see the land that I swore to Abraham, Yitshaq and Ya'aqob . . . Because they didn't fully follow after me", [12]except
Kaleb ben Yephunneh the Qenizzite and Yehoshua ben Nun, because they fully followed after Yahweh. [13]Yahweh's anger raged
against Yisra'el and he made them wander in the wilderness for forty years until the entire generation that acted badly in
Yahweh's eyes was finished.
[14]So here, you've risen in place of your fathers as a multitude of wrongdoers to add further to Yahweh's angry rage towards
Yisra'el. [15]When you turn back from following him, he will once again settle it down in the wilderness, and you'll destroy this
entire people.'

Mutual support

[16]They came up to him and said, 'We'll build sheepfolds here for our livestock and towns for our little ones, [17]but we ourselves
will equip ourselves as shock troops before the Yisra'elites till we've enabled them to come to their place, while our little ones
live in the fortified towns, because of the people who live in the country. [18]We won't come back to our houses till the Yisra'elites,
each one, has entered into his domain. [19]Because we won't have a domain with them across the Yarden yonder, because our
domain has come to us across the Yarden on the east.'
[20]Mosheh said to them. 'If you do this thing, if you equip yourselves before Yahweh for battle, [21]and every one of you who is
equipped crosses over the Yarden before Yahweh till he's dispossessed his enemies from before him [22]and the country is in
subjection before Yahweh, you can come back afterwards and be free in relation to Yahweh and to Yisra'el, and this region will
be your holding before Yahweh. [23]But if you don't do so: there, you will have done wrong in relation to Yahweh. Acknowledge
the wrongdoing you would do, which will find you. [24]Build yourselves towns for your little ones and folds for your sheep. But
what has gone out of your mouth, you're to do.'
[25]The Gadites and Re'ubenites said to Mosheh, 'Your servants will do as my lord is ordering. [26]Our little ones, our wives, our
livestock and all our animals will be there in the towns of Gil'ad, [27]while your servants will cross over for battle, everyone

equipped for war before Yahweh for battle, as my lord is saying.'

The region across the Yarden

[28]So Mosheh gave an order about them to El'azar the priest, to Yehoshua ben Nun and to the ancestral heads of the clans of the Yisra'elites. [29]Mosheh said to them, 'If the Gadites and Re'ubenites cross over the Yarden with you, each one equipped for battle before Yahweh, and the country is in subjection before you, you may give them the region of Gil'ad as a holding, [30]but if they don't cross over equipped with you, they will receive holdings among you in the country of Kena'an.'
[31]The Gadites and Re'ubenites avowed, 'What Yahweh has spoken to your servants, so we will do. [32]We ourselves will cross over equipped before Yahweh to the country of Kena'an, but the domain which is our holding will be with us across the Yarden.'
[33]So Mosheh gave to them (to the Gadites, to the Re'ubenites and to the half-clan of Menashsheh ben Yoseph) the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the country with its towns in the territories of the country's towns, all round. [34]The Gadites built up Dibon, Atarot, Aro'er, [35]Atrot Shophan, Ya'zer, Yogbehah, [36]Bet Nimrah and Bet Haran, as fortified towns and sheepfolds. [37]The Re'ubenites built up Heshbon, El'ale, Qiryatayim, [38]Nebo, Ba'al Me'on (these were changed in name) and Sibmah. They gave names to the towns that they built up.
[39]The descendants of Makir ben Menashsheh went to Gil'ad, captured it and dispossessed the Amorites who were there. [40]Mosheh gave Gil'ad to Makir ben Menashsheh and he lived there. [41]When Ya'ir ben Menashsheh went and captured their villages, he named them Ya'ir's Villages. [42]When Nobah went and captured Qenat and its daughter-towns, he named it Nobah, after his own name.

The stages of the journey

33 These were the movements of the Yisra'elites who came out of the country of Misrayim by their troops at the direction of Mosheh and Aharon. [2]Mosheh wrote down their departure points for their movements at Yahweh's bidding. These were the movements by their starting points.
[3]They moved on from Ra'meses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month. On the day after the Pesah the Yisra'elites went out with hands high before the eyes of all Misrayim [4]as the Misrayimites were burying the people Yahweh had struck down among them, every firstborn; on their gods Yahweh had performed acts of authority.
[5]The Yisra'elites moved on from Ra'meses and camped at Sukkot.
[6]They moved on from Sukkot and camped at Etam, which is on the edge of the wilderness.
[7]They moved on from Etam and turned back towards Pi Hahirot, which is on the east of Ba'al Tsephon, and camped near Migdol.
[8]They moved on from Pene Hahirot, passed through the middle of the sea into the wilderness, went three days' journey in the Etam Wilderness and camped at Marah.
[9]They moved on from Marah, came to Elim, and at Elim there were twelve springs of water and seventy palms, and they camped there.
[10]They moved on from Elim and camped by the Reed Sea.
[11]They moved on from the Reed Sea and camped in the Syn Wilderness.
[12]They moved on from the Syn Wilderness and camped at Dophqah.
[13]They moved on from Dophqah and camped at Alush.
[14]They moved on from Alush and camped at Rephidim, and there was no water for the people to drink there.

Up to the death of Aharon

[15]They moved on from Rephidim and camped in the Sinay Wilderness.
[16]They moved on from the Sinay Wilderness and camped at Qibrot Hatta'avah.
[17]They moved on from Qibrot Hatta'avah and camped at Hatserot.
[18]They moved on from Hatserot and camped at Ritmah.
[19]They moved on from Ritmah and camped at Rimmon Perets.
[20]They moved on from Rimmon Perets and camped at Libnah.
[21]They moved on from Libnah and camped at Rissah.
[22]They moved on from Rissah and camped at Qehelat.
[23]They moved on from Qehelat and camped at Mount Shepher.
[24]They moved on from Mount Shepher and camped at Haradah.
[25]They moved on from Haradah and camped at Maqhelot.
[26]They moved on from Maqhelot and camped at Tahat.
[27]They moved on from Tahat and camped at Terah.
[28]They moved on from Terah and camped at Mitqah.
[29]They moved on from Mitqah and camped at Hashmonah.
[30]They moved on from Hashmonah and camped at Moserot.
[31]They moved on from Moserot and camped at Bene Ya'aqan.
[32]They moved on from Bene Ya'aqan and camped at Hor Haggidgad.

[33]They moved on from Hor Haggidgad and camped at Yotbatah.
[34]They moved on from Yotbatah and camped at Abronah.
[35]They moved on from Abronah and camped at Etsyon Geber.
[36]They moved on from Etsyon Geber and camped in the Tsin Wilderness – i.e. Qadesh.
[37]They moved on from Qadesh and camped at Mount Hor on the edge of the country of Edom.
[38]Aharon the priest went up Mount Hor at Yahweh's bidding and died there in the fortieth year after the Yisra'elites left the country of Misrayim, in the fifth month, on the first of the month. [39]Aharon was a man of 123 years when he died on Mount Hor.
[40]The Kena'anite, the king of Arad (he was living in the Negeb, in the country of Kena'an), heard about the coming of the Yisra'elites.

Almost the end

[41]They moved on from Mount Hor and camped at Tsalmonah.
[42]They moved on from Tsalmonah and camped at Punon.
[43]They moved on from Punon and camped at Obot.
[44]They moved on from Obot and camped at Iyyim in the Regions Across, within the border of Mo'ab.
[45]They moved on from Iyyim and camped at Dibon Gad.
[46]They moved on from Dibon Gad and camped at Almon Diblatayim.
[47]They moved on from Almon Diblatayim and camped in the mountains of the Regions Across, near Nebo.
[48]They moved on from the mountains of the Regions Across and camped in the Mo'ab steppes by the Yarden at Yeriho. [49]They camped by the Yarden from Bet Hayeshimot as far as Acacias Meadow in the Mo'ab steppes.
[50]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh in the Mo'ab steppes by the Yarden at Yeriho: [51]'Speak to the Yisra'elites and say to them: "When you're crossing the Yarden into the country of Kena'an, [52]you're to dispossess all the people living in the country from before you, obliterate all their carvings, obliterate all their cast images and annihilate all their shrines, [53]and to take possession of the country and live in it, because I am giving the country to you to take possession of. [54]You're to have the country as a domain by lot by your kin-groups. For a large one you're to make its domain large and for a small one to make its domain small. Wherever the lot comes out for it, that's where it will be for it, as you enter into your domain by your ancestral clans.
[55]If you don't dispossess the people living in the country from before you, the ones among them whom you allow to remain will be barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides. They will attack you in the country where you're living, [56]and what I imagined doing to them I'll do to you."'

The dimensions of the country

34 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [2]'Order the Yisra'elites: "When you come into the country of Kena'an, this is the country that will fall to you as a domain, the country of Kena'an by its borders.
[3]Your southern aspect will go from the Tsin Wilderness along the sides of Edom. Your southern border will go from the end of the Salt Sea on the east. [4]Your border will be south of Scorpions Ascent and pass on to Tsin and its furthest extent will be south of Qadesh Barnea. It will extend to Hatsar-addar and pass on to Atsmon. [5]The border will go round from Atsmon to the Misrayimite Wadi and its furthest extent will be at the Sea.
[6]The western border: it will be the Great Sea for you. This will be your western border, the Great Sea.
[7]This will be your northern border: from the Great Sea you're to mark out Mount Hor for yourselves. [8]From Mount Hor you're to mark out Lebo Hamat. The border's furthest extent will be Tsedad [9]and the border will extend to Ziphron; its furthest extent will be Hatsar Enan. This will be your northern border.
[10]You're to mark out for yourselves as your eastern border from Hatsar Enan to Shepham. [11]The border will go down from Shepham to Hariblah on the east of Ayin. The border will go down and hit the flank of the Kinneret Sea on the east. [12]The border will go down to the Yarden and its furthest extents will be the Salt Sea.
This will be your country in respect of your borders all round."'
[13]Mosheh ordered the Yisra'elites: 'This is the country that you're to enter into as a domain by lot, which Yahweh ordered to give to the nine-and-a-half clans, [14]because the clan of the Re'ubenites by their ancestral household, the clan of the Gadites by their ancestral household and the half-clan of Menashsheh have received their domain, [15]in that the two-and-a-half clans have received their domain across the Yarden at Yeriho on the east, towards the sunrise.'

Twelve trusted men

[16]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [17]'These are the names of the people who will make the country into domains for you: El'azar the priest and Yehoshua ben Nun. [18]You're to get one leader from each clan to make the country into domains. [19]These are the people's names:

for the clan of Yehudah, Kaleb ben Yephunneh;
[20]for the clan of the Shim'onites, Shemu'el ben Ammihud;
[21]for the clan of Binyamin, Elidad ben Kislon;
[22]for the clan of the Danites as leader, Buqqi ben Yogli;
[23]for the Yosephites:

for the clan of the Menashshites as leader, Hanni'el ben Ephod;
[24]and for the clan of the Ephrayimites as leader, Qemu'el ben Shiphtan;
[25]for the clan of the Zebulunites as leader, Elitsaphan ben Parnak;
[26]for the clan of the Yissakarites as leader, Palti'el ben Azzan;
[27]for the clan of the Asherites as leader, Ahihud ben Shelomi;
[28]and for the clan of the Naphtalites as leader, Pedahel ben Ammihud.'

[29]These are the people whom Yahweh ordered to make the country into domains for the Yisra'elites in the country of Kena'an.

35 Yahweh spoke to Mosheh in the Mo'ab steppes by the Yarden at Yeriho: [2]'Order the Yisra'elites that they're to give the Levites towns to live in, out of the domain they hold, and they're to give the Levites the towns' pastureland round them. [3]The towns will be theirs to live in and their pasturelands will be for their animals, for their property and for all their creatures. [4]The pasturelands of the towns that you're to give the Levites will be from the town wall outwards, 500 metres round. [5]Outside the town, you're to measure on the east side 1,000 metres, on the south side 1,000 metres, on the west side 1,000 metres and on the north side 1,000 metres, with the town in the middle. This will be the towns' pasturelands for them.

The asylum towns

[6]The towns that you give to the Levites will be the six asylum towns that you give a killer to flee to, but you're to give forty-two towns along with them. [7]All the towns that you give to the Levites will be forty-eight towns, them and their pasturelands. [8]The towns that you give from the Yisra'elites' holding: from a large one make it large and from a small one make it small. Each in proportion to the domain it receives is to give some of its towns to the Levites.'

[9]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh: [10]'Speak to the Yisra'elites: "When you're crossing the Yarden into the country of Kena'an, [11]you're to appoint for yourselves towns that will be asylum towns for you, so a killer who strikes down a person by accident may flee there. [12]The towns will be an asylum for you from the restorer. The killer will not die until he's stood before the assembly for a ruling.

[13]The towns that you're to set: you're to have six asylum towns. [14]You're to set three towns across the Yarden and set three towns in the country of Kena'an. They will be asylum towns. [15]For the Yisra'elites, for the resident and for the settler among them, these six towns are to be for asylum for anyone who strikes down a person by accident to flee there.

[16]But if he struck him down with an iron object and he died, he's a killer; the killer is absolutely to be put to death. [17]If he struck him down with a stone in his hand by which someone might die and he dies, he's a killer; the killer is absolutely to be put to death. [18]Or if he struck him down with a wooden object in his hand by which someone might die and he dies, he's a killer; the killer is absolutely to be put to death. [19]The blood restorer himself is to put the killer to death. On coming upon him, he's to put him to death.

Deciding on responsibility

[20]If he knocks him down in hostility or he threw something at him with deliberation and he died, [21]or he struck him down with his hand in enmity and he died, the one who struck down is absolutely to be put to death. He's a killer. The blood restorer is to put the killer to death on coming upon him.

[22]But if he knocked him down on meeting him without enmity, or threw any object at him without deliberation [23]or with any stone by which he might die, without seeing, but he made it fall on him and he died, but he was not his enemy and was not seeking something bad for him, [24]the assembly is to decide between the one who strikes down and the blood restorer. [25]The assembly is to rescue the killer from the hand of the blood restorer.

The assembly is to take him back to his asylum town, to which he had fled, and he's to live in it until the death of the great priest whom they anointed with the sacred oil. [26]But if the killer actually goes out of the boundary of his asylum town to which he's fled, [27]and the blood restorer finds him outside the boundary of his asylum town, and the blood restorer kills the killer, there's no blood attaching to him, [28]because he was to live in his asylum town until the great priest's death. After the great priest's death the killer may go back to the region of his holding.

[29]These are to be the ruling decree for you through your generations in all your settlements.

[30]Anyone who strikes a person down, it's at the mouth of witnesses that people may kill the killer, and one witness will not avow against a person so he dies. [31]You will not accept a ransom for the life of a killer who is in the wrong and should die, because he is absolutely to be put to death. [32]And you will not accept a ransom in respect of fleeing to his asylum town, so that he may go back to live in the region before the priest's death. [33]You will not pollute the country where you are, because blood pollutes the country and the country cannot be expiated for blood that has been shed in it except by the blood of the one who shed it. [34]You will not make taboo the country in which you're living, within which I'm dwelling, because I am Yahweh dwelling among the Yisra'elites."'

The five pushy women pushed back a bit

36 The ancestral heads of the kin-group of the descendants of Gil'ad ben Makir, son of Menashsheh, from the kin-groups of the Yosephites, drew near and spoke before Mosheh and before the leaders, the ancestral heads of the Yisra'elites. [2]They said, 'Yahweh ordered my lord to give the country to the Yisra'elites as a domain by lot, and my lord was ordered by Yahweh to give our brother Tselophhad's domain to his daughters. [3]But they may become wives of someone from the members of the other Yisra'elite clans, and their domain will disappear from our ancestral domain and add to the domain of the clan to which they come

to belong; it will disappear from our domain by lot. [4]And if the Yisra'elites have a ram's horn [year], their domain will add to the domain of the clan to which they belong; from the domain of our ancestral clan their domain will disappear.'

[5]So Mosheh ordered the Yisra'elites at Yahweh's bidding: 'The Yosephite clan are speaking correctly. [6]This is the thing that Yahweh has ordered concerning Tselophhad's daughters: "They may become the wives of whoever is good in their eyes, yet they're to become wives of a kin-group in their father's clan. [7]The domain of the Yisra'elites will not go round from clan to clan, because the Yisra'elites are to attach themselves, each individual, to his clan's ancestral domain. [8]Any daughter who possesses a domain from the Yisra'elites' clans is to become the wife of someone from a kin-group in her ancestral clan, in order that the Yisra'elites may possess, each person, his ancestral domain. [9]No domain will go round from a clan to another clan because the clans of the Yisra'elites are to attach themselves, each individual, to his domain."'

[10]As Yahweh ordered Mosheh, so Tselophhad's daughters did. [11]Mahlah, Tirtsah, Hoglah, Milkah and No'ah, Tselophhad's daughters, became wives of their uncles' sons. [12]They became wives in the kin-groups of the descendants of Menashsheh ben Yoseph, and their domain was in the clan of their ancestral kin-group.

[13]These are the orders and the rulings that Yahweh gave to the Yisra'elites through Mosheh in the Mo'ab steppes by the Yarden at Yeriho.

Deuteronomy

The name 'Deutero-nomy' gives the impression that this document gives us a 'second law', and that's not a bad description of it. The first law is then the teaching Yahweh gave Moses at Sinay, which dominates the second half of Exodus and the whole of Leviticus. Deuteronomy is another version of that teaching, retreading much of the same ground as the first. We noted in the Introduction to Leviticus that the Torah brings together several versions of the way God laid the law down to Israel over the centuries. God guided his people in changing social contexts by means of people such as priests, prophets and writers, who in effect presented their teaching as what Moses would say if he were here now, and people accepted it as such. They recognized that it was Moses' God who had been speaking to them in their new context.

In Deuteronomy as in Leviticus, the social context is more developed and urban than it is in the older teaching in Exodus. But Deuteronomy no longer looks at matters that priests especially need to know about, as Leviticus does. It talks about issues such as the sort of person the king ought to be and the need to tell the difference between a real prophet and a pretend prophet. That last question was a lively one in Jeremiah's day, and it wouldn't be surprising if that period (the seventh century) forms the background to Deuteronomy. One of the kings of that time, Josiah, attempted a brave reform of Judah's life and religion, seeking to remove features that reflected more the way the Canaanites and the Assyrians thought of God than the way the Israelites ought to think of God (you can read his story in 2 Kings 22—23), and there are overlaps between Josiah's reformation and the teaching of Deuteronomy.

Another feature of Deuteronomy that makes sense against this background is its emphasis on the pact between Yahweh and Israel, which it portrays along the lines of the treaty relationship that obtained between the imperial power of Assyria and a little people like Judah. In effect Deuteronomy says, 'You know how the Assyrians expect you to relate to them, with them as the big power and you expected to do what they say? Well, I'll tell you who is really the big power and what *he* expects you to do.'

As a treaty/pact/covenant document, Deuteronomy outlines as follows:

1—3	The relationship between the two parties in the past
4—11	The big power's basic expectations, especially of loyalty
12—26	The big power's detailed expectations
27	Regulations for the formalizing of the relationship
28—30	The blessings of cooperation, and the opposite
31—34	Moses' final words

The long section of detailed expectations compares with another kind of document we know from the Middle East, one in which a king would expound some of his social and legal policies.

Jesus suggests several guidelines for discerning how we learn from Deuteronomy. He takes some key principles for relating to God from Deuteronomy 4—11 (see Matthew 4.1–11). He declares that the Torah as a whole is an exposition of Deuteronomy 6.5 and Leviticus 19.18 (see Matthew 22.37), so that in reading Deuteronomy it's always worth asking how its requirements are an exposition of love for God or love for one's neighbour. Jesus also takes up Deuteronomy's own affirmation that it is written the way it is because it makes allowance for people's stubbornness (Matthew 19.1–8), so that in reading Deuteronomy, it's also worth asking, how is God making allowance for our stubbornness here?

Mosheh (Moses) begins his last sermon

1 These are the words that Mosheh spoke to all Yisra'el [Israel] across the Yarden [Jordan] in the wilderness, in the steppe
near Suph, between Pa'ran and Tophel, Laban, Hatserot and Di Zahab. ([2]It's eleven days from Horeb by way of Mount Se'ir
to Qadesh Barnea.) [3]In the fortieth year in the eleventh month on the first of the month, Mosheh spoke to the Yisra'elites in
accordance with everything Yahweh had ordered him for them, [4]after he had struck down Sihon king of the Amorites who was
living in Heshbon and Og king of Bashan who was living in Ashtarot (in Edre'i). [5]Across the Yarden, in the country of Mo'ab,
Mosheh resolved to expound this instruction.

[6]Yahweh our God himself spoke to us at Horeb: 'Your stay at this mountain has been long. [7]Turn your face, move yourselves
on, come to the highland of the Amorites and to all their neighbours in the steppe, in the highland, in the foothills, in the Negeb,
on the sea coast (the country of the Kena'anites [Canaanites]) and the Lebanon, as far as the big river (the River Euphrates). [8]See,
I've put the country before you. Come and take possession of the country that Yahweh swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, to
Yitshaq [Isaac] and to Ya'aqob [Jacob], to give to them and to their offspring after them.'

[9]I said to you at that time, 'I can't carry you alone; [10]Yahweh your God has made you numerous. Here you are today, like the
stars in the heavens in the large number. [11]May Yahweh the God of our ancestors add to you as you are, a thousand times, and
bless you as he spoke to you. [12]Alone, how can I carry the weight of you, the burden of you and your arguing? [13]Provide for
yourselves people who are smart, discerning and knowledgeable for your clans, and I will make them into your heads.'

Recalling the time in the wilderness

[14]You answered me, 'The thing that you spoke of is good to do.' [15]So I got your clan heads, people who were smart and
knowledgeable, and made them heads over you, divisional officials, section officials, unit officials, group officials and overseers
for your clans. [16]I ordered the people in authority over you at that time: 'Listen between your brothers and exercise authority

faithfully between an individual and his brother and a resident. [17]You will not recognize a person in making a decision. Listen to the small as you listen to the big. You will be in dread of no one's person, because decision-making belongs to God. The thing that's too tough for you, present to me, and I'll listen to it.'

[18]I gave you orders at that time about all the things that you should do. [19]We moved on from Horeb and went through that entire great, awe-inspiring wilderness that you saw on the way to the Amorite highland, as Yahweh our God ordered us, and we came as far as Qadesh Barnea. [20]I said to you, 'You've come as far as the Amorite highland, which Yahweh our God is giving to us. [21]See, Yahweh your God has put the country before you. Go up, take possession, as Yahweh the God of your ancestors spoke to you. Don't be afraid. Don't be scared.'

[22]You all drew near to me and said, 'Let's send people before us so they can check out the country for us and bring us back word about the way by which we should go up, and the towns that we shall come to.' [23]The thing was good in my eyes, and I got from you twelve people, one individual for each clan. [24]They turned their face and went up into the highland and came as far as Cluster Wadi. They investigated it [25]and got some of the country's fruit in their hand and carried it down to us. They brought us back word, and said, 'The country that Yahweh our God is giving us is good.'

Recalling the failure of nerve

[26]But you were not willing to go up. You rebelled against the bidding of Yahweh your God. [27]You muttered in your tents and said, 'It was because of Yahweh's hostility towards us that he got us out of the country of Misrayim [Egypt] to give us into the hand of the Amorites, to annihilate us. [28]Where are we going up to? Our brothers have made our minds melt, saying "It was a people bigger and taller than us, and towns big and fortified to the heavens, and also Anaqites, that we saw there."'

[29]I said to you, 'You will not be frightened; you will not be afraid of them. [30]Yahweh your God is going before you. He will do battle for you, in accordance with all that he did with you in Misrayim before your eyes, [31]and in the wilderness where you saw how Yahweh your God carried you as a man carries his son, on the entire way that you went until you came to this place. [32]Despite this fact, you don't trust in Yahweh your God [33]who goes before you on the way to investigate a place for you to camp, in fire by night (to enable you to see the way by which you should go) and in a cloud by day.'

[34]Yahweh heard the sound of your words and he was furious. He swore, [35]'If an individual among these people, this bad generation, sees the good country that I swore to give to your ancestors . . . [36]Except Kaleb [Caleb] ben Yephunneh, he will see it. To him I'll give the country on which he set foot, and to his descendants, because of the fact that he fully followed after Yahweh.'

How Mosheh paid a price

[37]With me, too, Yahweh showed himself angry, on your account, saying 'You too will not come there. [38]Yehoshua [Joshua] ben Nun, who stands before you, he will come there. Strengthen him, because he's the one who will enable Yisra'el to take it as a domain.

[39]Your little ones, who you said would become plunder, and your children who haven't got to know good from bad today, they'll come there. To them I'll give it. They'll take possession of it. [40]But you, turn your face for yourselves, move on into the wilderness by the Reed Sea road.'

[41]You answered, 'We've done wrong in relation to Yahweh. We ourselves will go up and do battle in accordance with all that Yahweh our God ordered us.' And you wrapped on your battle gear, each person, and got ready to go up into the highland. [42]But Yahweh said to me, 'Say to them, "You will not go up and you will not do battle, because I will not be among you so that you don't take a beating before your enemies."'

[43]I spoke to you, but you didn't listen. You rebelled against Yahweh's bidding and asserted yourselves and went up into the highland. [44]And the Amorites who live in that highland came out to meet you and pursued you as bees do. They crushed you in Se'ir as far as Hormah. [45]You again wailed before Yahweh, but Yahweh didn't listen to your voice. He didn't give ear to you. [46]So you stayed at Qadesh for a long time, the very time that you stayed there.

2 Then we turned our face and moved on into the wilderness by the Reed Sea road, as Yahweh spoke to me. We went round the highland of Se'ir for a long time.

The beginning of the end

[2]Then Yahweh said to me: [3]'Your going round this highland has been long. Turn your face for yourselves north. [4]Order the people: "You're going to pass through the border of your brothers, Esaw's descendants, who live in Se'ir. They'll be afraid of you. You're to keep close watch on yourselves: [5]don't engage them, because I shall not give you any of their country, as much as the sole of a foot treads on, because I gave Esaw Mount Se'ir as a possession. [6]You may buy food from them for silver so you may eat, and you may also purchase water from them for silver so you may drink. [7]Because Yahweh your God has blessed you in all the action of your hand. He's known your going through this great wilderness. Yahweh your God being with you these forty years, you haven't lacked anything."'

[8]We passed on, away from our brothers, Esaw's descendants, who live in Se'ir, away from the steppe road, away from Elat and from Etsyon Geber. We turned our face and passed by the Mo'ab Wilderness road. [9]Yahweh said to me, 'Don't attack Mo'ab. Don't engage them in battle, because I shall not give you any of its country as a possession, because I gave Ar to Lot's descendants as a possession.

([10]The Terrors lived in it before, a big and numerous people, and as tall as the Anaqites. [11]They are also thought of as Repha'ites, like the Anaqites, but the Mo'abites call them Terrors. [12]The Horites lived in Se'ir before, but Esaw's descendants

dispossessed them, annihilated them from before them and lived in their place, as Yisra'el did in connection with the country it came to possess, which Yahweh gave them.)

[13]Now, set off, get yourselves across Wadi Zered.' So we crossed Wadi Zered.

When the old generation is gone

[14]The time that we were going from Qadesh Barnea until we crossed Wadi Zered was thirty-eight years, until the entire generation of men of battle came to an end from within the camp, as Yahweh swore about them. [15]Indeed, Yahweh's hand was against them to root them out from within the camp, until they came to an end.
[16]When all the men of battle came to an end, dying from within the camp, [17]Yahweh spoke to me: [18]'Today you're passing through Mo'ab's border, through Ar, [19]and you will draw near to the Ammonites. Don't attack them. Don't engage with them, because I shall not give you any of the Ammonites' country as a possession, because I've given it to Lot's descendants as a possession.

([20]It is also thought of as the country of the Repha'ites; they lived in it before. The Ammonites call them Zamzummites, [21]a people big and numerous, and as tall as the Anaqites. Yahweh annihilated them from before them, and they dispossessed them and lived in their place, [22]as he did for Esaw's descendants who live in Se'ir, in that he annihilated the Horites from before them. They dispossessed them and lived in their place, until this day. [23]The Avvites who lived in villages as far as Azzah [Gaza] – the Kaphtorites who came from Kaphtor annihilated them and lived in their place.)

[24]Set off, move on, cross Wadi Arnon, see, I've given Sihon king of Heshbon, the Amorite, into your hand, he and his country. Start taking possession. Engage them in battle. [25]This day I shall start putting dread of you and fear of you on the face of the peoples under the entire heavens, peoples who will hear report of you and tremble and shake before you.'

An attempt to be peaceful

[26]I sent envoys from the Easterlies Wilderness to Sihon king of Heshbon with words of peace: [27]'I want to pass through your country by the road. I shall go by the road. I shall not turn aside right or left. [28]You can sell me food for silver so I may eat, and you can give me water for silver so I can drink. I only want to pass through on foot [29](as Esaw's descendants who live in Se'ir did for me, and the Mo'abites who live in Ar) until I cross the Yarden into the country that Yahweh our God is giving us.'
[30]But Sihon king of Heshbon was not willing to let us pass through, because Yahweh had toughened his spirit and made his mind firm in order to give him into your hand this very day. [31]Yahweh said to me, 'See, I've started giving over before you Sihon and his country. Start taking possession of his country.'
[32]Sihon came out to meet us in battle, he and his entire people, at Yahats, [33]but Yahweh our God gave him over before us and we struck him down, he and his sons and his entire people. [34]We captured all his towns at that time and devoted every town, men, women and little ones. We let no survivor remain. [35]Only the animals did we take as plunder for ourselves, and the spoil in the towns that we captured. [36]From Aro'er, which is on the edge of Wadi Arnon, and the town that's in the wadi, as far as Gil'ad, there was no township that was too high for us. Yahweh our God gave over everything before us. [37]Only, you didn't draw near to the country of the Ammonites, the entire bank of Wadi Yabboq and the towns in the highland – everything that Yahweh our God ordered.
3 We turned our face and went up the Bashan road. Og king of Bashan came out to meet us in battle, he and his entire company, at Edre'i. [2]Yahweh said to me, 'Don't be afraid of him, because I've given him into your hand, him and his entire people and his country. You're to do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who was living in Heshbon.'

The man with the huge iron bed

[3]So Yahweh our God also gave Og king of Bashan into our hand, he and his entire company. We struck him down until no survivor remained to him. [4]We captured all his towns at that time. There was no township that we didn't take from them: sixty towns (the entire Argob area, Og's kingdom in Bashan), [5]all these towns fortified with a lofty wall, doors and a bar, apart from the country towns, very many. [6]We devoted them as we did Sihon king of Heshbon, devoting every town: men, the women and the little ones. [7]But all the animals and the spoil in the towns we took as plunder for ourselves.
[8]So at that time we took from the hand of the two Amorite kings the country that was across the Yarden, from Wadi Arnon as far as Mount Hermon ([9]the Tsidonites call Hermon Siryon and the Amorites call it Senir), [10]all the towns in the flatland, all Gil'ad and all Bashan as far as Salkah and Edre'i, the towns of Og's kingdom in Bashan . . .

([11]Because only Og king of Bashan remained of what was left of the Repha'ites. There, his bed, a bed made of iron – it's in Rabbah of the Ammonites, isn't it – was five metres in its length and two metres in its width by the human measure. [12]So we took possession of this region at that time. From Aro'er, which is near Wadi Arnon, and half the highland of Gil'ad and its towns, I gave to the Re'ubenites and to the Gadites. [13]The rest of Gil'ad and all Bashan, Og's kingdom, I gave to the half-clan of Menashsheh. The entire Argob area (all that part of Bashan used to be called the region of the Repha'ites): [14]Ya'ir ben Menashsheh received the entire Argob area as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Ma'akatites. He named them after his own name (Bashan), Ya'ir's Villages, until this day. [15]To Makir I gave Gil'ad. [16]To the Re'ubenites and to the Gadites I gave the part of Gil'ad as far as Wadi Arnon, the middle of the wadi, the border and as far as Wadi Yabboq, the Ammonites'

border.)

[17]. . . the steppe, and the Yarden as the border from Kinneret as far as the Steppe Sea (the Salt Sea) beneath the Pisgah slopes on the east.

The plea Yahweh will not answer

[18]I ordered you at that time: 'Yahweh your God has given you this country, to take possession of it. You're to cross equipped before your brothers, the Yisra'elites, all the forceful men. [19]Only your wives, your little ones and your livestock (I know that you have much livestock) are to stay in your towns which I've given you, [20]till Yahweh enables your brothers to settle down like you and they too take possession of the country that Yahweh your God is giving them across the Yarden. Then you may go back each individual to his possession, which I have given you.'

[21]I ordered Yehoshua at that time, 'Your eyes see all that Yahweh your God did to these two kings. So will Yahweh do to all the kingdoms into which you're crossing. [22]You will not be afraid of them, because Yahweh your God – he will do battle for you.'

[23]I pleaded with Yahweh for grace at that time: [24]'My Lord Yahweh, you yourself started to let your servant see your greatness and your strong hand. Who is the God in the heavens or on the earth who does things like your deeds and your acts of strength? [25]I want to cross, please, and see the good country that's across the Yarden, this good highland and the Lebanon.'

[26]But Yahweh was incensed with me on your account, and wouldn't listen to me. Yahweh said, 'That's plenty for you. Don't ever speak to me again about this matter. [27]Go up to the top of Pisgah, lift up your eyes west, north, south and east. Look with your eyes, because you will not cross this Yarden. [28]Give Yehoshua orders, get him to be strong and to stand firm, because he's the one who will cross before this people, and he will enable them to take possession of the country you will see.'

[29]So we stayed in the ravine near Bet Pe'or.

What nation has a story like Yisra'el's?

4 Now, Yisra'el, listen to the decrees and to the rulings that I am teaching you to act on, in order that you may live, and go in and take possession of the country that Yahweh the God of your ancestors is giving you. [2]You will not add to the word that I'm ordering you and you will not take away from it, in keeping the orders of Yahweh your God that I'm giving you. [3]Your eyes are the ones that saw what Yahweh did in connection with Master-of-Pe'or, that Yahweh your God eliminated from among you every individual who followed Master-of-Pe'or, [4]but you who attached yourselves to Yahweh your God are all of you alive today.

[5]See, I am teaching you decrees and rulings, as Yahweh my God has ordered me, so you may act in this way within the country where you're coming to take possession of it. [6]Keep them and act on them, because it will be your smartness and your discernment before the eyes of the peoples, who will listen to all these decrees and say, 'Really, this great nation is a smart and discerning people.'

[7]Because who is a great nation that has gods near to it like Yahweh our God whenever we call to him? [8]Who is a great nation that has decrees and rulings as faithful as this entire instruction that I'm putting before you today? [9]Only keep watch on yourself, keep your own person carefully, so you don't put out of mind the things that your eyes have seen, and so they don't depart from your mind all the days of your life. And get your children and your grandchildren to acknowledge them.

The attraction of images

[10]The day that you stood before Yahweh your God at Horeb, when Yahweh said to me, 'Congregate the people for me so I may get them to listen to my words, that they may learn to live in awe of me all the time that they live on the land, and may teach their children': [11]you drew near and stood beneath the mountain. The mountain was burning up with fire to the heart of the heavens, dark with cloud and denseness.

[12]Yahweh spoke to you from the middle of the fire; you could hear the sound of the words, but you couldn't see a shape, only a sound. [13]He told you about his pact which he ordered you to act on, the ten words, and he wrote them on two stone tablets. [14]And at that time Yahweh ordered me to teach you decrees and rulings for you to act on in the country where you're crossing over to take possession of it.

[15]Keep close watch on yourselves, because you didn't see any shape on the day Yahweh spoke to you at Horeb from the middle of the fire, [16]so that you don't act devastatingly and make yourselves a shaped sculpture (any figure, the form of a male or female, [17]the form of any animal that's on the earth, the form of any winged bird that flies in the heavens, [18]the form of anything moving on the ground, the form of any fish that's in the water below the earth), [19]and so you don't raise your eyes to the heavens and look at the sun, the moon and the stars, the entire army in the heavens, and stray and bow low to them and serve them, when Yahweh your God allocated them to all the peoples under all the heavens. [20]Yahweh took you and got you out of the iron furnace, out of Misrayim, to be a people for him, his domain, this very day.

Annihilation and restoration

[21]Yahweh showed himself angry with me because of your words, and he swore that I would not cross the Yarden and not come into the good country that Yahweh your God is giving you as a domain. [22]Because I'm going to die in this country. I'm not crossing the Yarden. You're going to cross and take possession of this good country.

[23]Keep watch on yourselves so you don't put out of mind the pact of Yahweh your God, which he solemnized with you, and make yourselves a shaped sculpture of anything, about which Yahweh your God has given you orders. [24]Because Yahweh your

God is a devouring fire, a passionate God.
[25]When you father children and grandchildren and you become sleepy in the country, and you act devastatingly and make a shaped sculpture of anything, and do what is bad in the eyes of Yahweh your God so as to provoke him, [26]I call the heavens and the earth to testify against you today that you will quickly quite perish from on the country where you're crossing the Yarden to take possession of it. You won't stay a long time on it, because you will be totally annihilated. [27]Yahweh will disperse you among the peoples. Few in number of you will remain among the nations where Yahweh drives you, [28]and there you will serve gods made by human hands of wood and stone, which cannot see, cannot listen, cannot eat and cannot smell.
[29]But you will seek Yahweh your God from there, and you will find, when you enquire of him with your entire heart and with your entire being [30]when you're under pressure. All these things will befall you in a later time, but you will turn back to Yahweh your God and listen to his voice. [31]Because Yahweh your God is a compassionate God. He won't let go of you. He won't devastate you. He won't put out of mind the pact with your ancestors, which he swore to them.

Has the like of it ever been heard?

[32]Because do ask about an earlier time, which was before you, from the day when God created humanity on the earth, and from one end of the heavens to the other end of the heavens, whether anything like this great thing has happened or anything like this has made itself heard. [33]Has a people heard a god's voice speaking from the middle of the fire, as you yourself heard, and stayed alive? [34]Or has a god tried to come to take a nation for himself from within a nation, by trials, by signs, by proofs, by battle, by a strong hand, by an extended arm and by great awe-inspiring deeds, in accordance with all that Yahweh your God did for you in Misrayim before your eyes? [35]You yourselves have been allowed to see, so as to acknowledge that Yahweh is God. There's no other apart from him. [36]From the heavens he let you hear his voice to discipline you, and on the earth he let you see his great fire. You heard his words from the middle of the fire.
[37]On account of the fact that he loved your ancestors, he chose their offspring after them, and got you out of Misrayim by his presence, by his great energy, [38]to dispossess bigger and more numerous nations than you from before you, to bring you in to give you their country as a domain this very day, [39]so you may acknowledge today and make it come back to your mind that Yahweh is God in the heavens above and on the earth below (there's no other) [40]and may keep his decrees and his orders which I'm giving you today, so things may be good for you and for your children after you, in order that your time may be long on the land that Yahweh your God is giving you for all time.

What Yahweh said face to face

[41]Then Mosheh made three towns distinct, across the Yarden towards the rising of the sun, [42]for a killer to flee there who kills his neighbour without knowing and when he was not hostile to him in previous days, so he could flee to one of the towns and live: [43]Betser in the wilderness in the flatland, for the Re'ubenites; Heights-in-Gil'ad, for the Gadites; and Golan, in Bashan, for the Menashshites.
[44]This is the instruction that Mosheh put before the Yisra'elites; [45]these are the affirmations, the decrees and the rulings that Mosheh spoke to the Yisra'elites when they had got out of Misrayim, [46]across the Yarden, in the ravine near Bet Pe'or, in the country of Sihon king of the Amorites who had been living in Heshbon, whom Mosheh and the Yisra'elites struck down when they had got out of Misrayim. [47]They took possession of his country and the country of Og king of Bashan, the two kings of the Amorites, which were across the Yarden towards the rising of the sun, [48]from Aro'er which is on the bank of Wadi Arnon and as far as Mount Si'on (i.e. Hermon), [49]and all the steppe across the Yarden to the east and as far as the Steppe Sea, beneath the Pisgah slopes.
5 Mosheh called all Yisra'el and said to them: Listen, Yisra'el, to the decrees and the rulings that I'm speaking in your ears today. You're to learn them and keep them by acting on them.
[2]Yahweh our God solemnized a pact with us at Horeb. [3]It was not with our parents that Yahweh solemnized this pact but with us ourselves, these people here today, all of us who are alive. [4]Face to face Yahweh spoke with you on the mountain from the middle of the fire [5](I was standing between Yahweh and you at that time to tell you Yahweh's word, because you were afraid of the fire and you didn't go up on the mountain):

Ten words

[6]'I am Yahweh your God who got you out of the country of Misrayim, out of a household of serfs.
[7]For you there will be no other gods in my presence.
[8]You will not make yourself a sculpture of any shape that's in the heavens above, that's on the earth below or that's in the water under the earth. [9]You will not bow low to them and you will not serve them. Because I, Yahweh your God, am the passionate God, attending to parents' waywardness in connection with children and with thirds and with fourths for people who are hostile to me, [10]but acting in commitment towards thousands for people who are loyal to me and to people who keep my orders.
[11]You will not lift up the name of Yahweh your God in respect of something empty, because Yahweh will not free of guilt a person who lifts up his name in respect of something empty.
[12]Keep the sabbath day so as to make it sacred, as Yahweh your God has ordered you. [13]For six days you can serve and do all your work, [14]but the seventh day is a sabbath for Yahweh your God. You will not do any work, you, your son or your daughter, your servant or your handmaid, your ox or your donkey or any of your animals, or the resident who is in your

communities, in order that your servant and your handmaid may rest like you. [15]You're to be mindful that you were a servant in the country of Misrayim but Yahweh your God got you out of there with a strong hand and an extended arm. That's why Yahweh your God has ordered you to make the sabbath day.
[16]Honour your father and your mother as Yahweh your God has ordered you, in order that your time may be long, and in order that things may be good for you, on the land that Yahweh your God is giving you.
[17]You will not murder.
[18]You will not be adulterous.
[19]You will not steal.
[20]You will not avow empty testimony against your neighbour.
[21]You will not desire your neighbour's wife. You will not long for your neighbour's house or his field, his servant or his handmaid, his ox or his donkey, or anything that your neighbour has.'

If only . . .

[22]These words Yahweh spoke to your entire congregation at the mountain from the middle of the fire (the cloud and the denseness) in a loud voice. He didn't add anything. He wrote them on two stone tablets and gave them to me.
[23]When you heard the voice from the middle of the darkness, and the mountain was burning up with fire, you drew near to me, all your clan heads and your elders, [24]and said, 'Here, Yahweh our God has let us see his splendour and his greatness, and we've heard his voice from the middle of the fire. This day we've seen that God can speak with a human being and he can live.
[25]But now, why should we die? Because this great fire will devour us. If we continue to hear the voice of Yahweh our God any more, we will die. [26]Because who is there of all flesh that has listened to the living God's voice speaking from the middle of the fire like us and lived? [27]You draw near and listen to everything that Yahweh our God says, and you can speak to us everything that Yahweh our God speaks to you, and we will listen and do it.'
[28]Yahweh listened to the sound of your words as you spoke to me. Yahweh said to me, 'I've listened to the sound of this people's words that they have spoken to you. They've done what is good in everything that they spoke. [29]If only this will be their mind, to live in awe of me and to keep all my orders at all times, in order that things may be good for them and for their children permanently. [30]Go, say to them: "Get yourselves back to your tents." [31]But you, stand here with me and I shall speak to you the entire order (the decrees and the rulings) that you're to teach them so they will do them in the country that I'm giving them, to take possession of it.'

Listen, Yisra'el

[32]You're to keep them by acting as Yahweh your God has ordered you. You will not turn aside right or left. [33]You're to walk in every way that Yahweh your God has ordered you, in order that you may live and things may be good for you and you may stay a long time in the country that you're to take possession of.
6 This is the order (the decrees and rulings) that Yahweh your God has ordered to teach you, to act on in the country where you're crossing over to take possession of it, [2]in order that you may live in awe of Yahweh your God by keeping all his decrees and his orders that I'm giving you – you, your children and your grandchildren – all the days of your life, and in order that your time may be long. [3]You're to listen, Yisra'el, and keep them by acting on them so things will be good for you and so you may become very numerous, as Yahweh the God of your ancestors spoke to you (a country flowing with milk and syrup).
[4]Listen, Yisra'el: Yahweh our God Yahweh one. [5]You're to be loyal to Yahweh your God with your entire mind, with your entire being, with your entire might.
[6]These words that I'm ordering you today are to be on your mind. [7]You're to drive them home to your children and speak of them when you're staying at home and when you're going on a journey, when you lie down and when you get up. [8]You're to tie them as a sign on your hand. They're to be bands between your eyes, [9]and you're to write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gateways.

When your children ask questions

[10]When Yahweh your God brings you into the country that he swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Yitshaq and to Ya'aqob, to give you, great and good towns that you haven't built, [11]houses full of everything good that you haven't filled, cisterns dug that you haven't dug, vineyards and olive groves that you haven't planted, and you eat and are full, [12]keep watch on yourself so you don't put Yahweh out of mind, the one who got you out of the country of Misrayim, out of a household of serfs.
[13]You're to live in awe of Yahweh your God, to serve him and to swear in his name. [14]You will not follow other gods from among the gods of the peoples that are round you, [15]because Yahweh your God among you is a passionate God, so that the anger of Yahweh your God doesn't rage against you and he annihilate you from on the face of the land.
[16]You will not test Yahweh your God as you tested him at Massah ['Testing']. [17]Keep carefully the orders of Yahweh your God, his affirmations and his decrees which he has given you. [18]You're to do what is right and good in Yahweh's eyes in order that things may be good for you and you may come in and take possession of the good country that Yahweh swore to your ancestors, [19]by driving out all your enemies from before you, as Yahweh has spoken.
[20] When your child asks you in the future, 'What were the affirmations, the decrees and the rulings that Yahweh our God ordered you?', [21]you're to say to your child, 'We were Par'oh's serfs in Misrayim, and Yahweh got us out of Misrayim with a strong hand. [22]Yahweh put great, bad signs and proofs against Misrayim, against Par'oh and against his entire household, before

our eyes, [23]and he got us out of there in order that he might bring us in to give us the country that he swore to our ancestors.
[24]Yahweh ordered us to act on all these decrees, to live in awe of Yahweh our God for our good at all times, to keep us alive, this very day. [25]It will be our right standing, when we keep this entire order before Yahweh our God by acting on it, as he ordered us.'

Yahweh's attraction

7 When Yahweh your God brings you into the country where you're coming to take possession of it, and clears away many nations from before you (the Hittite, the Girgashite, the Amorite, the Kena'anite, the Perizzite, the Hivvite and the Yebusite, seven nations bigger and more numerous than you), [2]and Yahweh your God gives them up before you and you strike them down, you're to devote them totally. You will not solemnize a pact with them. You will not grace them. [3]You will not make marriages with them. You will not give your daughter to his son or take his daughter for your son, [4]because he'll turn your son aside from following me and they'll serve other gods, and the anger of Yahweh will rage against you and he'll quickly annihilate you.
[5]Rather, you're to do this to them. You're to demolish their altars. You're to break up their columns. You're to cut down their totem poles. You're to burn their statues in fire.
[6]Because you're a people sacred for Yahweh your God. It was you that Yahweh your God chose to become a people that is personal treasure for him from all the peoples on the face of the ground. [7]It wasn't because of your larger number than all the peoples that Yahweh got attracted to you and chose you, because you were smaller than all the peoples. [8]Rather, it was because of Yahweh's loyalty to you, and because of his keeping the oath that he swore to your ancestors, that Yahweh got you out with a strong hand, redeemed you out of a household of serfs, out of the hand of Par'oh king of Misrayim.
[9]You're to acknowledge that Yahweh your God is God, the trustworthy God, keeping the pact and commitment to people who are loyal to him and keep his orders, to a thousand generations, [10]but one who makes good to people who are hostile to him, to the person's face, by obliterating him. He isn't slow with someone who's hostile to him; to his face he makes good to him. [11]So you're to keep the order (the decrees and the rulings) that I'm giving you today, by acting on it.

The hornet

[12]On the basis that you listen to these rulings and keep and act on them, Yahweh your God will keep for you the pact and commitment that he swore to your ancestors. [13]He will be loyal to you, bless you and make you numerous. He will bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, your grain, your new wine and your fresh oil, the drop of your domestic animals and the young of your flock, on the land that he swore to your ancestors to give you. [14]You will be blessed above all the peoples. There will not be among you male or female who is infertile, or among your animals. [15]Yahweh will remove from you every illness, and none of the bad illnesses of Misrayim, which you know, will he place on you. He'll put them on the people who are hostile to you.
[16]You're to devour all the peoples that Yahweh your God is giving over to you. Your eye will not pity them. You will not serve their gods, because it will be a snare to you. [17]When you say inside, 'These nations are more numerous than me – how will I be able to dispossess them?', [18]you will not be afraid of them. You're to be resolutely mindful of what Yahweh your God did to Par'oh and to all Misrayim, [19]the great tests that your eyes saw, the signs and the proofs, the strong hand and the extended arm by which Yahweh your God got you out. Yahweh your God will act in that way to all the peoples before whom you're afraid.
[20]Yahweh your God will also send off a hornet against them until those who remain, and who are hiding from before you, perish. [21]You will not be frightened before them, because Yahweh your God is among you, a great and awe-inspiring God.

Little by little

[22]Yahweh your God will clear away those nations from before you little by little. You won't be able to finish them off quickly, so the creatures of the wild don't become too numerous for you. [23]But Yahweh your God will give them over before you and throw them into a great turmoil until their annihilation. [24]He will give their kings into your hand and you will eliminate their name from under the heavens. No one will take a stand before you until you've annihilated them.
[25]The statues of their gods you're to burn in fire. You will not desire the silver and gold on them and take it for yourself, so you don't trap yourself by it, because it would be an offensive act to Yahweh your God. [26]You will not bring an offensive thing into your house, and become an object for devoting, like it. You're to treat it as totally abominable, totally offensive, because it's an object for devoting.
8 The entire order that I'm giving you today you're to keep by acting on it, in order that you may live and become numerous, and come and take possession of the country that Yahweh swore to your ancestors. [2]You're to be mindful of the entire way that Yahweh your God had you go these forty years in the wilderness, in order that he might humble you by testing you so as to know what was in your mind, whether you would keep his orders or not. [3]He humbled you and let you be hungry and fed you the *maan* which you hadn't known and your ancestors had not known, in order that he might get you to acknowledge that human beings don't live on the basis of bread alone but on the basis of everything that comes out of Yahweh's mouth. [4]Your clothing hasn't worn out from upon you and your foot hasn't swollen these forty years.

The danger of forgetting

[5]You're to acknowledge in your mind that as someone disciplines his son, Yahweh your God disciplines you, [6]and you're to keep the orders of Yahweh your God by walking in his ways and by living in awe of him. [7]Because Yahweh your God is bringing you into a good country, a country of wadis with water, springs and depths issuing, in valley and in mountain, [8]a country of

wheat, barley, vine, fig and pomegranate, a country of olive oil and syrup, [9]a country where you can eat bread without being short,
where you won't lack anything, a country whose stones are iron and from whose mountains you can dig copper. [10]You will eat
and be full and bless Yahweh your God for the good country that he's given you.
[11]Keep watch on yourself so you don't put Yahweh your God out of mind by not keeping his orders, his rulings and his decrees
which I'm giving you today, [12]so you don't eat and get full, and build good houses and live in them, [13]and your herd and your
flock increase, and your silver and gold increase, and everything that you have increases, [14]and your mind exalts itself and you put
out of mind Yahweh your God who got you out of the country of Misrayim, out of a household of serfs, [15]the one who had you go
through the great, awe-inspiring wilderness with venomous snake and scorpion, and desert where there was no water, who got
water out of a flint crag for you, [16]who enabled you to eat *maan* in the wilderness, which your ancestors had not known, in order
that he might humble you and in order that he might test you, so as to do good to you in your later life, [17]and you say inside, 'My
energy and the might of my hand generated these resources for me.'

The importance of remembering

[18]You're to be mindful of Yahweh your God, that he's the one who is giving you the energy to generate resources, in order to
implement the pact that he swore to your ancestors, this very day. [19]If you do put Yahweh your God out of mind and follow other
gods and serve them and bow low to them, I testify against you today that you will totally perish. [20]Like the nations whom
Yahweh is making perish from before you, so you will perish, since you don't listen to the voice of Yahweh your God.
9 Listen, Yisra'el. Today you're crossing the Yarden to go in to dispossess nations bigger and more numerous than you: big
towns fortified to the heavens, [2]a big and tall people, the Anaqites whom you yourselves know and of whom you've heard it
said, 'Who can take a stand before the descendants of Anaq?' [3]You're to acknowledge today that Yahweh your God – he's
crossing before you, a devouring fire. He's the one who will destroy them. He's the one who will put them down before you so
you'll dispossess them and make them perish quickly, as Yahweh has spoken to you.
[4]Don't say inside, when Yahweh your God has driven them out from before you, 'It's because of my faithfulness that Yahweh
brought me in to take possession of this country.' It's because of the faithlessness of these nations that Yahweh is dispossessing
them from before you. [5]It's not because of your faithfulness or because of the uprightness of your mind that you're going in to
take possession of their country. It's because of the faithlessness of these nations that Yahweh your God is dispossessing them
from before you, and in order to implement the word that Yahweh swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Yitshaq and to
Ya'aqob.

Not because of your faithfulness

[6]You're to acknowledge that it's not because of your faithfulness that Yahweh your God is giving you this good country, to
take possession of it, because you're a tough-necked people. [7]Be mindful, don't put out of mind, how you infuriated Yahweh your
God in the wilderness. From the day that you left the country of Misrayim till you came to this place, you've been rebellious
towards Yahweh.
[8]At Horeb you infuriated Yahweh and he showed himself angry enough with you to annihilate you, [9]when I went up the
mountain to get the stone tablets, the tablets of the pact that Yahweh had solemnized with you. I stayed on the mountain forty days
and forty nights. I ate no bread and I drank no water. [10]Yahweh gave me the two stone tablets written on by God's finger, with all
the very things on them that God had spoken with you on the mountain from the middle of the fire on the day of the congregation.
[11]At the end of forty days and forty nights Yahweh gave me the two stone tablets, the pact tablets.
[12]But Yahweh said to me, 'Get up, go down from here quickly, because your people whom you got out of Misrayim have acted
devastatingly. They've departed quickly from the way that I ordered them. They've made a figurine for themselves.' [13]And
Yahweh said to me, 'I've looked at this people, and here, it's a tough-necked people. [14]Let me go, so I can annihilate them and
wipe out their name from under the heavens, and make you into a more numerous and vast nation than them.'
[15]I turned my face and came down from the mountain (the mountain was burning up with fire) with the two tablets of the pact
in my two hands. [16]I looked, and there, you'd done wrong in relation to Yahweh your God. You'd made a bullock figurine for
yourselves. You'd departed quickly from the way that Yahweh had ordered you. [17]I took hold of the two tablets and threw them
out of my two hands and broke them up before your eyes.

Effective intercession

[18]I made myself fall before Yahweh. Like the first time, for forty days and forty nights I ate no bread and drank no water on
account of all the wrong that you'd committed in doing what was bad in Yahweh's eyes so as to provoke him, [19]because I was in
dread before the anger and wrath with which Yahweh was furious towards you so as to annihilate you. Yahweh listened to me that
time, too. [20]With Aharon [Aaron], Yahweh showed himself very angry, enough to annihilate him, but I also interceded on
Aharon's behalf at that time.
[21]The wrongful thing that you'd made, the bullock, I got it and burned it in fire and crushed it and ground it well until it became
fine as powder, and I threw its powder into the wadi coming down from the mountain.
[22]At Tab'erah and at Massah and at Qibrot Hatta'avah you were people who infuriated Yahweh. [23]When Yahweh sent you
from Qadesh Barnea, saying 'Go up and take possession of the country that I've given you', you rebelled against the bidding of
Yahweh your God. You didn't trust in him and you didn't listen to his voice. [24]You've been rebellious in relation to Yahweh from
the day I knew you.
[25]I made myself fall before Yahweh for the forty days and forty nights that I made myself fall, because Yahweh said he would

annihilate you. [26]I interceded with Yahweh and said, ‘My Lord Yahweh, don’t devastate your people, your domain, which you redeemed by your greatness, which you got out of Misrayim with a strong hand. [27]Be mindful of your servants, of Abraham, of Yitshaq and of Ya’aqob. Don’t turn your face to the obstinacy of this people, to its faithlessness, to its wrongdoing, [28]so the country from which you got us out doesn’t say, “It was because Yahweh couldn’t bring them into the country of which he spoke to them and because he was hostile to them that he got them out, to let them die in the wilderness.” [29]They are your people, your domain, which you got out by your great energy and your extended arm.’

The ten words re-inscribed

10 At that time Yahweh said to me, ‘Carve yourself two stone tablets like the first ones, and go up to me on the mountain, and make yourself a wooden chest. [2]I’ll write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke up, and you’re to put them in the chest.’ [3]So I made an acacia wood chest and carved two stone tablets like the first. I went up the mountain with the two tablets in my hand, [4]and he wrote on the tablets the same text as the first, the ten words that Yahweh spoke to you on the mountain from the middle of the fire on the day of the congregation. Yahweh gave them to me [5]and I turned my face and came down from the mountain, and put the tablets in the chest that I had made. So they’ve been there, as Yahweh ordered me.

[6]The Yisra’elites moved on from Bene-ya’aqan Wells to Moserah. There Aharon died and he was buried there, and El’azar his son acted as priest in his place. [7]From there they moved on to Gudgod, and from Gudgod to Yotbat, a region of wadis with water. [8]At that time Yahweh made the clan of Levi distinct, to carry Yahweh’s pact chest, to stand before Yahweh to minister to him, and to bless in his name, until this day. [9]Therefore Levi hasn’t had a share, a domain, with his brothers. Yahweh is his domain, as Yahweh your God spoke to him.

[10]So I – I stood on the mountain as at the first time for forty days and forty nights, and Yahweh listened to me once again. Yahweh was not willing to devastate you. [11]Yahweh said to me, ‘Set off, go, move on before the people, so they may come in and take possession of the country that I swore to their ancestors to give them.’

Attraction and attachment

[12]Now, Yisra’el, what is Yahweh your God asking of you except to live in awe of Yahweh your God so as to walk in all his ways, to be loyal to him and to serve Yahweh your God with your entire mind and with your entire being, [13]so as to keep Yahweh’s orders and his decrees that I’m giving you today for your good?

[14]Here, to Yahweh your God belong the heavens, the highest heavens, the earth and everything that’s in it. [15]Only Yahweh got attracted to your ancestors so as to be loyal to them, and chose their offspring after them, you, from all the peoples, this very day. [16]So circumcise the foreskin of your mind. You will not toughen your neck any more. [17]Because Yahweh your God – he’s the God over the gods, the Lord over the lords, the God great, mighty and awe-inspiring, who doesn’t honour a person and doesn’t accept a bribe. [18]He makes a ruling for the orphan and the widow and he is loyal to the resident by giving him bread and clothing. [19]So you’re to be loyal to the resident, because you were residents in the country of Misrayim.

[20]Yahweh your God: you’re to live in awe of him, serve and attach yourselves to him, and swear by his name. [21]He’s to be your praise and he’s to be your God who did for you these great, awe-inspiring things that your eyes saw. [22]As seventy persons your ancestors went down to Misrayim, but now Yahweh your God has made you like the stars in the heavens in the large number.

It was you

11 So you’re to be loyal to Yahweh your God and keep his charge, his decrees, his rulings and his orders at all times. [2]You’re to acknowledge today that it was not with your children, who didn’t know and who didn’t see the discipline of Yahweh your God, his greatness, his strong hand and his extended arm, [3]his signs and his deeds that he did in the middle of Misrayim to Par’oh king of Misrayim and to all his country, [4]and what he did to Misrayim’s force, to its horses and to its chariotry, over whose heads Yahweh made the water of the Reed Sea flow when they pursued after you, and in this way destroyed them until this day, [5]and what he did for you in the wilderness until you came as far as this place, [6]and what he did to Datan and to Abiram, the sons of Eli’ab the Re’ubenite, whom the earth opened its mouth and swallowed, them, their households, their tents and everything that existed that was in their company, in the middle of all Yisra’el . . .

[7]Rather it was your eyes that saw every great deed that Yahweh did. [8]So you’re to keep the entire order that I’m giving you today, in order that you may be strong and may go in and take possession of the country where you’re crossing over to take possession of it, [9]and in order that you may stay a long time on the land that Yahweh swore to your ancestors to give to them and to their offspring, a country flowing with milk and syrup.

A country that drinks water from the heavens

[10]Because the country where you’re coming to take possession of it is not like the country of Misrayim, from where you got out, where you sow your seed and water it by foot, like a vegetable garden. [11]The country where you’re crossing over to take possession of it is a country of mountains and valleys, one that drinks water from the heavens’ rain, [12]a country that Yahweh your God enquires after. The eyes of Yahweh your God are on it regularly from the year’s beginning until the year’s end.

[13]If you really do listen to my orders that I’m giving you today by being loyal to Yahweh your God and by serving him with your entire mind and with your entire being, [14]I will give rain on your country in its time, early rain and late rain, and you’ll gather in your grain, your new wine and your fresh oil. [15]I’ll give grass in your fields for your animals and you’ll eat and be full.

[16]Keep watch on yourselves so your mind is not naive and you depart, and serve other gods and bow low to them, [17]and Yahweh's anger rages against you, and he holds back the heavens and there's no rain, and the ground doesn't give its produce, and you quickly perish from on the good country that Yahweh is giving you.

[18]You're to put these words on to your mind and on to your person. Tie them as a sign on your hand. They're to be bands between your eyes. [19]You're to teach them to your children by speaking of them when you're staying at home and when you're going on a journey, when you're lying down and when you're getting up, [20]and you're to write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gateways, [21]in order that your days and your children's days may be many on the land that Yahweh swore to your ancestors to give them, as many as the days of the heavens over the earth.

Blessing or slighting

[22]Because if you carefully keep this entire order that I'm giving you by acting on it, being loyal to Yahweh your God by walking in all his ways and by attaching yourselves to him, [23]Yahweh will dispossess all these nations from before you and you will take possession of nations bigger and more numerous than you. [24]Every place on which the sole of your foot treads will be yours. From the wilderness and the Lebanon, from the river (the River Euphrates) as far as the Western Sea will be your border. [25]No one will take a stand against you. Yahweh your God will put dread of you and fear of you on the face of the entire country on which you tread, as he's spoken to you.

[26]Look, I'm putting before you today blessing and slight: [27]the blessing because you listen to the orders of Yahweh your God that I'm giving you today, [28]and the slight if you don't listen to the orders of Yahweh your God but depart from the way that I'm ordering you today by following other gods that you haven't acknowledged. [29]When Yahweh your God brings you into the country where you're coming to take possession of it, you're to put the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the slight on Mount Ebal. [30]They're across the Yarden, beyond the sunset road in the country of the Kena'anites who live in the steppe near Gilgal, beside the Moreh Oaks, aren't they. [31]Because you're crossing the Yarden to go in to take possession of the country that Yahweh your God is giving you so you may take possession of it and live in it. [32]You're to keep all the decrees and the rulings that I'm putting before you today, by acting on them.

On not following your instincts

12 These are the decrees and the rulings that you're to keep by acting on them, in the country that Yahweh the God of your ancestors has given you to take possession of it, all the time that you're living on the land. [2]You're to obliterate, totally, all the sites where the nations that you're dispossessing have served their gods, on high mountains and on hills and under any verdant tree. [3]You're to tear down their altars, break up their columns, burn their totem poles in fire, cut down the statues of their gods and obliterate their name from that site. [4]You will not act for Yahweh your God in that way.

[5]Rather you're to enquire at the site that Yahweh your God chooses from all your clans, to put his name there for him to dwell. You're to come there [6]and bring there your whole offerings and your sacrifices, your tenths and the contribution from your hand, your pledges and your free offerings, and the firstlings of your herd and of your flock. [7]You're to eat there before Yahweh your God and rejoice in every undertaking of your hand (you and your households) in which Yahweh your God has blessed you.

[8]You will not act in accordance with anything that we are doing here today, an individual doing anything that's all right in his eyes, [9]because until now you haven't come to the place to settle down, to the domain that Yahweh your God is giving you. [10]You're to cross the Yarden and live in the country that Yahweh your God is giving you as a domain. He will enable you to settle down free of all your enemies all round, and you will live in confidence. [11]And the site where Yahweh your God chooses to have his name dwell, you're to bring there everything that I'm ordering you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tenths, the contribution from your hand and every choice thing among the pledges that you make to Yahweh.

Freedom to 'sacrifice' nearer home

[12]So you're to rejoice before Yahweh your God, you, your sons and your daughters, your servants and your handmaids, and the Levite who is in your communities (because he has no share, no domain with you).

[13]Keep watch on yourself so you don't offer up your burnt offerings at every site that you see. [14]Rather, at the site that Yahweh chooses in one of your clans, there you're to offer up your burnt offerings, and there you're to act on everything that I'm ordering you.

[15]Only, at any longing of your appetite you may 'sacrifice' and eat meat in accordance with the blessing of Yahweh your God that he's given you, in all your communities. Taboo and pure people may eat it, like the gazelle and like the deer. [16]Only, the blood you will not eat. You're to pour it on the earth like water.

[17]In your communities you will not be able to eat the tenth of your grain, new wine and fresh oil, or the firstlings of your herd and flock, or any pledges that you make, or your free offerings or the contribution from your hand. [18]Rather, you're to eat them before Yahweh your God at the site that Yahweh your God chooses, you, your son and your daughter, your servant and your handmaid, and the Levite who is in your communities, and you're to rejoice before Yahweh your God in every undertaking of your hand. [19]Keep watch on yourself so you don't abandon the Levite all your days on your land.

[20]When Yahweh your God widens your border, as he spoke to you, and you say, 'I want to eat meat', because your appetite longs to eat meat, at any longing of your appetite you may eat meat. [21]When the site that Yahweh your God chooses to put his name there is far from you, you may 'sacrifice' from your herd or from your flock that Yahweh has given you as I've ordered you, and you may eat in your communities, at the longing of your appetite.

Not eating the blood

[22]However, as the gazelle and the deer are eaten – in this way you're to eat it. Taboo and pure people may eat it together.
[23]Only, be firm about not eating the blood, because the blood is the life. You will not eat the life with the meat. [24]Given that you will not eat it, you're to pour it on the earth like water. [25]You will not eat it, in order that things may be good for you and for your descendants after you, because you do what's right in Yahweh's eyes.
[26]Only, your sacred things that you have, and your pledges, you're to take up, and come to the site that Yahweh chooses.
[27]You're to make your burnt offerings, the meat and the blood, on the altar of Yahweh your God. The blood of your sacrifices is to be poured on the altar of Yahweh your God, but the meat you may eat.
[28]Keep and listen to all these words that I'm ordering you, in order that things may be good for you and for your descendants after you permanently, because you do what is good and right in the eyes of Yahweh your God.
[29]When Yahweh your God cuts down the nations where you're coming to dispossess them from before you, and you dispossess them and live in their country, [30]keep watch on yourself so you're not trapped into following them after they've been annihilated from before you, and so you don't enquire of their gods, saying 'How do these nations serve their gods, so I may also act in the same way?' [31]You will not act in this way towards Yahweh your God, because they do for their gods everything that's an offence to Yahweh, that to which he's hostile, because they even burn their sons and their daughters in fire for their gods.
[32]Every thing that I'm ordering you, you're to keep by acting on it. You will not add to it and you will not take away from it.

False prophets

13 When a prophet or someone who has a dream rises among you, and gives you a sign or a proof [2](and the sign or the proof of which he spoke to you comes about), saying 'Let's follow other gods (which you haven't acknowledged) and serve them':
[3]you will not listen to the words of that prophet or that one who has the dream, because Yahweh your God is testing you so as to know whether you're people who are loyal to Yahweh your God with your entire mind and with your entire being. [4]You're to follow Yahweh your God. You're to live in awe of him. His orders you're to keep and to his voice you're to listen. He's the one you're to serve, and you're to attach yourselves to him.
[5]That prophet or that one who has the dream: he's to be put to death, because he spoke defiance against Yahweh your God (who got you out of the country of Misrayim and redeemed you from a household of serfs) to drive you from the way that Yahweh your God ordered you to walk in. So you will burn away the bad thing from among you.
[6]When your brother, your mother's son, or your son or your daughter, or the wife in your arms, or your neighbour who is as close to you as your own self, incites you in secret, saying 'Let's go and serve other gods' (which you yourself and your ancestors haven't acknowledged), [7]from the gods of the peoples that are round you, the ones near to you or the ones far away from you, from one end of the country to the other end of the country, [8]you will not agree with him, you will not listen to him.
Your eye will not pity him. You will not spare him or conceal him, [9]but simply kill him. Your own hand will be the first against him, to put him to death, and the hand of the entire people afterwards. [10]Pelt him with stones so he dies, because he sought to drive you away from Yahweh your God who got you out of the country of Misrayim, out of a household of serfs.
[11]All Yisra'el will hear and live in awe and will not again do the likes of this bad thing among you.

When someone leads the town astray

[12]When you hear in one of your towns that Yahweh your God is giving you to live in, [13]'People who are scoundrels have gone out from among you and have driven away the people living in their town, saying "Let's go and serve other gods"' (which you haven't acknowledged), [14]you're to enquire well and search out and ask. And there, the thing is established truthful, this offensive act was done among you. [15]Strike down hard the people living in that town with the mouth of the sword. Devote it, everything that's in it and its animals, with the mouth of the sword. [16]All its spoil you're to collect in the middle of the square, and burn the town and all its spoil with fire as a whole offering for Yahweh your God. It's to become a permanent ruin. It will not be built up again.
[17]Not a thing from what was to be devoted will attach itself to your hand, in order that Yahweh may turn back from his angry rage and show you compassion. He will be compassionate to you and make you numerous, as he swore to your ancestors,
[18]because you listen to the voice of Yahweh your God by keeping all his orders that I'm giving you today, by doing what is right in the eyes of Yahweh your God.
14 You are the children of Yahweh your God. You will not cut yourselves or make a bald space between your eyes for a dead person, [2]because you're a people sacred for Yahweh your God. Yahweh chose you to be his, a people that is personal treasure, from all the peoples that are on the face of the ground.

You are what you eat

[3]You may not eat anything offensive.
[4]These are the animals that you may eat: ox, young one from the sheep, young one from the goats, [5]deer, gazelle, roebuck, wild goat, ibex, antelope, mountain sheep, [6]any animal that has a divided hoof (that has a cleft in its hoofs) that brings up its cud; you may eat it.
[7]This, however, you may not eat: ones that bring up their cud or have a divided hoof (have a cleft in their hoof) – the camel, the hare and the rock badger, because they bring up their cud but don't have a divided hoof; they're taboo for you; [8]the pig, because it has a divided hoof but doesn't bring up its cud; it's taboo for you.

You will not eat of their meat and you will not touch their corpse.
[9]This you may eat of everything that's in the water: anything that has fins and scales you may eat.
[10]But anything that has no fins and scales you may not eat; it's taboo for you.
[11]Any pure bird you may eat.
[12]This is what you may not eat of them: the eagle, the vulture, the osprey, [13]the kite, the falcon, the buzzard (any of its species), [14]every raven (any of its species), [15]the ostrich, the nighthawk, the seagull, the hawk (any of its species), [16]the tawny owl, the screech owl, the barn owl, [17]the pelican, the swan, the cormorant, [18]the stork, the heron (any of its species), the hoopoe and the bat.
[19]Any teeming, flying thing is taboo for you. It may not be eaten.
[20]Any pure flying thing you may eat.
[21]You may not eat any corpse (though you may give it to the resident who is in your communities so he may eat it, or sell it to a foreigner), because you're a people sacred for Yahweh your God.
You will not cook a kid goat in its own mother's milk.

Tithes

[22]You're carefully to take a tenth of the entire yield from your seed that your fields produce, year by year. [23]Before Yahweh your God at the site where Yahweh chooses to have his name dwell, you're to eat the tenth of your grain, your new wine and your fresh oil, and the firstlings of your herd and your flock, in order that you may learn to live in awe of Yahweh your God at all times. [24]When the journey's too big for you, because you can't carry it (because the site that Yahweh your God chooses to put his name there is too far for you) because Yahweh your God blesses you, [25]you may turn it into silver, tie up the silver in your possession, go to the site that Yahweh your God chooses [26]and give the silver for anything that your appetite longs for: herd, flock, wine, liquor, anything that your appetite asks for. You're to eat there before Yahweh your God and rejoice, you and your household, [27]and you will not abandon the Levite who's in your communities, because he has no share, no domain with you.
[28]At the end of three years you will take out the entire tenth of your yield in that year, but set it down in your communities. [29]The Levite (because he has no share, no domain of his own with you) and the resident, the orphan, and the widow who is in your communities, will come and eat and be full, in order that Yahweh your God may bless you in all the action of your hand that you perform.

Helping people get back on their feet

15 At the end of seven years you're to effect a release. [2]This is the thing about the release: anyone in a position to make a loan from his hand who makes a loan to his neighbour is not to exact it of his neighbour, his brother, when the release for Yahweh has been called. [3]You may exact it of a foreigner, but whatever of yours is with your brother, your hand is to release.
[4]Yet there won't be a needy person among you, because Yahweh will truly bless you in the country that Yahweh your God is giving you as a domain, to take possession of it, [5]if only you really listen to the voice of Yahweh your God, by keeping this entire order that I'm giving you today, by acting on it. [6]When Yahweh your God has blessed you as he spoke to you, you'll lend to many nations but you yourself won't borrow. You'll rule over many nations but over you they won't rule.
[7]When there's a needy person among you, one of your brothers, inside one of your communities in the country that Yahweh your God is giving you, you will not firm up your mind and you will not close your hand against your needy brother, [8]because you're to open your hand wide to him and generously lend enough for the lack that he has. [9]Keep watch on yourself so a thing doesn't come into your scoundrelous mind, 'The seventh year, the release year, is drawing near', so your eye works badly towards your needy brother and you don't give anything to him, and he calls to Yahweh about you and it becomes a wrong done by you. [10]Give generously to him. Your mind must not work badly when you give to him, [11]because the needy person won't leave off from within the country. That's why I'm ordering you, 'Open your hand wide to your weak and your needy brother in your country.'

When servants decline their freedom

[12]When your brother, a Hebrew man or a Hebrew woman, sells himself to you, he may serve you for six years, and in the seventh year you're to send him off from you as a free person. [13]When you send him off from you as a free person, you will not send him off empty-handed. [14]You're to supply him liberally from your flock, from your threshing floor and from your winepress. With what Yahweh your God has blessed you, you're to give to him. [15]Be mindful that you were a serf in the country of Misrayim and Yahweh your God redeemed you. That's why I'm ordering this thing today.
[16]When he says to you, 'I won't go out from you', because he's loyal to you and your household, because things have been good for him with you, [17]you're to get an awl and put it through his ear and through the door, and he'll be your servant permanently. You're also to do this for your handmaid. [18]When you send him off from you as a free person, it shouldn't be tough in your eyes, because he's served you for six years for the equivalent of the wages of an employee. And Yahweh your God will bless you in all that you do.
[19]Every male firstling that's born in your herd and in your flock you're to make sacred for Yahweh your God. You will not serve with the firstling of your ox and you will not shear the firstling of your flock. [20]You're to eat it before Yahweh your God year by year at the site that Yahweh chooses, you and your household. [21]But when there's a defect in it, lameness or blindness, any bad defect, you're not to sacrifice it for Yahweh your God. [22]You may eat it in your communities, taboo and pure together,

like the gazelle and the deer. [23]Only, its blood you will not eat. You're to pour it on the earth like water.

Pesah (Passover)

16 Keep the month of Abib and make Pesah for Yahweh your God, because in the month of Abib Yahweh your God got you out of Misrayim, by night. [2]You're to sacrifice the Pesah for Yahweh your God from flock or herd at the site where Yahweh chooses to have his name dwell. [3]You will not eat any leavened bread along with it. For seven days you're to eat flatbread (humble bread) with it, because it was in haste that you got out of the country of Misrayim, in order that you may be mindful of the day you got out of the country of Misrayim, all the days of your life. [4]Yeast will not appear among you, within your entire border, for seven days, and none of the meat that you sacrifice on the evening of the first day will stay until morning.

[5]You will not be able to sacrifice the Pesah within one of your communities that Yahweh your God is giving you. [6]Rather, you're to sacrifice the Pesah at the site where Yahweh your God chooses to have his name dwell, in the evening, at sunset, the set time of your getting out of Misrayim. [7]You're to cook and eat at the site that Yahweh your God chooses, and turn your face in the morning and go to your tents. [8]For six days you're to eat flatbread and on the seventh day there's to be an assembly for Yahweh your God; you will not do any work.

Shabu'ot and Sukkot (Weeks or Pentecost, and Tabernacles)

[9]You're to count seven weeks [*shabu'ot*] for yourself; from when you start the sickle in the standing grain you're to start counting seven weeks. [10]You're to make the Shabu'ot Festival for Yahweh your God, by the measure of the free offering from your hand that you give, as Yahweh your God blesses you. [11]You're to rejoice before Yahweh your God, you, your son and your daughter, your servant and your handmaid, the Levite who is in your communities and the resident, the orphan and the widow who are among you, at the site where Yahweh your God chooses to have his name dwell. [12]You're to be mindful that you were a serf in Misrayim, and to keep and act on these decrees.

[13]You're to make the Sukkot Festival for yourself for seven days when you've gathered things in from your threshing floor and from your winepress. [14]You're to rejoice at your festival, you, your son and your daughter, your servant and your handmaid, the Levite and the resident, the orphan and the widow who are in your communities. [15]For seven days you're to hold a festival for Yahweh your God at the site that Yahweh chooses, because Yahweh your God will bless you in your entire yield and in all the action of your hands. You will be simply rejoicing.

[16]Three times in the year every male of yours is to appear before Yahweh your God at the site that he chooses, at the Flatbread Festival, at the Shabu'ot Festival and at the Sukkot Festival. He's not to appear before Yahweh empty-handed: [17]each in accordance with the gift in his possession, in accordance with the blessing of Yahweh your God that he's given you.

Absolute faithfulness

[18]You're to make yourself authorities and officials in all the communities that Yahweh your God is giving you for your clans. They're to exercise faithful authority for the people. [19]You will not twist the exercise of authority. You will not honour persons. You will not accept a bribe, because a bribe blinds the eyes of smart people and twist the words of faithful people. [20]You're to pursue absolute faithfulness in order that you may live and take possession of the country that Yahweh your God is giving you.

[21]You will not plant for yourself as a totem pole any tree beside the altar of Yahweh your God which you will make for yourself, [22]and you will not set up a column for yourself, to which Yahweh your God is hostile.

17 You will not sacrifice for Yahweh your God an ox or a sheep in which there's a defect, anything bad, because it's an offensive act to Yahweh your God.

[2]When there is found among you, in one of your communities that Yahweh your God is giving you, a man or a woman who does something bad in the eyes of Yahweh your God by contravening his pact [3]and has gone and served other gods and bowed down to them, to the sun or to the moon or to any of the heavenly army, which I haven't ordered, [4]and it's told to you, you're to listen and enquire well. And there, the thing is established as truthful, this offensive act was done in Yisra'el. [5]You're to take out that man or that woman who did this bad thing, to your gateways, and pelt them with stones so they die.

Making judgements

[6]At the mouth of two witnesses or three witnesses is a person to be put to death. He will not be put to death at the mouth of one witness. [7]The hand of the witnesses is to be the first against him to put him to death, and the hand of the entire people afterwards, so you burn away the bad thing from among you.

[8]When a matter is too hard for you to decide, between one instance of bloodshed and another, between one judgement and another, or between one assault and another (matters of argument in your communities), you're to set off and go up to the site that Yahweh your God chooses [9]and come to the Levitical priests, to the person in authority that's there at that time, and enquire. They'll tell you the word of decision, [10]and you're to act in accordance with the word that they tell you, from that site that Yahweh chooses. You're to keep it by acting in accordance with everything that they instruct you.

[11]You're to act in accordance with the instruction that they give you and by the ruling that they say to you. You will not turn aside from the word that they tell you, right or left. [12]The individual who acts with assertiveness rather than listening to the priest who stands to minister to Yahweh your God there, or to the person in authority: that individual is to die, so you may burn away what is bad from Yisra'el, [13]and so the entire people may listen and live in awe and not assert themselves again.

Kings

[14]When you come into the country that Yahweh your God is giving you and you take possession of it and you're living in it,
and you say 'I intend to set a king over me, like all the nations that are round me', [15]you may indeed set over you a king whom
Yahweh your God chooses. From among your brothers you may set a king over you. You cannot put over you an individual who's
a foreigner, who's not your brother.
[16]Only, he will not acquire many horses for himself and he will not get the people to go back to Misrayim in order that he may
acquire many horses, when Yahweh has said to you, 'You will never again go back that way.' [17]He will not acquire many wives
for himself, so his mind does not turn aside, and he will not make very much silver and gold for himself.
[18]When he sits on his royal throne, he's to write for himself a copy of this instruction on a document, from before the Levitical
priests. [19]It's to be with him and he's to read out of it all the days of his life in order that he may learn to live in awe of Yahweh
his God, by keeping all the words of this instruction and these decrees by acting on them, [20]so his mind doesn't rise above his
brothers and so he doesn't depart from the order, right or left, in order that he may stay a long time over his kingdom, he and his
sons, within Yisra'el.

Priests and Levites

18 The Levitical priests, the entire clan of Levi, are to have no share, no domain, with Yisra'el. They will eat Yahweh's gift
offerings, as its domain. [2]It will have no domain among its brothers. Yahweh is its domain, as he spoke to it.
[3]This is to be the priests' due from the people, from those who are offering a sacrifice, whether an ox or a sheep: he will give
the priest the shoulder, the jaws and the stomach. [4]You're to give him the first of your grain, your new wine and your fresh oil,
and the first shearing of your flock. [5]Because Yahweh your God has chosen him out of all your clans to stand to minister in
Yahweh's name, he and his descendants for all time.
[6]When a Levite comes from one of your communities, from all Yisra'el where he's been a resident, and comes with any
longing of his own to the site that Yahweh chooses, [7]he may minister in the name of Yahweh his God like all his brother Levites
who are standing there before Yahweh. [8]They're to eat equal shares, apart from his assets through his ancestors.
[9]When you come into the country that Yahweh your God is giving you, you will not learn to act in accordance with the
offensive practices of those nations. [10]There will be no one present among you who makes his son or his daughter pass through
fire, who engages in divination, who practises augury, who casts spells, who practises sorcery, [11]who uses enchantment, who asks
things of ghosts and spirits, or who enquires of the dead. [12]Because anyone who does these things is an offence to Yahweh. It's
because of these offensive acts that Yahweh your God is dispossessing them before you.

Prophets

[13]You're to be people of integrity with Yahweh your God. [14]Because these nations that you're dispossessing listen to people
who practise augury and to diviners, but you: Yahweh your God hasn't made it so for you.
[15]Yahweh your God will make a prophet arise for you from among you, from your brothers, like me. You're to listen to him,
[16]in accordance with all that you asked of Yahweh your God at Horeb on the day of the congregation, saying 'I won't any more
listen to the voice of Yahweh my God and I won't look any longer at this great fire, so I don't die.' [17]Yahweh said to me, 'They
did a good thing in what they spoke. [18]I shall make a prophet arise for them from among their brothers like you. I shall put my
words in his mouth and he will speak to them all that I order him. [19]The individual who doesn't listen to my words that he speaks
in my name – I myself will enquire of him.
[20]Moreover, the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I didn't order him to speak or who speaks in the name
of other gods: that prophet shall die. [21]When you say to yourself, "How will we know the word that Yahweh hasn't spoken?":
[22]what the prophet speaks in Yahweh's name but the word doesn't come about, come true, that's the word that Yahweh didn't
speak. The prophet spoke it presumptuously. You will not be in dread of him.'

Asylum towns

19 When Yahweh your God cuts down the nations whose country Yahweh your God is giving you and you dispossess them and
you live in their towns and in their houses, [2]you're to distinguish for yourself three towns within your country that Yahweh
your God is giving you, to take possession of it. [3]You're to measure the journey for yourself and divide into three the border of
your country that Yahweh your God gives you as a domain, so any killer may be able to flee there.
[4]This is the thing with the killer who flees there so he may live – one who strikes down his neighbour without knowing, and
wasn't hostile to him in previous days, [5]but who comes into the forest with his neighbour to chop wood, and his hand thrusts with
the axe to cut down a tree and the iron slips off the wooden part and finds his neighbour and he dies. He can flee to one of these
towns so he may live, [6]so the blood restorer doesn't pursue after the killer when his feelings are hot and overtake him, because the
journey is long, and strike him down a fatal blow, when he was not liable to the death sentence because he hadn't been hostile to
him in previous days. [7]That's why I'm ordering you, 'You're to distinguish three towns for yourself.'
[8]If Yahweh your God widens your border as he swore to your ancestors and gives you the entire country that he spoke of giving
to your ancestors, [9]when you keep this entire order that I'm giving you today by acting on it, by being loyal to Yahweh your God
and by walking in his ways at all times, you're to add for yourself three more towns along with these three. [10]Thus the blood of
the person who is free of guilt will not be shed within your country that Yahweh your God is giving you as a domain so that the

shed blood comes on you.

An eye for an eye

[11]But when an individual is hostile to his neighbour, lies in wait for him, sets on him and strikes him down with a fatal blow so he dies, and he flees to one of these towns, [12]the elders of his town are to send and get him from there and give him into the hand of the blood restorer, so he dies. [13]Your eye will not pity him. You're to burn away from Yisra'el the blood of the person who is free of guilt, so things may be good for you.

[14]You will not move aside your neighbour's boundary marker, which previous generations laid down, in your domain which you will have as yours in the country that Yahweh your God is giving you to take possession of it.

[15]One witness will not stand up against someone regarding any waywardness or regarding any wrong, in connection with any wrong that he does. At the mouth of two witnesses or at the mouth of three witnesses the thing will stand up.

[16]When a felonious witness stands up against someone to avow defiance against him, [17]the two people who have the argument are to take their stand before Yahweh, before the priests or the authorities who are there at that time, [18]and the authorities will enquire well.

There, the witness is a false witness. He has avowed a falsehood against his brother. [19]You're to do to him as he intended to do to his brother, and burn away the bad thing from among you, [20]while the remaining people will hear and live in awe, and will never again do the likes of this bad deed among you. [21]Your eye will not pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

How to make war

20 When you go out for battle against your enemies and you see horse and chariotry, a company bigger than you, you will not be afraid of them, because Yahweh your God, who got you out of the country of Misrayim, will be with you. [2]When you're drawing near for battle, the priest is to come up and speak to the company, [3]and say to them: 'Listen, Yisra'el. You're drawing near for battle against your enemies today. Your heart is not to be soft. Don't be afraid, don't be in haste, don't be frightened before them, [4]because Yahweh your God is going with you to do battle for you with your enemies, to deliver you.'

[5]The officials will speak to the company: 'Who is the individual who's built a new house and not dedicated it? He's to go and turn back to his house, so he doesn't die in battle and another individual dedicate it. [6]Who is the individual who's planted a vineyard and not initiated it? He's to go and turn back to his house, so he doesn't die in battle and another individual initiate it. [7]Who is the individual who's betrothed a woman and not taken her? He's to go and turn back to his house so he doesn't die in battle and another individual take her.'

[8]The officials are to speak further to the people and say, 'Who is the individual who's afraid and whose mind is frail? He's to go and turn back to his house so his brothers' mind doesn't melt like his mind.'

[9]When the officials have finished speaking to the company, they're to appoint army officers at the head of the company.

How to make war impractical

[10]When you draw near to a town to do battle against it, you're to call for peace to it. [11]If it answers with peace and opens up to you, the entire people that's to be found in it will become yours, as a workforce. They'll serve you. [12]If it doesn't make peace with you and does battle with you, you're to besiege it, [13]and Yahweh your God will give it into your hand. You're to strike down all its males with the mouth of the sword. [14]Only, the women, the little ones, the animals and everything that's in the town, all its spoil, you may take as plunder for yourself, and devour your enemy's spoil, which Yahweh your God has given you.

[15]So you're to do to all the towns that are very far from you, which are not among the towns belonging to these nations here. [16]Only, from the towns of these peoples that Yahweh your God is giving you as a domain you will not let any person live, [17]because you're to devote them totally (the Hittite, the Amorite, the Kena'anite, the Perizzite, the Hivvite and the Yebusite), as Yahweh your God has ordered you, [18]in order that they may not teach you to act in accordance with all their offensive practices, which they have performed for their gods, and you do wrong towards Yahweh your God.

[19]When you besiege a town for a long time in battling against it to capture it, you will not devastate its trees by thrusting an axe against them, because you're to eat from them. You will not cut them down, because are the trees of the open country human beings, to come before you in a siege work? [20]Only, trees that you know are not trees for food, them you may devastate and cut down so you may build a siege work against the town that's doing battle with you, until its fall.

Murder desecrates the land

21 When a person who has been run through is found, fallen in the fields, on the land that Yahweh your God is giving you to take possession of it, and it's not known who struck him down, [2]your elders or your authorities are to go out and take measurements to the towns that are round the person who has been run through. [3]The town near the person who has been run through – that town's elders are to get a heifer from the herd that hasn't been made to serve, that hasn't pulled in a yoke. [4]That town's elders are to take the heifer down to a flowing wadi that has not served, not been sown, and to break the heifer's neck there, in the wadi.

[5]The Levitical priests will come up, because Yahweh your God chose them to minister to him and to bless in Yahweh's name, and every argument and every assault rests on their pronouncement. [6]All the elders of that town who were near to the person who

has been run through will wash their hands over the heifer whose neck has been broken in the wadi. [7]They will avow: ‘Our hands
didn’t shed this blood; our eyes didn’t see. [8]Make expiation for your people Yisra’el whom you redeemed, Yahweh. Don’t put the
blood of a person who’s free of guilt among your people Yisra’el.’ And the blood will be expiated for them. [9]You yourself will
burn away the blood of the person who is free of guilt from among you, because you do what’s right in Yahweh’s eyes.

The loved and the unloved

[10]When you go out for battle against your enemies, and Yahweh your God gives them into your hand and you take them
captive, [11]and you see among the captives a woman who’s attractive in appearance, you fancy her, you get her for yourself as
wife, [12]you bring her inside your house, she shaves her head, trims her nails, [13]removes her captive clothes from her, lives in your
house, and bewails her father and her mother for a whole month, and after this you have sex with her and you become her husband
and she becomes your wife: [14]if you then don’t want her, you’re to send her off for herself. You will not at all sell her for silver.
You will not do what you like with her, since you’ve humbled her.
[15]When a man has two wives and one is loved and one disliked, and they’ve borne him sons, the loved and the disliked, and the
firstborn son belongs to the disliked one, [16]on the day he gives what he has to his sons as their domain, he cannot treat as firstborn
the son of the one who is loved in disregard of the son of the one who is disliked who was the firstborn. [17]Rather he’s to treat as
the firstborn the son of the one who is disliked, by giving him a double share in all that is found to him, because he’s the first of
his vigour. The due of the firstborn is his.
[18]When an individual has a defiant and rebellious son who doesn’t listen to his father’s voice or to his mother’s voice, and they
discipline him but he doesn’t listen to them, [19]his father and his mother are to get hold of him and take him out to the town’s
elders, to the gateway of his place. [20]They’re to say to the town’s elders, ‘This son of ours is defiant and rebellious. He doesn’t
listen to our voice. He’s a wastrel and a drunkard.’ [21]All the town’s people are to pelt him with stones so he dies. So you will burn
away the bad thing from among you; all Yisra’el will hear and live in awe.

Responsibilities

[22]When there’s a wrong that carries a death sentence against a man and he’s put to death, and you hang him up on a tree, [23]you
will not let his corpse stay the night on the tree. Rather, you’re to make sure you bury him that day, because someone hanged up is
a slight to God, and you will not make taboo your land that Yahweh your God is giving you as a domain.
22 You will not see your brother’s ox or his sheep straying, and hide from them. You’re definitely to get them back to your
brother. [2]If your brother is not near to you or you don’t know him, take it home to your house so it may be with you until
your brother enquires about it and you can give it back to him. [3]You’re to act in this way with his donkey and to act in this way
with his clothing and to act in this way with anything lost by your brother, which gets lost from him and which you find. You
can’t hide. [4]You will not see your brother’s donkey or his ox falling on the road and hide from them. You must definitely get it up
with him.
[5]A man’s things will not be on a woman and a man will not wear a woman’s clothing, because anyone who does these things is
offensive to Yahweh your God.
[6]When a bird’s nest happens to be before you on the road, in any tree or on the earth, with young ones or eggs and the mother
sitting on the young or on the eggs, you will not take the mother along with the offspring. [7]You’re absolutely to send off the
mother, but you may take the offspring for yourself, in order that things may be good for you and you may stay a long time.
[8]When you build a new house, you’re to make a wall for your roof so you don’t put shed blood on your household when
someone falling down falls from it.

Accusations against a girl

[9]You will not sow your vineyard with two species, so the full harvest doesn’t become sacred (the seed that you sow and the
vineyard’s yield). [10]You will not plough with ox and with donkey together. [11]You will not wear a mixture of wool and linen
together. [12]You’re to make yourself tassels on the four corners of your garment with which you cover yourself.
[13]When a man takes a wife and has sex with her, but dislikes her [14]and makes accusations about her and causes her to have a
bad name, and says ‘I took this woman and had sex with her, and I didn’t find in her the evidence of virginity’, [15]the girl’s father
and her mother are to get the evidence of the girl’s virginity and bring it out to the town’s elders at the gateway. [16]The girl’s father
is to say to the elders, ‘I gave my daughter to this man as wife but he came to dislike her. [17]Here, that man has made accusations,
saying “I didn’t find the evidence of virginity in your daughter.” This is the evidence of my daughter’s virginity.’ And they will
lay out the cloth before the town’s elders. [18]Then that town’s elders are to get the man, chastise him, [19]charge him a hundred in
silver and give it to the girl’s father, because he caused a Yisra’elite young girl to have a bad name. And she can be his wife; he
will not be able to send her off through his entire life.
[20]But if this thing was truthful, if the evidence of virginity was not found for the girl, [21]they’re to bring the girl to the entrance
of her father’s house, and the people of her town are to pelt her with stones so she dies, because she’s done something villainous
in Yisra’el by whoring in her father’s household. So you will burn away the bad thing from among you.

Sex in the city and in the country

[22]When a man is found sleeping with a woman who’s married to a husband, they are to die, both of them, the man who slept
with the woman and the woman. So you will burn away the bad thing from Yisra’el.

[23]When there's a girl who's a young girl betrothed to a man, and a man finds her in the town and sleeps with her, [24]you're to take the two of them out to the gateway of that town and pelt them with stones so they die (the girl on account of the fact that she didn't cry out in the town, and the man on account of the fact that he humbled his neighbour's wife). So you will burn away the bad thing from among you.
[25]But if the man finds the betrothed girl in the fields and the man takes strong hold of her and sleeps with her, the man who slept with her is alone to die. [26]You're not to do anything to the girl. There's no wrong that deserves death attaching to her, because this thing is like an individual who sets upon his neighbour and kills him, [27]because he found her in the fields. Should the betrothed girl have cried out, there was no one to deliver her.
[28]When a man finds a girl who's a young girl who's not betrothed and takes hold of her and sleeps with her and they're found out, [29]the man who slept with her is to give the girl's father fifty in silver and she can be his wife. Since he humbled her, he can't send her off through his entire life.
[30]No individual will take his father's wife. He will not uncover his father's garment.

Attitudes to foreigners

23 No one whose testicles are crushed or whose penis is cut off will come into Yahweh's congregation. [2]No one misbegotten will come into Yahweh's congregation; even his tenth generation will not come into Yahweh's congregation.
[3]No Ammonite or Mo'abite will come into Yahweh's congregation; even their tenth generation will not come into Yahweh's congregation ever, [4]because of the fact that they didn't meet you with bread and with water on the way, when you got out of Misrayim, and because he hired against you Bil'am ben Be'or from Petor in Aram-of-the-Two-Rivers, to slight you [5](but Yahweh your God was not willing to listen to Bil'am, and for you Yahweh your God turned the slight into blessing, because Yahweh your God is loyal to you). [6]You will not enquire after their welfare or what is good for them through your entire life, permanently.
[7]You will not take offence at an Edomite, because he's your brother; you will not take offence at an Misrayimite, because you were a resident in his country. [8]Children that are born to them, their third generation, may come into Yahweh's congregation.
[9]When you go out as a camp against your enemies, you're to keep yourselves away from any bad thing. [10]When there is among you an individual who is not pure because of a nocturnal emission, he's to go outside the camp. He will not come inside the camp. [11]When evening is turning its face, he's to wash in water, and as the sun goes down he may come inside the camp.
[12]There's to be an area for you outside the camp and you're to go out there, outside. [13]You're to have a stick along with your equipment, and when you've sat outside, you're to dig with it and go back and cover your excrement. [14]Because Yahweh your God walks about inside your camp to rescue you and to give over your enemies before you, your camp is to be sacred. He's not to see in you something indecent and turn back from following you.

The runaway servant

[15]You will not hand over to his lord a servant who escapes to you from his lord. [16]He's to live with you, among you in the place that he chooses in one of your communities, in one that seems good to him. You will not do him wrong.
[17]No one from among Yisra'el's women will become a hierodule, and no one from among Yisra'el's men will become a hierodule. [18]A whore's 'gift' and a dog's fee will not come into the house of Yahweh your God for any pledge, because both of them would be an offence to Yahweh your God.
[19]You will not charge interest to your brother: interest on silver, interest on food or interest on anything that can be the subject of interest. [20]To a foreigner you may charge interest, but to your brother you will not charge interest, in order that Yahweh your God may bless you in every venture of your hand in the country where you're coming to take possession of it.
[21]When you make a pledge to Yahweh your God, you will not put off making good on it, because Yahweh your God will definitely require it from you, and there will be wrongdoing counted against you, [22]but when you leave off from pledging, there will not be wrongdoing counted against you. [23]What comes out from your lips you're to keep and act on, as you freely made a pledge to Yahweh your God, which you spoke with your own mouth.
[24]When you come into your neighbour's vineyard, you may eat grapes in accordance with your appetite until you're full, but you will not put them into your container. [25]When you come into your neighbour's standing grain, you may pluck ears with your hand, but you will not put a sickle to your neighbour's standing grain.

The pain and the joy of marriage

24 When a man takes a wife and becomes her husband, if she doesn't find grace in his eyes because he finds something indecent in her, and he writes her a divorce document, puts it in her hand and sends her off from his household, [2]and she leave his household, goes and comes to belong to another man, [3]but the other man dislikes her, writes her a divorce document, puts it in her hand and sends her off from his household, or when the other man who took her as his wife dies, [4]her first husband who sent her off cannot take her again as his wife after she's been made taboo, because it would be an offence before Yahweh. You will not do wrong to the country that Yahweh your God is giving you as a domain.
[5]When a man takes a new wife he will not go out in the army, and he will not pass over to it for anything. For a year he is to be free for his household so he may enable his wife whom he's taken to rejoice.
[6]Someone may not take a hand mill or an upper millstone as security, because he would be taking a life as security.
[7]When an individual is found kidnapping a person from among his brothers, from among the Yisra'elites, so he can turn him into a slave and sell him, that kidnapper is to die. So you will burn away the bad thing from among you.

[8]Keep careful watch on yourself in an outbreak of scaliness by acting in accordance with everything that the Levitical priests instruct you. As I ordered them, you're to keep watch so as to act. [9]Be mindful of what Yahweh your God did to Miryam on the journey when you'd got out of Misrayim.

On sacred inefficiency

[10]When you make a loan of any kind to your neighbour, you're not to go into his house to get his collateral. [11]You're to stand outside while the individual to whom you're making the loan brings the collateral to you outside. [12]If he's someone humble, you will not sleep with his collateral. [13]You're definitely to give his collateral back to him at sunset so he may sleep in his covering and bless you, and there will be faithfulness counted for you before Yahweh your God.

[14]You will not defraud a humble and needy employee from your brothers or from your residents who are in your country, in your communities. [15]You're to give him his payment on the day. The sun will not go down on it, because he's humble and he's basing his life on it, and he will call out to God against you, and there will be wrongdoing counted against you.

[16]Parents will not be put to death for children and children will not be put to death for parents. People are to be put to death, an individual for his own wrongdoing.

[17]You will not twist the exercise of authority in respect of a resident or orphan, and you will not take a widow's coat as security. [18]You're to be mindful that you were a serf in Misrayim and Yahweh your God redeemed you from there. That's why I'm ordering you to do this thing.

[19]When you reap your harvest in your fields and you overlook a sheaf in the fields, you will not go back to get it. It's to belong to the resident, to the orphan and to the widow, in order that Yahweh your God may bless you in all the action of your hands. [20]When you beat your olive tree, you will not go over it after you. It's to belong to the resident, to the orphan and to the widow. [21]When you cut the grapes from your vineyard, you will not pick it over after you. It's to belong to the resident, to the orphan and to the widow. [22]You're to be mindful that you were a serf in the country of Misrayim. That's why I'm ordering you to do this thing.

Maintaining the family name

25 When there's an argument between people and they come up for a decision, and they decide for them and pronounce one in the right and the other in the wrong, [2]if the one in the wrong is to be beaten, the one who makes decision is to have him fall down and beaten before him with a number that's enough for his wrongdoing. [3]While he may have him beaten forty times, he will not do more, so he doesn't do more beating on top of these, a huge beating, and your brother is slighted in your eyes.

[4]You will not muzzle an ox when it's threshing.

[5]When brothers live together and one of them dies and has no son, the dead man's wife will not go elsewhere, to a man who's an outsider. Her brother-in-law is to have sex with her; he's to take her as his wife and act as brother-in-law to her. [6]The first son to whom she gives birth will take his place in the name of his dead brother so his name is not wiped out from Yisra'el.

[7]If the man doesn't want to take his sister-in-law, his sister-in-law is to go up to the gateway, to the elders, and say, 'My brother-in-law won't set up a name in Yisra'el for his brother. He's not willing to act as brother-in-law to me.' [8]His town's elders will call for him and speak to him. If he stands firm and says 'I don't want to take her', [9]his sister-in-law will come up to him before the eyes of the elders, pull his boot from on his foot, spit in his face and avow, 'In this way it's done to the man who doesn't build up his brother's household.' [10]It will be named in Yisra'el, 'the household of the man who had his boot pulled off'.

Not to forget Amaleq

[11]When men fight one another, a man and his brother, and the wife of one comes near to rescue her husband from the hand of the one who is striking him, puts out her hand and takes strong hold of him by his private parts, [12]you're to cut off her fist. Your eye will not pity.

[13]You will not have in your bag two stones, big and small. [14]You will not have in your house two measures, big and small. [15]You're to have a stone that's perfect and faithful, a measure that's perfect and faithful, in order that your days may be many on the land that Yahweh your God is giving you. [16]Because anyone who does these things, anyone who does evil, is an offence to Yahweh your God.

[17]Be mindful of what Amaleq did to you on the journey, when you had got out of Misrayim. [18]He met you on the journey and attacked you from the rear (all the ones who were shattered at the back of you), when you were faint and weary. He was not in awe of God. [19]When Yahweh your God enables you to settle down free of all your enemies all round in the country that Yahweh your God is giving you as your domain, to take possession of it, you're to erase the memory of Amaleq from under the heavens. You will not put it out of mind.

A refugee has become a great nation

26 When you come into the country that Yahweh your God is giving you as a domain, and you take possession of it and live in it, [2]you're to get some of the first of all the fruit of the land that you bring in from your country that Yahweh your God is giving you, put it in a basket and go to the site where Yahweh your God chooses to have his name dwell. [3]You're to come to the priest who is there at that time and say to him, 'I tell Yahweh your God today that I've come into the country that Yahweh swore to our ancestors to give them.'

[4]The priest will take the basket from your hand and set it down before the altar of Yahweh your God. [5]You are to avow before

Yahweh your God: ‘My father was an Aramite refugee and he went down to Misrayim and resided there as a few people, but there he became a big, numerous and substantial nation. [6]The Misrayimites dealt badly with us, humbled us and put tough servitude on us, [7]but we cried out to Yahweh the God of our ancestors, and Yahweh listened to our voice. He saw our humbling, our hardship and our affliction. [8]Yahweh got us out of Misrayim with a strong hand, with an extended arm, with great awe-inspiring action, with signs and with proofs. [9]He brought us to this place and gave us this country, a country flowing with milk and syrup. [10]So now, here, I’ve brought the first of the fruit of the land that you, Yahweh, have given me.’

You will set it down before Yahweh your God and bow low before Yahweh your God, [11]and rejoice in all the good that Yahweh your God has given you and your household, you, the Levite and the resident who is among you.

A mutual commitment

[12]When you finish setting aside the entire tenth of your yield in the third year, the year of the tenth, and give to the Levite, to the resident, to the orphan and to the widow, so they may eat in your communities and be full, [13]you’re to say before Yahweh your God, ‘I’ve cleared out what was sacred from the house. Further, I’ve given it to the Levite, to the resident, to the orphan and to the widow, in accordance with your entire order that you gave me. I haven’t contravened any of your orders.

I haven’t put them out of mind.
[14]I haven’t eaten of it while in sorrow.
I haven’t cleared out any of it while taboo.
I haven’t given any of it to a dead person.

I’ve listened to the voice of Yahweh my God. I’ve acted in accordance with everything that you ordered me. [15]Look out from your sacred abode, from the heavens, and bless your people Yisra’el and the land that you’ve given us, as you swore to our ancestors, a country flowing with milk and syrup.’

[16]This day Yahweh your God is ordering you to act on these decrees and rulings. You’re to keep them and act on them with your entire mind and with your entire being. [17]You’ve got Yahweh to say today that he’ll be your God and that you’ll walk in his ways, keep his decrees, his orders and his rulings, and listen to his voice. [18]And Yahweh has got you to say today that you’ll be a people that is personal treasure, as he spoke to you, that you’ll keep all his orders, [19]that he’ll put you on high over all the nations that he made, for praise, for fame and for glory, and that you’ll be a people sacred to Yahweh your God, as he spoke.

Inscribed stones

27 Mosheh and the Yisra’elite elders ordered the people: ‘Keep the entire order that I’m giving you today. [2]On the day that you cross the Yarden into the country that Yahweh your God is giving you, you’re to set up for yourself big stones. You’re to coat them in plaster [3]and write on them all the words in this instruction, when you cross in order that you may go into the country that Yahweh your God is giving you, a country flowing with milk and syrup, as Yahweh the God of your ancestors spoke to you.

[4]So when you cross the Yarden you’re to set up on Mount Ebal these stones about which I’m ordering you today, and coat them in plaster, [5]and build an altar there for Yahweh your God, an altar of stones. You will not wield iron on them; [6]you’re to build the altar of Yahweh your God from whole stones. You’re to offer up whole offerings on it for Yahweh your God, [7]and make well-being sacrifices, eat there and rejoice before Yahweh your God. [8]And you’re to write on the stones all the words in this instruction. Make it good and plain.’

[9]Mosheh and the Levitical priests spoke to all Yisra’el: ‘Be quiet and listen, Yisra’el. This day you’ve become a people belonging to Yahweh your God. [10]You’re to listen to the voice of Yahweh your God and act on his orders and on his decrees, which I’m ordering you today.’

[11]Mosheh ordered the people that day: [12]‘These are to stand to bless the people on Mount Gerizim, when you cross the Yarden: Shim’on [Simeon], Levi, Yehudah [Judah], Yissakar [Issachar], Yoseph [Joseph] and Binyamin [Benjamin]. [13]These are to stand for the slight on Mount Ebal: Re’uben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali.

Curses

[14]The Levites will avow to every individual in Yisra’el, in a loud voice:

[15]Cursed is the individual who makes a sculpture or figurine, an offensive thing to Yahweh, the making of a craftsman’s hands, and sets it up in secret.
The entire people are to avow, “Yes!”
[16]Cursed is one who slights his father or his mother.
The entire people is to avow, “Yes!”
[17]Cursed is one who moves aside his neighbour’s boundary marker.
The entire people is to avow, “Yes!”
[18]Cursed is one who misdirects a blind person on the road.
The entire people is to avow, “Yes!”
[19]Cursed is one who twists the exercise of authority for a resident, an orphan or a widow.
The entire people is to avow, “Yes!”
[20]Cursed is one who sleeps with his father’s wife, because he’s uncovered his father’s garment.
The entire people is to avow, “Yes!”

[21]Cursed is one who sleeps with any animal.
The entire people is to avow, “Yes!”
[22]Cursed is one who sleeps with his sister, his father’s daughter or his mother’s daughter.
The entire people is to avow, “Yes!”
[23]Cursed is one who sleeps with his mother-in-law.
The entire people is to avow, “Yes!”
[24]Cursed is one who strikes down his neighbour in secret.
The entire people is to avow, “Yes!”
[25]Cursed is one who accepts a bribe to strike down a person who is free of guilt.
The entire people is to avow, “Yes!”
[26]Cursed is someone who doesn’t implement the words in this instruction and act on them.
The entire people is to avow, “Yes!”

Blessings

28 If you listen attentively to the voice of Yahweh your God so as to keep all his orders which I’m giving you today by acting on them, Yahweh your God will put you on high over all the nations on the earth. [2]All these blessings will come on you and overtake you when you listen to the voice of Yahweh your God:
[3]Blessed are you in the town and blessed are you in the fields.
[4]Blessed is the fruit of your womb, the fruit of your land, the fruit of your animals, the drop of your domestic animals and the young of your flock.
[5]Blessed is your basket and your kneading bowl.
[6]Blessed are you in your coming in and blessed are you in your going out.
[7]Yahweh will make your enemies who set upon you take a beating before you. They will come out against you by one route but flee before you by seven routes.
[8]Yahweh will order blessing on you in your barns and in every venture of your hand. He will bless you in the country that Yahweh your God is giving you. [9]Yahweh will set you up as his sacred people, as he swore to you, because you keep the orders of Yahweh your God and walk in his ways. [10]All the peoples of the earth will see that Yahweh’s name has been called out over you and they will live in awe of you. [11]Yahweh will make you more than abound with good things, in the fruit of your womb, in the fruit of your animals and in the fruit of your land, on the land that Yahweh swore to your ancestors to give them. [12]Yahweh will open for you his storehouse of goodness, the heavens, to give rain on the earth in its time and to bless every action of your hand. You will lend to many nations but you won’t borrow.
[13]Yahweh will make you the head and not the tail, and you will be only on top and not at the bottom, when you listen to the orders of Yahweh your God that I’m giving you today, keeping them by acting on them, [14]and don’t turn aside from all the things that I’m ordering you today, right or left, by following other gods to serve them.

Curses once more

[15]But if you don’t listen to the voice of Yahweh your God, keeping all his orders and his decrees that I’m giving you today by acting on them, all these slights will come on you and overtake you.
[16]Cursed are you in the town and cursed are you in the fields.
[17]Cursed is your basket and your kneading bowl.
[18]Cursed is the fruit of your womb, the fruit of your land, the drop of your domestic animals and the young of your flock.
[19]Cursed are you in your coming in and cursed are you in your going out.
[20]Yahweh will send off against you curse, turmoil and rebuke in every venture of your hand that you undertake, until you’re annihilated and until you perish quickly in the face of the bad nature of your practices by which you’ve abandoned me. [21]Yahweh will make epidemic attach itself to you until he finishes you off from upon the land where you’re coming to take possession of it. [22]Yahweh will strike you down with wasting, with fever, with inflammation, with heatwave, with drought, with blight and with mildew, and they’ll pursue you until you perish. [23]The heavens that are above your head will be copper and the earth that’s under you will be iron. [24]Yahweh will make the rain of your country dust, and earth will descend on you from the heavens until you’re annihilated. [25]Yahweh will make you take a beating before your enemies. You will go out against him by one route but flee before him by seven routes. You will become a thing of horror to all the kingdoms of the earth. [26]Your corpse will become food for all the birds of the heavens and for the animals of the earth, with no one to make them tremble.

Troubles

[27]Yahweh will strike you down with the inflammation of Misrayim, with haemorrhoids, with sores and with rashes, from which you won’t be able to find healing. [28]Yahweh will strike you down with madness, with blindness and with confusion of mind. [29]You’ll be groping at noon as the blind person gropes in darkness. You won’t make a success of your journeys. You will only be defrauded and robbed all the time, with no one to deliver.
[30]You’ll betroth a wife but another man will sleep with her. You’ll build a house but you won’t live in it. You’ll plant a vineyard but you won’t initiate it. [31]Your ox slaughtered before your eyes: and you won’t eat of it. Your donkey stolen before you: and it won’t come back to you. Your flock given over to your enemies: and you’ll have no one to deliver. [32]Your sons and

your daughters given over to another people, with your eyes looking and spending themselves for them all the time: and there'll be no power in your hand.
[33]A people you don't acknowledge will eat the fruit of your ground and all your weariness. You'll be only defrauded and crushed all the time. [34]You'll be made insane by the sight that your eyes see. [35]Yahweh will strike you down with bad inflammation, on your knees and on your thighs, from which you won't be able to find healing, from the sole of your foot to the crown of your head.
[36]Yahweh will make you, and the king whom you set over you, go to a nation that you haven't acknowledged, you or your ancestors. There you'll serve other gods, wood and stone. [37]You'll be something shocking, an object lesson and a subject of taunting among all the peoples where Yahweh drives you.

Defeat

[38]You'll take much seed out to the field but you'll gather little because the locust will devour it. [39]You'll plant vineyards and serve them but you won't drink wine and you won't gather because the worm will eat them. [40]You'll have olive trees through your entire border, but you won't apply oil because your olive tree will drop off. [41]You'll father sons and daughters but they won't be yours because they'll go into captivity. [42]Insects will take possession of all your trees and the fruit of your ground. [43]The resident who's among you will go up higher and higher above you and you'll descend lower and lower. [44]He'll lend to you and you won't lend to him. He'll be head and you'll be tail.
[45]All these slights will come on you, and they'll pursue you and overtake you until you're annihilated, because you didn't listen to the voice of Yahweh your God, keeping his orders and his decrees which he gave you. [46]They'll be permanent signs and proofs against you and against your offspring. [47]Since you didn't serve Yahweh your God with rejoicing and with a good heart because of the large quantity of everything, [48]you'll serve your enemies whom Yahweh will send off against you, in hunger and in thirst, in nakedness and in lack of everything. He'll put an iron yoke on your neck until he's annihilated you.
[49]Yahweh will bring against you a nation from afar, from the end of the earth, as the eagle swoops, a nation whose tongue you can't listen to, [50]a nation hard-faced that won't honour the person of the elderly and won't show grace to the young, [51]and will eat the fruit of your animals and the fruit of your ground until you're annihilated, that won't leave you grain, new wine or fresh oil, the drop of your domestic animals or the young of your flock, until it has let you perish.

The horrors of siege

[52]It will besiege you in all your communities until the fall of your lofty and fortified walls on which you're relying, in the entire country. It will besiege you in all your communities in the entire country that Yahweh your God has given you. [53]You'll eat the offspring of your womb, the flesh of your sons and your daughters, whom Yahweh your God has given you, in the siege and in the stress that your enemy puts on you.
[54]The soft individual among you and the one who is very sensitive – his eye will be mean towards his brother and towards the wife in his arms and towards the rest of his children whom he has remaining, [55]so that he won't give one of them any of the flesh of his children that he eats, because he doesn't have anything remaining for himself, in the siege and in the stress that your enemy puts on you in all your communities.
[56]The woman who is soft among you and sensitive, who hasn't ventured to set the sole of her foot on the ground because of being sensitive and soft – her eye will be mean towards the husband in her arms, towards her son and towards her daughter, [57]towards her afterbirth that comes out beneath her feet and towards her children to whom she gives birth, because she will eat them in secret, as a result of her lack of everything, in the siege and in the stress that your enemy puts on you in your communities.
[58]If you don't keep all the words in this instruction that are written in this document by acting on them, so as to live in awe of this honoured and awe-inspiring name, Yahweh your God, [59]Yahweh will bring extraordinary calamities on you and calamities on your offspring, big and lasting calamities, bad and lasting diseases. [60]He will bring back on you every illness of Misrayim before which you were in dread, so that they attach themselves to you.

No resting place

[61]Yahweh will also bring on you every disease and every calamity that's not written in this instruction document, until you're annihilated. [62]You'll remain as a few people, although you were like the stars in the heavens in your large number, because you didn't listen to the voice of Yahweh your God. [63]As Yahweh delighted over you in doing good to you and in multiplying you, so Yahweh will delight over you in letting you perish and annihilating you. You'll be torn from upon the land where you're coming in to take possession of it.
[64]Yahweh will disperse you among the peoples from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth, and you'll serve other gods there that you haven't acknowledged, you or your ancestors. [65]And among those nations you won't rest. There'll be no place to settle for the sole of your foot. Yahweh will give you there an anxious mind, spending of eyes and languishing of the entire being. [66]Your life will be hanging at a distance from you. You'll be terrified night and day. You won't trust your life. [67]In the morning you'll say, "If only it were evening", and in the evening you'll say, "If only it were morning", because of dread in your mind that you feel and because of the sight of your eyes that you see. [68]Yahweh will take you back to Misrayim in ships, by a way that I said you would not again see, and you'll sell yourselves there to your enemies as servants and maidservants, but there will be no buyer.'
These are the words of the pact that Yahweh ordered Mosheh to solemnize with the Yisra'elites in the country of Mo'ab, apart

29 from the pact that he solemnized with them at Horeb.

The mystery of obedience and disobedience

[2]Mosheh called all Yisra'el and said to them: 'You yourselves have seen all that Yahweh did before your eyes in the country of Misrayim, to Par'oh, to all his servants and to his entire country, [3]the great tests that your eyes saw, those great signs and proofs. [4]But Yahweh hasn't given you a mind to acknowledge or eyes to see or ears to listen, until this day.

[5]I enabled you to go through the wilderness for forty years. Your clothes didn't wear out on you and your boot didn't wear out on your foot, [6]you didn't eat bread and you didn't drink wine or liquor, in order that you might acknowledge that I am Yahweh your God. [7]You came to this place and Sihon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan came out to meet you in battle but we struck them down, [8]took their country, and gave it to the Re'ubenites, to the Gadites and to the half-clan of Menashsheh, as their domain.

[9]You're to keep the words in this pact and act on them, in order that you may thrive in everything that you do. [10]You're standing today, all of you, before Yahweh your God – your heads, your clans, your elders, your officials, every individual in Yisra'el, [11]your little ones, your wives, your resident who is within the camps, from the person who chops your wood to the one who draws your water – [12]for you to pass over into the pact of Yahweh your God and into its vow, which Yahweh your God is solemnizing with you today, [13]in order that he may set you up today as a people for him and that he may be God for you, as he spoke to you and as he swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Yitshaq and to Ya'aqob. [14]Not with you alone am I solemnizing this pact and this vow; [15]rather with the one who is here with us today standing before Yahweh our God, and with the one who is not here with us today.

Why this angry fury?

[16]Because you yourselves acknowledge the fact that we lived in the country of Misrayim and the fact that we passed through the middle of the nations that you did pass through, [17]and you saw their abominations and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which were with them.

[18]Beware that there is not among you a man or a woman, a kin-group or a clan, whose mind is turning about today from Yahweh our God to go to serve those nations' gods. Beware that there is not among you a root sprouting a poisonous and bitter plant. [19]When he hears the words of this vow he may bless himself inside, saying "Things will go well for me when I walk by the determination of my mind, in order to augment the well-watered with the dry." [20]Yahweh will not be willing to pardon him. Rather, Yahweh's anger will then smoke, with his passion, against that man. The entire vow written in this document will descend on him. Yahweh will wipe out his name from under the heavens. [21]Yahweh will distinguish him from all the Yisra'elite clans for bad experiences, in accordance with all the vows in the pact written in this instruction document.

[22]The next generation will say – your children who come after you, and the foreigner who comes from a distant country and sees the calamities on that country and its diseases that Yahweh will have brought on it ([23]its entire country, burning with sulphur and salt, won't be sown and won't bloom, and no grass will grow in it, like the overthrow of Sedom and Amorah, Admah and Tseboyim, which Yahweh overthrew in his anger and in his wrath): [24]all the nations will say, "Why did Yahweh act like this to this country? Why this great angry rage?"

The things hidden and the things revealed

[25]They will say, "On account of the fact that they abandoned the pact of Yahweh the God of their ancestors which he solemnized with them when he got them out of the country of Misrayim, [26]and went and served other gods and bowed low to them, gods that they had not acknowledged and he had not allocated to them. [27]Yahweh's anger raged at that country so as to bring on it every curse that's written in this document. [28]Yahweh rooted them up from on their land in anger, in wrath and in great rage, and sent them off to another country this very day."

[29]The things that are hidden belong to Yahweh our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children permanently, to act on all the words of this instruction.

30 But when all these things come on you (the blessing and the curse that I've put before you) and you bring them back to mind among all the nations where Yahweh your God has driven you away, [2]and turn back to Yahweh your God and listen to his voice in accordance with everything that I'm ordering you today, you and your children, with your entire mind and with your entire being, [3]Yahweh your God will bring back your good fortune. He will have compassion on you and again gather you from all the peoples where Yahweh your God has dispersed you.

[4]If your people who've been driven away are at the end of the heavens, from there Yahweh your God will gather you, from there he'll get you. [5]Yahweh your God will bring you to the country that your ancestors took possession of and you'll take possession of it. He'll be good to you and he'll make you more numerous than your ancestors.

In your mouth and in your mind

[6]Yahweh your God will circumcise your mind and the mind of your offspring so that you are loyal to Yahweh your God with your entire mind and with your entire being, in order that you may live. [7]Yahweh your God will put all these vows on your enemies, on the people who are hostile to you, who have pursued you. [8]You yourselves will come back and listen to Yahweh's voice and act on all his orders that I'm giving you today.

[9]Yahweh your God will make you abound in all the action of your hand, in the fruit of your womb, in the fruit of your animals
and in the fruit of your land, for good, because Yahweh will again rejoice over you for good, as he rejoiced over your ancestors,
[10]when you listen to the voice of Yahweh your God so as to keep his orders and his decrees that are written in this instruction
document, when you turn back to Yahweh your God with your entire mind and with your entire being.
[11]Because this order that I'm giving you today is not too extraordinary for you, and it's not far away. [12]It's not in the heavens,
to make you say, "Who will go up to the heavens for us and get it for us, and enable us to listen to it so we may act on it?" [13]It's
not across the sea, to make you say, "Who will go across the sea for us and get it for us, and enable us to listen to it so we may act
on it?" [14]Because the thing is very near you, in your mouth and in your mind, so as to act on it. [15]See, today I've put before you
life and good things, death and bad things. [16]I'm ordering you today to be loyal to Yahweh your God by walking in his ways and
by keeping his orders, his decrees and his rulings, so you may live and be numerous, and so Yahweh your God may bless you in
the country where you're coming to take possession of it.

Choose life

[17]But if your mind turns about and you don't listen, and you stray and bow low to other gods and serve them, [18]I tell you today
that you will quite perish. You won't stay a long time on the land where you're crossing the Yarden to come to take possession of
it. [19]I call the heavens and the earth to testify against you today. I've put life and death before you, blessing and curse. You're to
choose life, in order that you and your offspring may live, [20]by being loyal to Yahweh your God by listening to his voice and by
attaching yourself to him, because that means your life and your long stay living on the land that Yahweh swore to your ancestors,
to Abraham, to Yitshaq and to Ya'aqob, to give them.'

31 Mosheh went and spoke these words to all Yisra'el: [2]'I am a man of 120 years. Today I can no longer go out and come in,
and Yahweh has said to me, "You will not cross this Yarden." [3]Yahweh your God – he's crossing before you, and he himself
will annihilate these nations from before you so you may dispossess them. Yehoshua is the one who is crossing before you, as
Yahweh has spoken.
[4]Yahweh will do to them as he did to Sihon and to Og, the kings of the Amorites, and to their country, whom he annihilated.
[5]Yahweh will give them up before you and you're to act towards them in accordance with the entire order that I gave you. [6]Be
strong and stand firm. Don't be afraid and don't be frightened before them, because Yahweh your God, he's going with you. He
won't let go of you. He won't abandon you.'

Teaching to read

[7]Mosheh called Yehoshua and said to him before the eyes of all Yisra'el, 'Be strong and stand firm, because you're the one
who will go with this people into the country that Yahweh swore to their ancestors to give them, and you'll enable them to have it
as their domain. [8]Yahweh himself is going before you. He'll be with you. He won't let go of you. He won't abandon you. You
won't be afraid. You won't be scared.'
[9]Mosheh wrote this instruction and gave it to the priests, Levi's descendants who carried Yahweh's pact chest, and to all the
Yisra'elite elders. [10]Mosheh ordered them, 'At the end of seven years, at the time set for the release year, at the Sukkot Festival,
[11]when all Yisra'el comes to appear before Yahweh your God at the site that he chooses, you're to read out this instruction before
all Yisra'el, in their ears. [12]Congregate the people – the men and the women, the little ones and the resident who is in your
communities – in order that they may listen, and in order that they may learn and live in awe of Yahweh your God, and keep all
the things in this instruction by acting on them. [13]Their children who haven't acknowledged it – they're to listen and learn to live
in awe of Yahweh your God all the time that you're living on the land where you're crossing the Yarden to take possession of it.'
[14]Yahweh said to Mosheh: 'Here, the time for you to die has drawn near. Call for Yehoshua and take your stand in the
appointment tent so I may give him my orders.' So Mosheh and Yehoshua went and took their stand in the appointment tent,
[15]and Yahweh appeared in the tent, in a cloud pillar. The cloud pillar stood at the entrance of the tent.

Write down this song

[16]Yahweh said to Mosheh: 'Here, you're going to lie down with your ancestors. This people will set off and whore after the
foreign gods of the country where it's coming, within it. It will abandon me and contravene my pact, which I solemnized with it,
[17]and my anger will rage against it on that day. I shall abandon them and hide my face from them. It will be for devouring. Many
bad experiences and pressures will befall it. On that day it will say, "Isn't it on account of the fact that our God was not among us
that these bad experiences have befallen us?" [18]But I myself will quite hide my face on that day because of all the bad things that
it has done, because it has turned its face to other gods.
[19]So now write down this song for yourselves and teach it to the Yisra'elites. Place it in their mouths in order that this song may
be for me a witness against the Yisra'elites. [20]When I bring it into the land that I swore to its ancestors, flowing with milk and
syrup, and it eats and is full and becomes enriched, and turns its face to other gods, and they serve them and disdain me, and it
contravenes my pact, [21]and when many bad experiences and pressures befall it, this song will avow before it as a witness, because
it won't be put out of mind from the mouth of its offspring. Because I know its inclination, which it's forming today, before I
bring it into the country that I swore.' [22]So Mosheh wrote down this song that day and taught it to the Yisra'elites.
[23]He ordered Yehoshua ben Nun, 'Be strong and stand firm, because you're the one who will enable the Yisra'elites to go into
the country that I swore to their ancestors. I will be with you.'

A truthful God

[24]When Mosheh had finished writing down the words in this instruction on a document, until it was complete, [25]Mosheh ordered the Levites, who carried Yahweh's pact chest: [26]'Take this instruction document and place it by the side of the pact chest of Yahweh your God. It's to be there as a witness against you. [27]Because I myself know your rebelliousness and the toughness of your neck. There, you've been rebellious with Yahweh while I've still been alive with you, today, and you will certainly be after my death. [28]Congregate to me all the elders of your clans and your officials so I may speak these words in their ears and call the heavens and the earth to testify against you. [29]Because I know that after my death you will behave in a totally devastating way and depart from the path on which I've ordered you, and that bad fortune will meet you in a later time, because you do what is bad in Yahweh's eyes so as to provoke him by the action of your hands.'
[30]So Mosheh spoke in the ears of the entire Yisra'elite congregation the words of this song, until it was complete.

32 Give ear, heavens, so I may speak; the earth is to listen to the words of my mouth.

[2]May my grasp of things fall like rain,
my speech drop like dew,
Like showers on grass,
like a downpour on shoots.
[3]Because I call out the name of Yahweh:
ascribe greatness to our God!
[4]The crag: his action is perfect,
because all his ways are authoritative.
A trustworthy God with whom there's no evil;
he is faithful and upright.

Is this the way you repay Yahweh?

[5]They have acted devastatingly with him, not as his children,
with a defect in them, a perverse and crooked generation.
[6]Do you deal this to Yahweh,
as a people that is villainous and not smart?
He's your Father who brought you into being, isn't he,
the one who made you and established you.
[7]Be mindful of the time of old,
consider the years of generation after generation.
Ask your father, and he will tell you,
your elders, and they will say it to you.
[8]When the One on High gave the nations domains,
divided up humanity,
He set the boundaries of the peoples,
according to the number of the divine beings,
[9]Because Yahweh's share is his people,
Ya'aqob is the allocation that is his domain.
[10]He found him in a wilderness region,
in a howling desert wasteland.
He surrounded him, he looked after him,
he preserved him like the pupil of his eye.
[11]Like an eagle that stirs its nest,
hovers over its young,
He spread his wings, took him,
carried him on his pinions.
[12]Yahweh alone led him,
there was no foreign god with him.
[13]He let him ride on the heights of the earth,
he ate the fruit of the field.
He let him suckle on honey from a cliff,
on oil from the flint of a crag,
[14]Curds from the herd, milk from the flock,
with the fat of lambs,
Rams of Bashan and he-goats,
with the kidney fat of wheat,
and the blood of the grape you drank, foaming wine.

[15]But Yeshurun got fat and kicked;
you got fat, heavy and gross.
He took leave of the God who made him,
despised the crag who delivered him.

[16]They aroused his passion with outside gods,
provoked him with offensive things.
[17]They sacrificed to demons, no-god,
gods they had not acknowledged,
New ones that had come from nearby,
whom your ancestors didn't recognize.
[18]You forgot the crag who fathered you,
put out of mind the God who was in labour with you.

Yahweh saw the provocation

[19]Yahweh saw and disdained them,
because of the provocation of his sons and his daughters.
[20]He said, 'I shall hide my face from them,
and I shall see what is their future.
Because they're a contrary generation,
children in whom there's no trustworthiness.
[21]Those people aroused my passion with a no-god,
provoked me with their hollow things.
So I – I shall arouse their passion with a non-people,
provoke them with a villainous nation.
[22]Because a fire has blazed in my anger,
and burned to lowest She'ol.
It has devoured the earth and its produce,
set on fire the foundations of the mountains.
[23]I shall gather bad things upon them,
finish up my arrows against them.
[24]Wasted by hunger, eaten by fever,
bitter devastation,
I shall send off against them animal fangs,
with the venom of creatures that crawl in the dirt.
[25]The sword will bereave outside,
dread from the rooms,
Both young man and young girl,
the nursing baby with the grey-haired man.
[26]I said I would cut them in pieces,
I would eliminate the memory of them from humanity.
[27]Except that I dreaded the provocation of the enemy,
so that their attackers don't recognize,
So that they don't say, "Our hand is high,
Yahweh has not done any of this!"
[28]Because they're a nation lost for counsel;
there's no insight in them.
[29]If they were smart, they would understand this,
they would have insight into their future.
[30]How does one pursue a thousand,
and two make ten thousand flee,
If it's not that their crag has sold them,
Yahweh has delivered them up?

Their crag is not like our crag

[31]Because their crag is not like our crag –
our enemies may be the judges.
[32]Because their vine is from Sedom's vine,
from Amorah's fields.
Their grapes are poisonous grapes,
their clusters are bitter for them.
[33]Their wine is the venom of asps,
vipers' cruel poison.
[34]It's laid up with me, isn't it,
sealed up in my storehouses?
[35]Redress and making good are mine
at the time when their foot slips.
Because the day of their calamity is near,
the things that are destined for them are making speed.

[36]Because Yahweh will act in judgement for his people,
will relent concerning his servants,
When he sees that their hand has failed,
and there's no one, bound or released.
[37]He will say, 'Where are their gods,
the crag in which they took shelter,
[38]Those who ate the fat of their sacrifices,
drank the wine of their libations?
They should set off and help you;
he should become a place to hide for you.
[39]See, now, that I,
I am the one.
There's no God beside me;
I myself put to death and I make alive.
I hit and I myself will heal;
there's no one rescues from my hand.
[40]Because I raise my hand to the heavens,
and I say: "As I live permanently:
[41]If I sharpen the flashing of my sword,
and my hand takes hold of authority,
I shall give back redress to my attackers,
I shall make good to the people who're hostile to me.
[42]I shall make my arrows drunk with blood,
my sword will devour flesh,
From the blood of the person who's been run through and the captive,
from the long-haired head of the enemy."

The song shared

[43]Resound over his people, you nations,
because he takes redress for the blood of his servants.
He gives back redress to his attackers
and makes expiation for his land, for his people.'

[44]Mosheh came and spoke all the words of this song in the people's ears, he and Hoshea ben Nun. [45]Mosheh finished speaking all these words to all Yisra'el, [46]then said to them: 'Give your mind to all these words that I'm testifying against you today, which you're to order your children to keep by acting on them, all the words in this instruction. [47]Because it's not an empty thing for you. Rather, it's your life. Through this thing you'll stay a long time on the land where you're crossing the Yarden to take possession of it.'
[48]Yahweh spoke to Mosheh that very day: [49]'Climb this mountain in the Regions Across, Mount Nebo, which is in the country of Mo'ab, which is facing Yeriho [Jericho], and look at the country of Kena'an, which I'm giving to the Yisra'elites as a holding. [50]You're to die on the mountain where you're climbing, and you're to be gathered to your kin, as Aharon your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his kin, [51]because of the fact that you trespassed against me among the Yisra'elites at Meribat Qadesh Water in the Tsin Wilderness, because of the fact that you didn't make me sacred among the Yisra'elites, [52]because you're to look at the country from a distance, but you will not come there, to the country that I'm giving to the Yisra'elites.'

Mosheh's final blessing: Re'uben, Yehudah, Levi

33 This is the blessing that Mosheh, the supernatural man, gave the Yisra'elites before his death:

[2]Yahweh came from Sinay,
rose on them from Se'ir,
shone from Mount Pa'ran.
He arrived from Sacred Myriads,
from the south to them at the slope.
[3]As one who indeed holds the people dear,
all its sacred ones are in your hand.
They themselves bowed at your foot,
as the one who utters your words.
[4]The instruction with which Mosheh ordered us,
the possession of Ya'aqob's congregation.
[5]He became king in Yeshurun,
when the heads of the people gathered,
Yisra'el's clans together.
[6]Re'uben is to live and not die,

but it's to become few in number.

[7]This of Yehudah – he said:

Listen to Yehudah's voice, Yahweh,
bring him to his people.
Make his hands powerful for him;
may you be a help against his attackers.

[8]Of Levi he said:

Your Urim and Tummim
be with the one who was loyal to you,
Whom you tested at Massah ['Testing'],
argued with at Meribah ['Argument'] Water,
[9]The one who said of his father and of his mother,
'I haven't looked at him',
And did not recognize his brothers,
did not acknowledge his children,
Because they kept your word,
preserved your pact.
[10]They will instruct Ya'aqob in your rulings,
Yisra'el in your instruction.
They will place incense before your nose
and a whole offering on your altar.
[11]Bless his forcefulness, Yahweh,
may you grace the action of his hands.
Hit the hips of the people who rise up against him,
and the people who are hostile to him, so that they cannot rise up.

Binyamin, Yoseph, Zebulun

[12]Of Binyamin he said:

Yahweh's beloved
is to dwell in confidence with him.
He will be surrounding him at all times;
he will be dwelling between his shoulders.

[13]Of Yoseph he said:

His region be blessed by Yahweh,
from the choice things of the heavens, from the dew,
and from the deep that lies down below,
[14]From the choice things of the sun's yield,
from the choice things of the moon's produce,
[15]From the top of the ancient mountains,
from the choice things of the age-old hills,
[16]From the choice things of the earth and its fullness,
and the acceptance of the one who dwelt at the bush.
It's to come on Yoseph's head,
on the crown of the prince of his brothers.
[17]His magnificence is that of a firstling ox,
his horns the horns of an oryx.
With them he's to gore the peoples,
the ends of the earth all at once.
They are Ephrayim's myriads,
They are Menashsheh's thousands.

[18]Of Zebulun he said:

Rejoice, Zebulun, as you go out,
and Yissakar in your tents.
[19]They're to call peoples to the highland,
there they will offer right sacrifices.
Because they will suck on the abundance of the seas
and on the hidden treasures of the shore.

Gad, Dan, Naphtali, Asher

[20]Of Gad he said:

Blessed the one who widens Gad,
dwelling like a cougar!
He will tear an arm, yes a crown;
[21]he's seen the best for himself.
Because there is the commander's plot, reserved,
and he's come to the people's heads.
He's put Yahweh's faithfulness into action,
his acts of authority with Yisra'el.

[22]Of Dan he said:

Dan is a lion cub
that will leap out from Bashan.

[23]Of Naphtali he said:

Naphtali, enjoying the acceptance
and full of the blessing of Yahweh,
take possession west and south.

[24]Of Asher he said:

Blessed of sons is Asher,
may he be accepted by his brothers,
dipping his foot in oil,
[25]Your bolts iron and copper,
your strength as long as your days.

[26]Yeshurun, there's none like God,
riding the heavens as your help,
the skies in his majesty.
[27]The ancient God is an abode,
underneath are the age-old arms.
He drove out the enemy from before you,
and said, 'Annihilate!'
[28]So Yisra'el dwells in confidence,
Ya'aqob's spring is left alone,
In a country of grain and new wine;
yes, its heavens drop down dew.
[29]Your good fortune, Yisra'el – who is like you,
a people finding deliverance through Yahweh,
Your shield who is your help,
the one who is your majestic sword?
Your enemies will cower before you,
and you yourself will tread on their backs.

Dying outside the promised land

34 So Mosheh went up from the Mo'ab steppes to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Yeriho, and Yahweh let him see the entire country, Gil'ad as far as Dan, [2]all Naphtali, the region of Ephrayim and Menashsheh, the entire region of Yehudah as far as the Western Sea, [3]the Negeb and the Plain (the Valley of Jericho, the town of palms) as far as Tso'ar. [4]Yahweh said to him, 'This is the country that I swore to Abraham, to Yitshaq and to Ya'aqob, "To your offspring I will give it." I've let you see it with your eyes, but you will not cross there.'

[5]So Mosheh, Yahweh's servant, died there in the country of Mo'ab at Yahweh's bidding, [6]and he buried him in a ravine in the country of Mo'ab near Bet Pe'or. No one knows his grave until this day. [7]Mosheh was a man of 120 years when he died. His eye was not weak and his strength had not gone. [8]The Yisra'elites bewailed Mosheh in the Mo'ab steppes for thirty days, then the days of grieved bewailing for Mosheh came to an end.

[9]Now Yehoshua ben Nun was full of a discerning spirit because Mosheh had leaned his hands on him, and the Yisra'elites listened to him and did as Yahweh ordered Mosheh. [10]There didn't again rise in Yisra'el a prophet like Mosheh, whom Yahweh acknowledged face to face, [11]in all the signs and the miracles that Yahweh sent him to do in the country of Misrayim for Par'oh, for all his servants and for all his country, [12]and in all the strong hand and in all the great awe-inspiring power that Mosheh showed before the eyes of all Yisra'el.

Joshua

The book of Joshua marks a new beginning to the story of Israel in Canaan. Yet the story continues straight on without a break. Deuteronomy had looked forward to the Israelites occupying Canaan; Joshua describes how they did so. Further back, Genesis had told of God's promise that Abraham's descendants would come to possess this land, and the book of Joshua relates how God fulfilled that promise. So Joshua also marks an end.

There are two stages to its account of the fulfilment. The first half of the book relates how the Israelites came to occupy the land. The second half relates how they allocated it among their clans.

But the story also incorporates two complications. The first half also lists areas of the country that Israel didn't conquer. These were the areas where most of the more powerful Canaanites lived. Israel mostly settled in the highland where hardly anyone else lived. Israelites hearing this story would be unable to suppress a smile, because the areas Israel failed to occupy were the best parts of the country. Sometimes Joshua speaks simply of them not occupying these areas, which might imply it was their fault. Sometimes it speaks of them being unable to occupy them, which implies that God didn't enable them to complete their occupation.

The other complication is that there indeed were a number of spectacular moments when the Israelites did not follow God's instructions: see especially the stories about Achan and about the Gib'onites (Joshua 7 and 9). This aspect of the story also points to the implication that, while they are not entirely to blame for their failure to occupy the whole country, they do carry some of the blame.

So the people see all God's promises fulfilled, but they don't; and they live by Yahweh's instructions, but they don't. The book thus epitomizes the dynamic of the portrait of the people of God in both Testaments. It encourages us to rejoice in God's fulfilling his promises but also to face the extent to which he hasn't, yet to live in confident hope that he will do so. It encourages us to be realistic about our own obedience to God and also to commit ourselves anew to keeping our commitment to the pact God has made with us.

Two other aspects of the book often trouble people. The story of how 'Joshua fit the battle of Jericho' is well known. Unfortunately, archaeological investigations suggest that no one lived in Jericho in Joshua's time, nor in Ai, whose conquest follows that of Jericho in the book. So the stories of the Israelites' capture of these towns don't correspond to what happened in these particular places. Why might God have inspired Israelite storytellers to develop imaginative stories about the taking of these towns (whose ruins would be familiar)? What the stories do is give concrete expression to the fact that God did give the country to Israel in an amazing way, and to the fact that the Israelites were always in danger of disobeying God.

The other aspect of the book that often troubles people is the fact that Joshua can look like a story about the Israelites committing genocide. This fact seems not to have troubled the New Testament writers, who didn't see the story of Joshua as incompatible with believing in Jesus. Stephen (in Acts 7) and Hebrews 11 are enthusiastic about Israel's violent occupation of Canaan. They don't assume that the story provides a warrant for subsequent acts of genocide, and neither does the Old Testament – Israel didn't regularly go around annihilating people. The occupation of the country by Joshua was a one-off act of judgement by God. The Canaanites were getting what they deserved for practices such as sacrificing children; they were not just innocent victims. Ironically, though, the book itself makes clear that the Israelites actually didn't commit genocide. The Canaanites continued in the country for centuries.

Just one river to cross

1 After the death of Mosheh [Moses], Yahweh's servant, Yahweh said to Yehoshua [Joshua] ben Nun, Mosheh's minister:
[2]'Mosheh my servant is dead. Set off now, cross this Yarden [Jordan], you and this entire people, into the country that I'm
giving to them, to the Israelites. [3]Every place on which the sole of your foot treads I give you, as I spoke to Mosheh. [4]From the
wilderness and this Lebanon, as far as the big river (the River Euphrates), all the country of the Hittites, as far as the Great Sea on
the west, will be your border. [5]No one will take a stand before you all the days of your life. As I was with Mosheh, I'll be with
you. I won't let go of you; I won't abandon you. [6]Be strong, stand firm, because you're the one who'll enable this people to take
as their domain this country that I swore to their ancestors to give them. [7]Only be strong, stand very firm, so as to keep by acting
in accordance with the entire instruction that Mosheh my servant ordered you. Don't turn aside from it right or left, in order that
you may thrive everywhere you go. [8]This instruction document will not move away from your mouth. You're to murmur it day
and night in order that you may keep by acting in accordance with everything written in it, because then you'll make your journey
successful, then you'll thrive. [9]I've ordered you, "Be strong, stand firm", haven't I? Don't be frightened, don't be scared, because
Yahweh your God will be with you everywhere you go.'
[10]So Yehoshua ordered the people's overseers: [11]'Pass through the middle of the camp and order the people, "Prepare
provisions for yourselves, because in three days more you're going to cross this Yarden, to go in to take possession of the country
that Yahweh your God is giving you, to take possession of it."'

Another spy mission

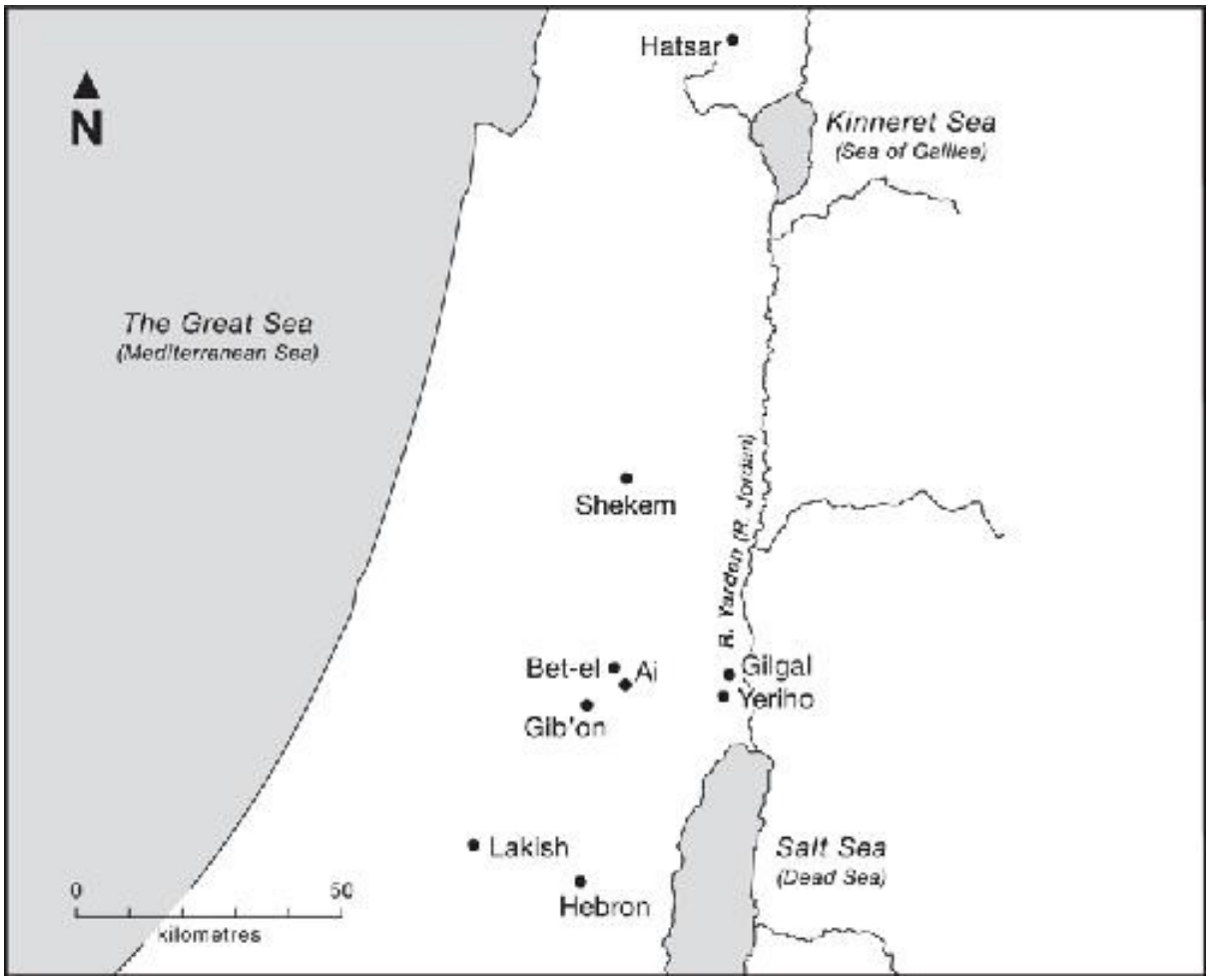
[12]To the Re'ubenites, to the Gadites and to the half-clan of Menashsheh, Yehoshua said: [13]'Be mindful of the thing that
Mosheh, Yahweh's servant, ordered you: "Yahweh your God is letting you settle down and is giving you this region. [14]Your
wives, your little ones, and your livestock can stay in the region that Mosheh gave you across the Yarden, but you're to cross,
organized into companies, before your brothers, all the forceful strong men. You're to help them [15]till Yahweh enables your
brothers to settle down like you and they also take possession of the region that Yahweh your God is giving them. Then you can
go back to the region that you're to take possession of and you can take possession of it, which Mosheh, Yahweh's servant, gave

you across the Yarden, to the east.'"
[16]They answered Yehoshua: 'All that you've ordered us we'll do. Everywhere that you send us we'll go. [17]Just as we listened to Mosheh, so we'll listen to you. May Yahweh simply be with you as he was with Mosheh. [18]Any individual who rebels against your bidding and doesn't listen to your words regarding everything that you order him is to be put to death. Simply be strong and stand firm.'

2 From Acacias, Yehoshua ben Nun sent two men to investigate quietly: 'Go and look at the country, and at Yeriho [Jericho].' They went, and came to the house of a woman who was a whore named Rahab, and they slept there. [2]It was told to the king of Yeriho: 'Here, some men came here tonight, some of the Yisra'elites [Israelites], to check out the country.' [3]So the king of Yeriho sent to Rahab: 'Bring out the men who came to you, who've come to your house, because they've come to check out the entire country.' [4]The woman had taken the two men and hidden them. So she said, 'Yes, the men came to me. I didn't know where they were from. [5]The gateway was about to be shut at dark and the men went out. I don't know where the men went. Hurry, pursue after them, because you can overtake them.'

Meanwhile, in the whorehouse

[6]Now she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them among the flax stalks that she had on the roof, laid out. [7]The men pursued after them on the Yarden road, down to the fords. And after their pursuers had gone out, they shut the gateway.
[8]Before those men went to sleep, she went up to them on the roof. [9]She said to the men, 'I acknowledge that Yahweh has given you the country, that a dread of you has fallen on us, and that all the people living in the country have melted away before you, [10]because we heard how Yahweh dried up the water of the Reed Sea before you when you got out of Misrayim [Egypt] and what you did to the two Amorite kings who were across the Yarden, to Sihon and to Og, whom you devoted. [11]We heard, and our mind melted. There was no spirit rising up in anyone in the face of you, because Yahweh your God is God in the heavens above and on the earth below.
[12]So now, please swear to me by Yahweh, because I've acted in commitment with you, that you'll also act in commitment with my father's household. Give me a truthful sign [13]that you'll let my father and my mother live, and my brothers and my sisters, and everyone who belongs to them, and that you'll save our lives from death.' [14]The men said to her, 'Our lives in place of you, to the death, if you don't tell about our business here. When Yahweh gives us the country, we'll act in commitment and truthfulness with you.'



Kena'an (Canaan) at the time of Yeshoshua (Joshua)

The scarlet cord

[15]She let them down by a rope through the window, because her house was in the fortification, so she was living in the fortification. [16]She said to them, 'Go to the highland so the pursuers don't come upon you, and hide there for three days till the pursuers come back, and afterwards you can go on your way.'
[17]The men said to her, 'We'll be free of this oath to you, which you've got us to take: [18]here, when we're coming into the country, you're to tie this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you've let us down, and you're to gather to yourself your father, your mother, your brothers, your entire ancestral household, in the house. [19]Anyone who goes out of the doors of your house outside – his blood will be on his head and we'll be free of guilt. Anyone who's with you in the house, his blood will be on our head if a hand is laid on him. [20]But if you tell people about this thing of ours, we will be free from the oath to you which you've got us to take.' [21]She said, 'In accordance with your words, so it will be.' She sent them off and they went, and she tied the scarlet line in her window.
[22]So they went, and came into the highland and stayed there for three days until the pursuers came back. The pursuers had searched on the entire road but had not found them. [23]The two men came down again from the highland, crossed over, and came to Yehoshua ben Nun. They recounted to him all the things that had befallen them, [24]and said to Yehoshua, 'Yahweh has given the entire country into our hand. What's more, all the people living in the country have melted away before us.'

On getting your feet wet

3 Yehoshua started early in the morning and they moved on from Acacias, and came to the Yarden, he and all the Yisra'elites. They stayed the night there before they were to cross over. [2]After three days the overseers passed through the middle of the camp [3]and ordered the people, 'When you see the pact chest of Yahweh your God, and the Levitical priests carrying it, you yourselves are to move on from your place and follow it [4](yet there's to be a distance between you and it, some 1,000 metres by measure – don't go near it), in order that you may know the way whereby you're to go, because you haven't passed this way in previous days.'
[5]Yehoshua said to the people, 'Make yourselves sacred, because tomorrow Yahweh will do extraordinary things among you.' [6]Yehoshua said to the priests, 'Carry the pact chest and pass through before the people.' So they carried the pact chest and went before the people.
[7]Yahweh said to Yehoshua, 'This day I shall start to make you great in the eyes of all Yisra'el so they may acknowledge that I'm with you as I was with Mosheh. [8]You yourself are to order the priests carrying the pact chest: "When you come to the edge of the Yarden water, you're to stand in the Yarden."'
[9]Yehoshua said to the Yisra'elites, 'Come up here and listen to the words of Yahweh your God.' [10]Yehoshua said, 'By this you will acknowledge that the living God is among you and that he will totally dispossess from before you the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Hivvite, the Perizzite, the Girgashite, the Amorite and the Yebusite. [11]Here is the pact chest of the Lord of all the earth, passing through the Yarden before you. [12]Now get yourselves twelve men from the Yisra'elite clans, one man per clan. [13]When the soles of the feet of the priests carrying the chest of Yahweh, Lord of all the earth, set down in the Yarden water, the Yarden water will break off (the water coming down from higher up) and stand as a single heap.'

The Yarden stops

[14]So when the people moved on from their tents to cross over the Yarden, the priests carrying the pact chest were before the people. [15]As the people carrying the chest came as far as the Yarden and the feet of the priests carrying the chest dipped into the edge of the water (the Yarden overflows all its banks the entire time of harvest), [16]the Yarden water coming down from higher up stood; it rose as a single heap a great way off at Adam, a town near Tsaretan. Going down to the Steppe Sea (the Salt Sea), it completely broke off. So the people crossed near Yeriho. [17]The priests carrying Yahweh's pact chest stood on dry ground in the middle of the Yarden, steady, while all Yisra'el were crossing on dry ground until the entire nation had come to an end of crossing the Yarden.
4 When the entire nation had come to an end of crossing the Yarden, Yahweh said to Yehoshua: [2]'Get yourselves twelve men from the people, one man each from a clan, [3]and order them, "Carry yourselves twelve stones from here, from the middle of the Yarden, from the place where the priests' feet stood steady. Take them across with you and set them down at the place where you stay the night tonight."' [4]So Yehoshua called twelve men whom he settled on from the Yisra'elites, one man for each clan. [5]Yehoshua said to them, 'Cross before the chest of Yahweh your God, into the middle of the Yarden, and lift up for yourselves, each man, a stone on to his shoulder, corresponding to the number of the Yisra'elites' clans, [6]in order that this may be a sign among you. When your children ask in the future, "What are these stones of yours?", [7]you're to say to them, 'The Yarden water broke off before Yahweh's pact chest; when it crossed the Yarden, the Yarden water broke off." These stones will be a permanent reminder for the Yisra'elites.'

Looking forwards and backwards

[8]The Yisra'elites did so, as Yehoshua ordered. They carried twelve stones from the middle of the Yarden, as Yahweh spoke to Yehoshua, corresponding to the number of the Yisra'elites' clans, took them across with them to the place where they were going to stay, and set them down there. [9]Yehoshua set up twelve stones in the middle of the Yarden at the place where the feet of the priests carrying the pact chest had stood. They have been there until this day.
[10]The priests carrying the chest were standing in the middle of the Yarden until everything had come to an end that Yahweh had

ordered Yehoshua to speak to the people, in accordance with everything Mosheh had ordered Yehoshua. The people hurried and crossed, [11]and when the entire people had come to an end of crossing, Yahweh's chest and the priests crossed before the people.
[12]The Re'ubenites, the Gadites and the half-clan of Menashsheh crossed, organized into companies before the Yisra'elites, as Mosheh had spoken to them. [13]Some 40,000 men equipped for war crossed before Yahweh to the Yeriho steppes for battle. [14]On that day Yahweh made Yehoshua great in the eyes of all Yisra'el. They lived in awe of him as they had lived in awe of Mosheh, all the days of his life.
[15]Yahweh said to Yehoshua: [16]'Order the priests carrying the affirmation chest to go up out of the Yarden.' [17]So Yehoshua ordered the priests: 'Go up out of the Yarden', [18]and when the priests carrying Yahweh's pact chest went up out of the middle of the Yarden and the soles of the priests' feet stepped on to the dry ground, the Yarden water turned back to its place and went over all its banks as in previous days.

What do these stones mean?

[19]When the people went up from the Yarden on the tenth of the first month, they camped at Gilgal, on the eastern border of Yeriho. [20]These twelve stones that they had got from the Yarden, Yehoshua set up at Gilgal. [21]He said to the Yisra'elites, 'When your children ask their parents in the future, "What are these stones?", [22]you're to let your children know, "On dry land Yisra'el crossed this Yarden", [23]because Yahweh your God dried up the Yarden water before you until you crossed, as Yahweh your God did to the Reed Sea, which he dried up before us until we crossed, [24]in order that all the peoples of the earth might acknowledge how strong is Yahweh's hand, in order that you might live in awe of Yahweh your God for all time.'
5 When all the kings of the Amorites who were across the Yarden on its western side and all the kings of the Kena'anites [Canaanites] who were near the Sea heard that Yahweh had dried up the Yarden water before the Yisra'elites until they had crossed, their mind melted and there was no longer any spirit left in them because of the Yisra'elites.

Foreskin Hill

[2]At that time Yahweh said to Yehoshua, 'Make yourself flint knives and circumcise the Yisra'elites again, a second time.' [3]So Yehoshua made himself flint knives and circumcised the Yisra'elites at Foreskin Hill.
[4]This is the reason why Yehoshua circumcised the entire people that got out of Egypt, the males. Every one (the men of battle) had died in the wilderness on the way, when they had got out of Egypt. [5]While the entire people that got out had been circumcised, they had not circumcised the entire people born in the wilderness on the way, when they had got out of Egypt. [6]Because for forty years the Yisra'elites had gone in the wilderness until the entire nation (the men of battle who had got out of Egypt) were gone, the people who had not listened to Yahweh's voice and to whom Yahweh had sworn not to let them see the land that Yahweh had sworn to their ancestors to give us, a land flowing with milk and syrup. [7]In that he had made their sons arise in their place, they are the people Yehoshua circumcised because they were foreskinned, because they had not circumcised them on the way.
[8]When they had come to an end of circumcising the entire nation, they stayed in their place in the camp until they had recovered. [9]Yahweh said to Yehoshua, 'Today I've rolled away the reviling of Egypt from upon you.' So they've named that place Gilgal ['Rolling'] until this day.
[10]The Yisra'elites camped at Gilgal and made the Pesah [Passover] on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening, in the Yeriho steppes. [11]They ate from the country's produce the day after Pesah, flatbread and roasted grain that actual day. [12]The *maan* stopped the day after they ate from the country's produce. There was no longer any *maan* for the Yisra'elites. They ate from the yield of the country of Kena'an that year.

Which side are you on?

[13]When Yehoshua was at Yeriho, he lifted his eyes and saw: there, a man standing opposite him, a drawn sword in his hand. Yehoshua went to him and said to him, 'Are you for us or for our attackers?' [14]He said, 'No, because it's as Yahweh's army officer that I've now come.' Yehoshua fell on his face to the ground before him. He bowed low and said to him, 'What is my lord going to speak to his servant?' [15]Yahweh's army officer said to Yehoshua, 'Take your boot off your foot, because the place on which you're standing is sacred.' Yehoshua did so.
6 Now Yeriho was closed, closed tight, before the Yisra'elites. No one was going out and no one was coming in. [2]Yahweh said to Yehoshua, 'See, I've given Yeriho and its king, the forceful strong men, into your hand. [3]You're to go round the town, all the men of battle circling the town once. You're to do this for six days, [4]while seven priests carry seven ram's horns before the chest. On the seventh day you're to go round the town seven times, while the priests blow on the horns. [5]At the drawing out of a blast on the ram's horn, when you hear the noise of the horn, the entire company is to give a great shout, the town's wall will fall flat, and the company are to go up, each individual straight ahead.'
[6]So Yehoshua ben Nun called the priests and said to them, 'Carry the pact chest, while seven priests carry seven ram's horns before Yahweh's chest.' [7]He said to the company, 'Pass on, go round the town, while the body equipped for a campaign passes on before Yahweh's chest.'

Come blow your horn

[8]When Yehoshua had said it to the company, the seven priests carrying the seven ram's horns passed on before Yahweh and blew on the horns, and Yahweh's pact chest followed them, [9]while the body equipped for a campaign was going before the priests

blowing the horns, and the rearguard was going behind the chest, with a continuing blowing on the horns. [10]Yehoshua ordered the company, ‘You will not shout, you will not make your voice heard, no word will come out of your mouth, until the time I say to you, “Shout!”, and you’ll shout.’

[11]So he had Yahweh’s chest go round the town, circling it once, then they came to the camp and stayed the night in the camp. [12]Yehoshua started early in the morning and the priests carried Yahweh’s chest, [13]while the seven priests carrying seven ram’s horns before Yahweh’s chest were continuing to go and blow on the horns, the body equipped for a campaign was going before them, and the rearguard was going behind Yahweh’s chest, with a continuing blowing on the horns. [14]They went round the town once on the second day and came back to the camp. So they did for six days.

[15]On the seventh day they started early, at sunrise, went round the town in accordance with this rule, seven times; only on that day did they go round the town seven times. [16]The seventh time, the priests blew on the horns and Yehoshua said to the company, ‘Shout, because Yahweh has given you the town. [17]The town is to be an object devoted to Yahweh, it and everything that’s in it, except that Rahab the whore will live, she and everyone who is with her in the house, because she hid the envoys that we sent. [18]Only, you keep yourselves from what’s to be devoted so you don’t become a thing that’s to be devoted, and you take anything from what’s to be devoted and make the Yisra’elite camp into a thing that’s to be devoted. You will bring disaster on it. [19]All the silver and gold and the objects of copper and iron are sacred to Yahweh. They’re to come into Yahweh’s treasury.’

And the walls came tumbling down

[20]So the company shouted and they blew on the horns, and when the company heard the sound of the horn, the company gave a great shout, the wall fell flat and the company went up into the town, each individual straight ahead. They captured the town [21]and devoted everything that was in the town, man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the mouth of the sword.

[22]To the two men who had investigated the country Yehoshua said, ‘Come into the house of the woman who’s a whore and bring out of there the woman and everyone who belongs to her, as you swore to her.’ [23]So the young men who’d done the investigating came in and brought out Rahab, her father and her mother, her brothers and everyone who belonged to her. They brought out her entire kin-group, and set them down outside the Yisra’elite camp.

[24]The town they burned in fire with everything that was in it, except that the silver and the gold and the objects of copper and iron they put in the treasury of Yahweh’s house, [25]and Yehoshua let Rahab the whore live, with her ancestral household and everyone who belonged to her. She’s lived among Yisra’el until this day, because she hid the envoys whom Yehoshua sent to investigate Yeriho.

[26]At that time Yehoshua swore, ‘Cursed before Yahweh be the man who sets about building this town, Yeriho. At the cost of his firstborn may he found it and at the cost of his little one may he put up its doors.’

[27]Yahweh was with Yehoshua and report of him went through the entire country.

7 But the Yisra’elites committed a trespass in connection with things to be devoted. Akan ben Karmi, son of Zabdi son of Zerah of the clan of Yehudah [Judah], took some of the things that were to be devoted, and Yahweh’s anger raged against the Yisra’elites.

Take it easy

[2]Yehoshua sent men ‘from Yeriho to Ha’ay [Ai, ‘The Ruin’]’, which is by Bet Aven [‘Trouble House’], east of Bet-el. He said to them, ‘Go up and investigate the region.’ The men went up and investigated Ha’ay, [3]and came back to Yehoshua and said to him, ‘The entire company should not go up. Some two or three thousand men should go up and strike down Ha’ay. You shouldn’t make the entire company get weary there, because they are few.’ [4]So some 3,000 of the company went up, but they took flight before the men of Ha’ay. [5]The men of Ha’ay struck down some thirty-six of them, and pursued them before the gateway as far as the quarries and struck them down on the slope.

The company’s mind melted, turned to water. [6]Yehoshua tore his clothes and fell on his face to the ground before Yahweh’s chest until the evening, he and Yisra’el’s elders, and they put dirt on their head. [7]Yehoshua said, ‘Oh, Lord Yahweh, why did you bring this people across the Yarden at all, to give us into the hand of the Amorites to obliterate us? If only we had resolved to live across the Yarden. [8]As for me, Lord, what am I to say after Yisra’el has turned its back before its enemies? [9]The Kena’anites and all the people living in the country will hear and surround us and cut off our name from the earth, and what will you do about your great name?’

[10]Yahweh said to Yehoshua, ‘Get yourself up. Why are you falling on your face there? [11]Yisra’el has done wrong. Yes, they’ve contravened my pact about which I gave them orders. They’ve both taken some of the things that were to be devoted, and they’ve stolen, and they’ve acted deceitfully, and they’ve put things in their bags. [12]The Yisra’elites won’t be able to stand before their enemies, they’ll turn their back before their enemies, because they’ve become something to be devoted. I shall not be with you any more unless you annihilate from among you the thing that’s to be devoted.

Coveting can kill

[13]Get up, make the people sacred. You’re to say, “Make yourselves sacred for tomorrow, because Yahweh, the God of Yisra’el, has said this: There’s something to be devoted among you, Yisra’el. You can’t stand before your enemies until you’ve removed what is to be devoted from among you.”

[14]In the morning you’re to draw near by your clans. The clan that Yahweh takes is to draw near by kin-groups. The kin-group that Yahweh takes is to draw near by households. The household that Yahweh takes is to draw near man by man. [15]The one who is taken in the net is to burn in fire, he and everything that belongs to him, because he contravened Yahweh’s pact and because he

did something villainous in Yisra'el.'
[16]Yehoshua started early in the morning and presented Yisra'el by its clans, and the clan of Yehudah was taken. [17]He presented the kin-group of Yehudah, and he took the kin-group of Zerah. He presented the kin-group of the Zarhites man by man, and Zabdi was taken. [18]He presented his household man by man, and Akan ben Karmi, son of Zabdi son of Zerah of the clan of Yehudah, was taken. [19]Yehoshua said to Akan, 'Son, please give honour to Yahweh, the God of Yisra'el, and make confession to him. Please tell me what you've done. Don't hide it from me.' [20]Akan answered Yehoshua, 'Truly I'm the one who's done wrong against Yahweh, the God of Yisra'el. This actual thing is what I did. [21]I saw in the spoil a fine coat from Shin'ar, and 200 sheqels of silver, and a bar of gold fifty sheqels in weight. I desired them and took them. There, they're buried in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath.'
[22]Yehoshua sent envoys and they ran to the tent, and there, it was buried in his tent, with the silver underneath. [23]They took them from inside the tent and brought them to Yehoshua and to all the Yisra'elites, and they laid them out before Yahweh.

Purging away the trespass

[24]Yehoshua took Akan ben Zerah, the silver, the coat, the gold bar, and his sons, his daughters, his ox, his donkey, his flock, his tent and everything that he had, he and all Yisra'el with him, and brought them up to Disaster Vale. [25]Yehoshua said, 'How you've brought disaster on us! Yahweh will bring disaster on you this day.' All Yisra'el pelted him with stones. They burned them in fire and executed them by stoning, [26]and raised a great heap of stones over them until this day. And Yahweh turned back from his angry burning.
That's why they've named that place Disaster Vale, until this day.
8 Yahweh said to Yehoshua, 'Don't be afraid. Don't be dismayed. Take the entire battle company with you and set off, go up to Ha'ay. See, I've given into your hand the king of Ha'ay, his town, his people and his region. [2]You're to do to Ha'ay and to its king as you did to Yeriho and to its king, only its spoil and its animals you may treat as plunder for yourselves. Set yourself an ambush for the town, behind it.'
[3]So Yehoshua and all the battle company set off to go up to Ha'ay. Yehoshua chose 30,000 men, forceful strong men, sent them by night [4]and ordered them, 'See, you're going to be men in an ambush for the town, behind the town. Don't be very far from the town, and all of you be ready. [5]I and the entire company that's with me – we'll draw near the town, and when they come out to meet us like the first time, we'll flee before them. [6]They'll come out after us till we've drawn them away from the town, because they'll say "They're fleeing before us like the first time." So we'll flee before them, [7]and you'll get up out of the ambush and take possession of the town. Yahweh your God will give it into your hand. [8]When you've taken the town, set the town on fire. You're to act in accordance with Yahweh's word. See, I've given you orders.'

The game plan executed

[9]So Yehoshua sent them, they went to the ambush, and they settled down between Bet-el and Ha'ay, west of Ha'ay. Yehoshua stayed the night among the company. [10]Yehoshua started early in the morning and numbered the company, and he and Yisra'el's elders went up before the company to Ha'ay. [11]All the battle company that was with him went up, moved close and came in front of the town, and camped north of Ha'ay. There was a ravine between them and Ha'ay.
[12]So he had taken some 5,000 men and set them as an ambush between Bet-el and Ha'ay, west of the town, [13]and the company set up the entire camp, which was north of the town, and its rearguard west of the town. Yehoshua had gone that night into the middle of the vale.
[14]When the king of Ha'ay saw it, the men of the town hurried and started early and went out to meet Yisra'el in battle, he and all his company, at the set place facing the steppe; he didn't know that there was an ambush for him behind the town. [15]Yehoshua and all Yisra'el let themselves be beaten before them and fled by the wilderness road. [16]The entire company that was in Ha'ay cried out to one another to pursue after them, and they pursued after Yehoshua and tore out of the town. [17]Not a man remained in Ha'ay or Bet El who didn't go out after Yisra'el. They left the town open and pursued after Yisra'el.
[18]Yahweh said to Yehoshua, 'Hold out the javelin that's in your hand towards Ha'ay, because I shall give it into your hand.' Yehoshua held out the javelin that was in his hand towards the town, [19]while the ambush quickly got up out of its place. They ran when he held out his hand, came into the town and captured it, and hurried and set the town on fire.

Ha'ay becomes a ruin

[20]The men of Ha'ay turned their face behind them and looked: there, smoke from the town went up to the heavens. There was no capacity in them to go this way or that when the company fleeing to the wilderness turned on to the pursuer, [21]and Yehoshua and all Yisra'el saw that the ambush had taken the town and that smoke from the town had gone up, and they turned back and struck down the men of Ha'ay. [22]When these [Yisra'elites] came out of the town to meet them, in relation to Yisra'el they were in the middle, some [Yisra'elites] on one side and some on the other. They struck them down so they didn't let anyone remain to it as escapee or survivor. [23]The king of Ha'ay they took alive and presented him to Yehoshua.
[24]When Yisra'el had finished slaughtering all the people living in Ha'ay in the fields, in the wilderness where they had pursued them, and all of them had fallen to the mouth of the sword until they had come to an end, all Yisra'el went back to Ha'ay and struck it down with the mouth of the sword.
[25]All those who fell that day, both men and women, were 12,000, all the people living in Ha'ay. [26]Yehoshua didn't take back his hand with which he held out his javelin until he had devoted all the people living in Ha'ay. [27]Only the animals and the spoil in that town did Yisra'el take as plunder for themselves, in accordance with Yahweh's word with which he had ordered Yehoshua.

[28]Yehoshua burned Ha'ay and made it a permanent ruin, a desolation until this day. [29]The king of Ha'ay he hanged on a tree until the time of evening. At sunset Yehoshua ordered, and they took down his corpse from the tree, threw it at the entrance of the town gateway and set up over it a great heap of stones, until this day.

It's over even when it's not over

[30]Then Yehoshua built an altar for Yahweh the God of Yisra'el on Mount Ebal, [31]as Mosheh Yahweh's servant ordered the Yisra'elites, as it is written in Mosheh's instruction document: an altar of whole stones on which no one had wielded iron. They offered up on it burnt offerings for Yahweh and made well-being sacrifices. [32]He wrote there on the stones a copy of Mosheh's instruction that he had written, before the Yisra'elites. [33]All Yisra'el, its elders, the overseers and its rulers, were standing on each side of the chest, facing the Levitical priests who carried Yahweh's pact chest, resident and native alike, half of them facing Mount Gerizim and half of them facing Mount Ebal, as Mosheh Yahweh's servant had ordered beforehand, to bless the people of Yisra'el.

[34]After this, he read out all the words of the instruction, the blessing and the slight, in accordance with all that's written in the instruction document. [35]There was not a word of all that Mosheh ordered that Yehoshua didn't read out in front of Yisra'el's entire congregation, with the women and little ones and the residents who were going among them.

9 When all the kings who were across the Yarden heard, in the highland, in the foothills and on the entire coast of the Great Sea to near the Lebanon (the Hittite, the Amorite, the Kena'anite, the Perizzite, the Hivvite and the Yebusite), [2]they gathered together to battle with Yehoshua and with Yisra'el, with one accord.

How to take Yisra'el in

[3]The people living in Gib'on heard what Yehoshua had done to Yeriho and to Ha'ay, [4]and they for their part acted with shrewdness. They went and behaved like envoys, but got worn-out sacks for their donkeys and worn-out wineskins, cracked and mended, [5]with worn-out, patched boots on their feet, and worn-out clothes on themselves, and all the bread they had as their provisions was dry and hard. [6]They went to Yehoshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and to the Yisra'elites, 'We've come from a country far away, so now, solemnize a pact with us.'

[7]The Yisra'elites said to the Hivvites, 'Maybe you're living among us. How can I solemnize a pact with you?' [8]They said to Yehoshua, 'We are your servants.' Yehoshua said to them, 'Who are you? Where do you come from?'

[9]They said to him, 'Your servants have come from a country very far away by reason of the name of Yahweh your God, because we've heard the report about him, about all that he did in Misrayim, [10]and all that he did to the two Amorite kings who were across the Yarden, to Sihon king of Heshbon and to Og king of Bashan who was in Ashtarot. [11]Our elders and all the people living in our country said to us, "Get in your hand provisions for the journey and go to meet them and say to them: 'We are your servants, so now, solemnize a pact with us.'" [12]This is our bread: we brought it hot as our provision from our houses on the day we left to go to you, but now – here, it's dry and hard. [13]These wineskins that we filled new – here, they've cracked. These clothes of ours and boots of ours have worn out from the great length of the journey.'

[14]The people took some of their provisions and didn't ask for Yahweh's bidding. [15]Yehoshua made peace with them and solemnized a pact with them to let them live, and the assembly's leaders swore an oath to them.

How to swallow your pride

[16]At the end of three days after they solemnized the pact with them, they heard that they were near them, living among them.

[17]The Yisra'elites moved on and came to their towns on the third day. Their towns were Gib'on, Qephirah, Be'erot and Ye'arim Township. [18]The Yisra'elites didn't strike them down because the assembly's leaders had sworn to them by Yahweh the God of Yisra'el. The entire assembly protested at the leaders, [19]but all the leaders said to the entire assembly, 'We ourselves swore to them by Yahweh the God of Yisra'el. We can't now touch them. [20]We'll do this to them: we'll let them live, so that there won't be fury against us because of the oath we swore to them', [21]so the leaders said to them, 'They're to live', but they became woodchoppers and water carriers for the entire assembly, as the leaders spoke concerning them.

[22]So Yehoshua called them and spoke to them: 'Why did you beguile us in saying, "We live very far away from you", and you're living among us? [23]You're now cursed. None of you will stop being a servant, both woodchoppers and water carriers for my God's house.' [24]They answered Yehoshua, 'Because it had been clearly told to your servants that Yahweh your God ordered Mosheh his servant to give you the entire country and to annihilate all the people living in the country from before you. We were very fearful for our lives from before you, so we did this thing. [25]But now, here we are, in your hand. Act towards us in accordance with what is good and with what is right in your eyes to act towards us.'

[26]He did so to them: he rescued them from the hand of the Yisra'elites, and they didn't slaughter them. [27]That day Yehoshua made them woodchoppers and water carriers for the assembly and for Yahweh's altar, until this day, at the site that he would choose.

Five kings panic

10 When Adonay-tsedeq king of Yerushalaim [Jerusalem] heard that Yehoshua had taken Ha'ay and devoted it (as he had done to Yeriho and its king, so he had done to Ha'ay and its king), and that the inhabitants of Gib'on had made peace with Yisra'el and were among them, [2]people were very fearful, because Gib'on was a big town, like one of the royal towns, and because it was bigger than Ha'ay, and all its men were strong men. [3]So Adonay-tsedeq king of Yerushalaim sent to Hoham king

of Hebron, to Pir'am king of Yarmut, to Yaphia king of Lakish and to Debir king of Eglon, saying [4]'Go up to me and help me, and we'll strike down Gib'on, because it's made peace with Yehoshua and with the Yisra'elites.'
[5]So the five Amorite kings, the king of Yerushalaim, the king of Hebron, the king of Yarmut, the king of Lakish and the king of Eglon, they and their entire camp, gathered together, went up, camped against Gib'on and did battle against it. [6]The people of Gib'on sent to Yehoshua in the camp at Gilgal, saying 'Don't slacken your hands from your servants, go up to us quickly, deliver us, help us, because all the kings of the Amorites, the people living in the highland, have collected together against us.' [7]So Yehoshua went up from Gilgal, he and the entire battle company with him, all the forceful strong men.
[8]Yahweh said to Yehoshua, 'Don't be afraid of them, because I've given them into your hand. Not one of them will stand before you.' [9]Yehoshua came on them by surprise; he had gone up all night from Gilgal, [10]and Yahweh put them into a turmoil before Yisra'el. He struck them down in a great rout at Gib'on and pursued them on the road to the Bet-horon ascent, and struck them down as far as Azeqah and as far as Maqqedah.

No compromise

[11]While they were fleeing from before Yisra'el (they were on the Bet-horon descent), Yahweh threw big stones at them from the heavens, as far as Azeqah. More died who died through the hailstones than the Yisra'elites slaughtered with the sword.
[12]Yehoshua spoke to Yahweh then, on the day Yahweh gave over the Amorites before the Yisra'elites, and said before the eyes of Yisra'el,

Sun stand still at Gib'on,
moon at the Ayyalon Vale!
[13]The sun stood still,
the moon halted,
Until a nation
took redress from its foes.
(It's written on the Document of the Upright One, isn't it.)

The sun stood in the middle of the heavens and didn't hasten to set, the like of a whole day. [14]There hasn't been anything like that day before it or after it for Yahweh's listening to someone's voice, because Yahweh was battling for Yisra'el.
[15]Yehoshua and all Yisra'el with him went back to the camp at Gilgal, [16]and these five kings fled and hid in a cave at Maqqedah. [17]It was told Yehoshua, 'Five kings have been found hiding in a cave at Maqqedah.' [18]Yehoshua said, 'Roll big stones to the cave's mouth and appoint men over it to keep them. [19]But you, don't halt; pursue after your enemies and hit them from the rear. Don't let them come to their towns, because Yahweh your God has given them into your hand.' [20]When Yehoshua and the Yisra'elites had finished striking them down in a great rout until they had come to an end, though some survivors escaped from them and came to their fortified towns, [21]the entire company went back to the camp to Yehoshua at Maqqedah in safety. No one loosened his tongue about the Yisra'elites.

Open the cave

[22]Yehoshua said, 'Open the cave mouth and bring these five kings out of the cave to me.' [23]They did so: they brought these five kings out of the cave to him, the king of Yerushalaim, the king of Hebron, the king of Yarmut, the king of Lakish, the king of Eglon. [24]When they brought these kings out to Yehoshua, Yehoshua called all the Yisra'elites and said to the commander over the men of battle who had gone with him, 'Draw near; put your feet on the necks of these kings.' They drew near and put their feet on their necks. [25]Yehoshua said to them, 'Don't be afraid. Don't be scared. Be strong, stand firm, because Yahweh will act like this to all your enemies with whom you're battling.'
[26]After this, Yehoshua struck them down. He put them to death and hanged them on five trees. They were hanged on the trees until the evening. [27]At the time when the sun went down, Yehoshua gave an order and they took them down from the trees, threw them into the cave where they had hidden, and put big stones on the cave mouth, until this very day.
[28]That day Yehoshua captured Maqqedah and struck it down, it and its king, with the mouth of the sword. He devoted them, along with every person who was in it. He didn't let a survivor remain. He did to the king of Maqqedah as he had done to the king of Yeriho. [29]Yehoshua and all Yisra'el with him passed on from Maqqedah to Libnah and battled with Libnah, [30]and Yahweh gave it, too, into Yisra'el's hand, it and its king. He struck it down with the mouth of the sword, along with every person who was in it. He didn't let a survivor remain in it. He did to its king as he had done to the king of Yeriho.

Welcome to the wild wild west

[31]Yehoshua and all Yisra'el with him passed on from Libnah to Lakish and camped against it and battled against it, [32]and Yahweh gave Lakish into Yisra'el's hand. He captured it on the second day and struck it down with the mouth of the sword, along with every person who was in it, in accordance with all that he had done to Libnah. [33]Horam king of Gezer had gone up then to help Lakish, but Yehoshua struck down him and his company until he didn't let a survivor remain to him.
[34]Yehoshua and all Yisra'el with him passed on from Lakish to Eglon and camped against it and battled against it. [35]That day they captured it and struck it down with the mouth of the sword. Every person who was in it he devoted that day, in accordance with all that he had done to Lakish. [36]Yehoshua and all Yisra'el with him went up from Eglon to Hebron and battled against it. [37]They captured it and struck it down with the mouth of the sword, its king and all its towns and every person who was in it. He didn't let a survivor remain, in accordance with all that he had done to Eglon. He devoted it and every person who was in it.

[38]Yehoshua and all Yisra'el with him went back to Debir and battled against it. [39]He captured it and its king and all its towns. They struck them down with the mouth of the sword and devoted every person who was in it. He didn't let a survivor remain. As he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir and to its king, and as he had done to Libnah and to its king.

Welcome to the wild wild north

[40]Yehoshua struck down the entire country: the highland, the Negeb, the foothills and the slopes, with all their kings. He didn't let a survivor remain. Anything that breathed he devoted, as Yahweh the God of Yisra'el had ordered. [41]Yehoshua struck them down from Qadesh Barnea to Azzah [Gaza], all the Goshen region, and as far as Gib'on. [42]All these kings and their country Yehoshua captured at a single stroke, because Yahweh the God of Yisra'el was battling for Yisra'el. [43]Then Yehoshua and all Yisra'el with him went back to the camp at Gilgal.

11 When Yabin king of Hatsor heard, he sent to Yobab king of Madon, to the king of Shimron, to the king of Akshaph, [2]to the kings who were to the north, in the highland, in the steppe south of Kinneret, in the foothills and in the Dor Heights on the west, [3]the Kena'anite on the east and on the west, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite and the Yebusite in the highland, and the Hivvite beneath Hermon in the region of The Watchtower. [4]They went out, those and their entire camp with them, a company as numerous as the sand that's on the seashore in its large number, with very numerous horse and chariotry. [5]All these kings arranged to meet, and came and camped together at Merom Water to do battle with Yisra'el.

[6]Yahweh said to Yehoshua, 'Don't be afraid before them, because tomorrow at this very time I'm going to give all of them up, run through before Yisra'el. You're to hamstring their horses and burn their chariots in fire.' [7]So Yehoshua and all his battle company with him came on them at Merom Water by surprise. They fell on them, [8]and Yahweh gave them into Yisra'el's hand. They struck them down and pursued them as far as Great Tsidon, as far as Misrephot Water, and as far as Watchtower Valley on the east, and struck them down until they let no survivor remain. [9]Yehoshua did to them as Yahweh had said to him: he hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots in fire.

The entire country taken

[10]Yehoshua turned back at that time and captured Hatsor, and its king he struck down with the sword, because Hatsor was formerly head of all these kingdoms. [11]They struck down every person who was in it with the mouth of the sword, devoting them. Nothing that breathed was left, while he burned Hatsor in fire.

[12]All these royal towns and their kings Yehoshua captured. He struck them down with the mouth of the sword and devoted them, as Mosheh Yahweh's servant had ordered. [13]Yet all the towns that were standing on their mound Yisra'el didn't burn, except that Yehoshua burned Hatsor alone. [14]All the spoil in these towns and the animals the Yisra'elites took as plunder for themselves. They struck down only all the human beings with the mouth of the sword until they had annihilated them; they didn't let anything that breathed remain. [15]As Yahweh had ordered Mosheh his servant, so Mosheh had ordered Yehoshua, and so Yehoshua did. He didn't take out anything from all that Yahweh had ordered Mosheh.

[16]SoYehoshua took this entire country: the highland, the entire Negeb, the entire Goshen region, the foothills, the steppe, the highland of Yisra'el and its foothills, [17]from Bald Mountain which goes up to Se'ir and as far as Ba'al Gad in the Lebanon Valley beneath Mount Hermon. He captured all their kings, struck them down and put them to death.

[18]For a long time Yehoshua did battle with all these kings. [19]There was no town that made peace with the Yisra'elites except the Hivvites living in Gib'on. They took everything in battle, [20]because it issued from Yahweh to stiffen their heart to meet with Yisra'el in battle, in order that he might devote them without there being any grace for them – in order that rather he might annihilate them, as Yahweh had ordered Mosheh.

The kings east of the Yarden

[21]At that time Yehoshua came and cut down the Anaqites from the highland, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, from the entire highland of Yehudah and from the entire highland of Yisra'el, with their towns. Yehoshua devoted them. [22]None of the Anaqites were left in the country of the Yisra'elites. Only in Azzah, in Gat and in Ashdod did they remain.

[23]So Yehoshua took the entire country, in accordance with all that Yahweh spoke to Mosheh, and Yehoshua gave it to Yisra'el as its domain, in accordance with their divisions, for the clans. And the country was calm from battle.

12 These are the kings of the country whom the Yisra'elites struck down and whose land they took possession of across the Yarden on the east side, from Wadi Arnon as far as Mount Hermon and the entire steppe, on the east side:

[2]Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, ruling from Aro'er, which is on the bank of Wadi Arnon, the middle of the wadi, and half of Gil'ad, as far as Wadi Yabboq, the Ammonites' border; [3]and the steppe as far as the Kinneret Sea, on the east side; and as far as the Steppe Sea (the Salt Sea), on the east side, the Bet Hayeshimot road; and on the south side, beneath the Pisgah slopes.

[4]The border of Og king of Bashan, from what was left of the Repha'ites, who lived in Ashtarot and in Edre'i, [5]ruling over Mount Hermon, over Salkah and over all Bashan, as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Ma'akatites, and half of Gil'ad, the border of Sihon king of Heshbon.

[6]Mosheh Yahweh's servant and the Yisra'elites had struck them down, and Mosheh Yahweh's servant had given it as a possession to the Re'ubenites, to the Gadites and to the half-clan of Menashsheh.

The kings west of the Yarden

[7]These are the kings of the country whom Yehoshua and the Yisra'elites struck down across the Yarden on the west side, from Ba'al Gad in the Lebanon Valley as far as Bald Mountain, which goes up to Mount Se'ir, which Yehoshua gave to the Yisra'elite clans to be a possession, in accordance with their divisions, [8]in the highland, in the foothills, in the steppe, in the slopes, in the wilderness and in the Negeb (the Hittite, the Amorite, the Kena'anite, the Perizzite, the Hivvite and the Yebusite):

[9]A king of Yeriho
A king of Ha'ay, which is near Bet-el
[10]A king of Yerushalaim
A king of Gezer
[13]A king of Debir
A king of Geder
[14]A king of Hormah
A king of Arad
[15]A king of Libnah
A king of Adullam
[16]A king of Maqqedah
A king of Bet-el
[17]A king of Tappuah
A king of Hepher
[18]A king of Apheq
A king of the Sharon
[19]A king of Madon
All kings: thirty-one.

A king of Hebron
[11]A king of Yarmut
A king of Lakish
[12]A king of Eglon
A king of Hatsor
[20]A king of Shimron Meron
A king of Akshaph
[21]A king of Ta'nak
A king of Megiddo
[22]A king of Qedesh
A king of Yoqne'am in Carmel
[23]A king of Dor in Dor Height
A king of Goyim in Gilgal
[24]A king of Tirtsah

All kings: thirty-one.

Yehoshua's time is almost over

13 Now Yehoshua was old, going on in years. Yahweh said to him, 'You yourself have become old, you have gone on in years, while the country is very great that remains, to take possession of it. [2]This is the country that remains:

All the areas of the Pelishtites [Philistines] and all the Geshurites, [3]from the Shihor, which is east of Misrayim, as far as the border of Eqron to the north, which is thought of as belonging to the Kena'anites (the five Pelishtite lords, the Azzahites, the Ashdodites, the Ashqelonites, the Gittites and the Eqronites); the Avvites [4]on the south; the entire Kena'anite country, Me'arah belonging to the Tsidonites as far as Apheq (as far as the Amorites' border); [5]the country of the Giblites and the entire Lebanon on the east from Ba'al Gad beneath Mount Hermon as far as Lebo' Hamat; [6]all the people living in the highland from the Lebanon as far as Misrephot Water (all the Tsidonites).

I myself will dispossess them from before the Yisra'elites. Only let it fall by lot to Yisra'el as its domain, as I've ordered you. [7]So now share out this country as a domain to the nine clans and the half-clan of Menashsheh.'
[8]With it, the Re'ubenites and the Gadites had taken their domain which Mosheh gave them across the Yarden to the east, as Mosheh Yahweh's servant gave them:

[9]From Aro'er which is on the bank of Wadi Arnon, and the town which is in the middle of the wadi; the entire Medeba flatland as far as Dibon; [10]all the towns of Sihon king of the Amorites who reigned in Heshbon, as far as the Ammonites' border; [11]Gil'ad and the border of the Geshurites and the Ma'akatites; all of Mount Hermon; all of Bashan as far as Salkah, [12]and the entire kingdom of Og in Bashan, who had reigned in Ashtarot and in Edre'i (he remained from what was left of the Repha'ites). Mosheh had struck them down and dispossessed them, [13]but the Yisra'elites didn't dispossess the Geshurites and the Ma'akatites; Geshur and Ma'akah have lived among Yisra'el until this day.

[14]Only to the clan of Levi did he not give a domain. The gift offerings of Yahweh the God of Yisra'el are its domain, as he spoke to it.

The clans east of the Yarden

[15]So Mosheh gave to the clan of the Re'ubenites, by their kin-groups, [16]and it became their border:

From Aro'er, which is on the bank of Wadi Arnon, and the town in the middle of the wadi, and the entire flatland, as far as Medeba; [17]Heshbon and all its towns, which are in the flatland; Dibon, Master's Heights, Bet Ba'al Me'on, [18]Yahats, Qedemot, Mepha'at, [19]Qiryatayim, Sibmah, Tseret Shahar on the vale mountain, [20]Bet Pe'or, the Pisgah slopes and Bet Hayeshimot, [21]all the towns of the flatland, the entire kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites who reigned in Heshbon, whom Mosheh struck down, he and the Midyanite leaders Evi, Reqem, Tsur, Hur and Reba, Sihon's appointees, living in the country. [22]Bil'am ben Be'or the diviner the Yisra'elites killed with the sword, to add to the people run through by them. [23]The Re'ubenites' border was the Yarden and the edge of it. This was the Re'ubenites' domain by their kin-groups, the towns and their villages.

[24]Mosheh gave to the clan of Gad, to the Gadites, by their kin-groups, [25]and it became their border:

Ya'zer; all the towns in Gil'ad; half the Ammonites' country as far as Aro'er which is east of Rabbah; [26]from Heshbon as far as Watchtower Height and Betonim, from Mahanayim as far as the border of Debir; [27]in the vale, Height House, Bet Nimrah, Sukkot and Tsaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon; and the Yarden and the edge as far as the end of the Kinneret Sea, across the Yarden on the east side. [28]This was the Gadites' domain by their kin-groups, the towns and their villages.

[29]Mosheh gave to the half-clan of Menashsheh, so it came to belong to the half-clan of the Menashshites by their kin-groups, [30]and it became their border:

From Mahanayim, all of Bashan, the entire kingdom of Og king of Bashan, all Ya'ir's Villages in Bashan, sixty towns, [31]half of Gil'ad, and Ashtarot and Edre'i, Og's royal towns in Bashan, for the descendants of Makir son of Menashsheh, for half the Makirites, by their kin-groups.

The promise to Kaleb (Caleb)

[32]These are what Mosheh made into domains in the Mo'ab steppes across the Yarden east of Yeriho. [33]To the clan of Levi Mosheh didn't give a domain. Yahweh the God of Yisra'el is their domain, as he spoke to them.

14 These are what the Yisra'elites received as their domain in the country of Kena'an, which El'azar the priest, Yehoshua ben Nun and the ancestral heads of the Yisra'elites' clans made into domains, [2]their domain by lot, as Yahweh ordered through Mosheh, for the nine clans and the half-clan, [3]because Mosheh had given the domain of the two clans and the half-clan across the Yarden, and to the Levites he had given no domain among them, [4]because the Yosephites [Josephites] were two clans, Menashsheh and Ephrayim, and they didn't give the Levites a share in the country, but rather towns to live in and pasturelands for their livestock and for their cattle. [5]As Yahweh ordered Mosheh, so the Yisra'elites did, and shared out the country.

[6]The Yehudahites came up to Yehoshua at Gilgal, and Kaleb ben Yephunneh the Qenizzite said to him, 'You yourself know the thing that Yahweh spoke to Mosheh, the supernatural man, concerning me and concerning you, at Qadesh Barnea. [7]I was a man of forty years when Mosheh Yahweh's servant sent me from Qadesh Barnea to investigate the country, and I brought him back word in accordance with how things were in my mind.

[8]My brothers who went up with me made the people's mind melt, but I myself fully followed after Yahweh my God. [9]That day, Mosheh swore: "If the country on which your foot trod doesn't become a permanent domain for you and for your descendants, because you fully followed after Yahweh my God . . ."

The country has rest from war

[10]So now, here, Yahweh has kept me alive, as he spoke, these forty-five years from when Yahweh spoke this word to Mosheh when Yisra'el went through the wilderness. So now, here, I am today a man of eighty-five years. [11]I'm still as strong today as on the day Mosheh sent me. As my energy was then, so is my energy now for battle, both for going out and for coming in. [12]So now, give me this highland that Yahweh spoke of on that day, because you yourself heard that day that Anaqites are there, and big fortified towns. Maybe Yahweh will be with me and I shall take possession of them as Yahweh spoke.'

[13]Yehoshua blessed him and gave Hebron to Kaleb ben Yephunneh as his domain. [14]Therefore Hebron came to belong to Kaleb ben Yephunneh the Qenizzite as his domain, until this day, because he fully followed Yahweh the God of Yisra'el. ([15]Hebron's name formerly was Arba's Township; he was the big man among the Anaqites.)

And the country was calm from battle.

Yehudah's borders

15 The lot fell for the Yehudahites' clan, by their kin-groups, to the Edomite border, the Tsin Wilderness to the south the bottom edge.

[2]Their southern border went from the end of the Salt Sea, from the tongue that turns southward, [3]extended to the south of Scorpions Ascent, passed on to Tsin, went up south of Qadesh Barnea, passed on by Hetsron, went up to Addar, turned to Qarqa, [4]passed on to Atsmon and extended to the Misrayimite Wadi. The border's furthest extents were at the sea. This will be your southern border.

[5]The border to the east: the Salt Sea as far as the edge of the Yarden.

The border on the northern side, from the tongue of the sea, from the end of the Yarden: [6]the border went up by Bet Hoglah and passed north of Bet Ha'arabah. The border went up by Bohan ben-Re'uben Stone. [7]The border went up to Debir from

Disaster Vale, and northward turning its face to Gilgal, which is in front of Red Rocks Ascent, which is south of the wadi.
The border passed on to Shemesh Spring Water. Its furthest extents went to Treader Spring. [8]The border went up by Ben-
hinnom Ravine along the Yebusite flank on the south (i.e. Yerushalaim). The border went up to the top of the mountain
which is opposite Hinnom Ravine to the west, which is at the edge of Repha'ites Vale to the north. [9]The border curved from
the top of the mountain to Nephtoah Water Spring and extended to the towns of Mount Ephron. The border curved by
Ba'alah (i.e. Ye'arim Township). [10]The border turned from Ba'alah westward to Mount Se'ir, passed by the flank of Mount
Ye'arim northward (i.e. Kesalon), went down to Bet-shemesh and passed on to Timnah. [11]The border extended to the flank
of Eqron northward. The border curved to Shikkeron, passed on to Mount Ba'alah and extended by Yabne'el. The border's
furthest extents were at the sea.
[12]The western border: the Great Sea and the border.
This was the border of the Yehudahites all round by their kin-groups.

Aksah insists

[13]In accordance with Yahweh's bidding to Yehoshua, he gave to Kaleb ben Yephunneh a share among the Yehudahites, Arba's Township, the ancestor of Anaq (i.e. Hebron). [14]Kaleb dispossessed from there the three Anaqites, Sheshay, Ahiman and Talmay, the descendants of Anaq. [15]He went up from there against the people living in Debir; the name of Debir was formerly Sepher Township. [16]Kaleb said, 'The person who strikes down Sepher Township and captures it: I'll give him Aksah my daughter as wife.' [17]Otni'el ben Qenaz, Kaleb's brother, captured it, and he gave him Aksah his daughter as wife.
[18]When she came, she incited him to ask for some fields from her father. She got down from her donkey and Kaleb said to her, 'What is it?' [19]She said, 'Give me a blessing, because you've given me a region in the south. Give me waterholes.' So he gave her the upper waterholes and the lower waterholes.

Yehudah's towns

[20]This is the domain of the Yehudahites' clan by their kin-groups.

[21]The towns at the edge of the Yehudahites' clan, near the Edomite border, in the Negeb, were:

Qabtse'el, Eder, Yagur, [22]Qinah, Dimonah, Ad'adah, [23]Qedesh, Hatsor, Yitnan, [24]Ziph, Telem, Be'alot, [25]Hatsor Hadattah,
Qeriyyot Hetsron (i.e. Hatsor), [26]Amam, Shema, Moladah, [27]Gaddah Village, Heshmon, Bet Pelet, [28]Shu'al Village, Be'er
Sheba, Bizyotyah, [29]Ba'alah, Iyyim, Etsem, [30]Eltolad, Kesil, Hormah, [31]Tsiqlag, Madmannah, Sansannah, [32]Leba'ot, Shilhim,
Ayin and Rimmon.
All the towns: twenty-nine, and their villages.

[33]In the foothills:

Eshta'ol, Tsor'ah, Ashnah, [34]Zanoah, Gannim Spring, Tappuah, Enam, [35]Yarmut, Adullam, Sokoh, Azeqah, [36]Sha'arayim,
Aditayim, Gederah and Gederotayim.
Fourteen towns and their villages.
[37]Tsenan, Hadashah, Gad Tower, [38]Dil'an, The Watchtower, Yoqte'el, [39]Lakish, Botsqat, Eglon, [40]Kabbon, Lahmas, Kitlish,
[41]Gederot, Bet-dagon, Na'amah and Maqqedah.
Sixteen towns and their villages.
[42]Libnah, Eter, Ashan, [43]Yiphtah, Ashnah, Netsib, [44]Qe'ilah, Akzib and Mareshah.
Nine towns and their villages.
[45]Eqron, its daughter-towns, and its villages; [46]from Eqron westward, everything that was in the vicinity of Ashdod and their
villages, [47]Ashdod, its daughter-towns, and its villages; Azzah, its daughter-towns and its villages, as far as the Misrayimite
Wadi, and the Great Sea and the edge.

[48]In the highland:

Shamir, Yattir, Sokoh, [49]Dannah, Sannah Township (i.e. Debir), [50]Anab, Eshtemoh, Anim, [51]Goshen, Holon and Giloh.
Eleven towns and their villages.
[52]Arab, Rumah, Esh'an, [53]Yanum, Bet-tappuah, Apheqah, [54]Humtah, Arba's Township (i.e. Hebron) and Tsi'or.
Nine towns and their villages.
[55]Ma'on, Karmel, Ziph, Yuttah, [56]Yizre'e'l, Yoqde'am, Zanoah, [57]Qayin, Gib'ah and Timnah.
Ten towns and their villages.
[58]Halhul, Bet-tsur, Gedor, [59]Ma'arat, Bet-anot and Elteqon.
Six towns and their villages.
[60]Ba'al Township (i.e. Ye'arim Township) and Rabbah.
Two towns and their villages.

[61]In the wilderness:

Bet Ha'arabah, Middin, Sekakah, [62]Nibshan, Salt Town and Gedi Spring.

Six towns and their villages.

[63]But the Yehudahites couldn't dispossess the Yebusites, the people living in Yerushalaim, and the Yebusites have lived with the Yehudahites in Yerushalaim until this day.

The Yosephites

16 The lot extended for the Yosephites from the Yarden at Yeriho, at the Yeriho water towards the sunrise, through the wilderness, going up from Yeriho into the highland to Bet-el. [2]It extended from Bet-el to Luz and passed on to the Arkites' border at Atarot. [3]It went down to the west to the Yaphletites' border, as far as the border of Lower Bet-horon and as far as Gezer. Its furthest extents were at the sea. [4]So the Yosephites received their domain – Menashsheh and Ephrayim. [5]The border of the Ephrayimites by their kin-groups, was:

The border of their domain towards the sunrise was Atrot Addar as far as Upper Bet Horon. [6]The border extended to the sea, to Mikmetat on the north. The border turned towards the sunrise at Ta'anat Shiloh and passed by it east of Yanoah. [7]It went down from Yanoah to Atarot and to Na'arat, came to Yeriho and extended to the Yarden. [8]From Tappuah the border extends to the west by Wadi Qanah. Its furthest extents were at the sea. This was the domain of the Ephrayimites' clan by their kin-groups, [9]and the towns distinguished for the Ephrayimites within the domain of the Menashshites, all the towns and their villages.

[10]But they didn't dispossess the Kena'anites who were living in Gezer. The Kena'anites have lived within Ephrayim until this day, but they have been a serf workforce.

17 The lot fell for the clan of Menashsheh, because he was Yoseph's firstborn.

For Makir, Menashsheh's firstborn and Gil'ad's father (because he was a man of battle): Gil'ad and Bashan had become his. [2]So it fell for the remaining Menashshites by their clans, for the descendants of Abi'ezer, for the descendants of Heleq, for the descendants of Asri'el, for the descendants of Shekem, for the descendants of Hepher and for the descendants of Shemida. These were the male descendants of Menashsheh, Yoseph's son, by their kin-groups.

Menashsheh (and Tselophhad's daughters again)

[3]Now Tselophhad ben Hepher, son of Gil'ad son of Makir son of Menashsheh, had no sons, but only daughters. These are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, No'ah, Hoglah, Milkah and Tirtsah. [4]They drew near before El'azar the priest, before Yehoshua ben Nun and before the leaders, saying 'Yahweh himself ordered Mosheh to give us a domain among our brothers.' So he gave them a domain among their father's brothers in accordance with Yahweh's bidding.
[5]Menashsheh's shares fell as ten, apart from the region of Gil'ad and Bashan which are across the Yarden, [6]because Menashsheh's daughters received a domain among his sons, while the region of Gil'ad belonged to the remaining descendants of Menashsheh.

[7]Menashsheh's border was: from Asher to Mikmetat, which is east of Shekem. The border goes to the south, to the people living in Tappuah Spring ([8]the Tappuah region belonged to Menashsheh, but Tappuah on the border of Menashsheh belonged to the Ephrayimites). [9]The border goes down by Wadi Qanah. South of the wadi, these towns belonged to Ephrayim, among Menashsheh's towns, with Menashsheh's border north of the wadi and its furthest extents at the sea. [10]To the south belongs to Ephrayim, to the north to Menashsheh, and the sea was its border. They come to Asher on the north and Yissakar [Issachar] on the east, [11]but in Yissakar and in Asher, to Menashsheh belonged Bet-she'an and its daughter-towns, Yible'am and its daughter-towns, the people living in Do'r and its daughter-towns, the people living in Dor Spring and its daughter-towns, the people living in Ta'nak and its daughter-towns, and the people living in Megiddo and its daughter-towns (Three Heights).

[12]But the Menashshites couldn't take possession of these towns; the Kena'anites resolved to stay in this region. [13]When the Yisra'elites became strong, they made the Kena'anites into a workforce, but they didn't dispossess them at all.

A challenge for Yoseph

[14]The Yosephites spoke with Yehoshua: 'Why have you given me as my domain one lot, one allocation, when I'm a numerous people that Yahweh has blessed, up until now?' [15]Yehoshua said to them, 'If you're a numerous people, get yourself up into the forest and clear it for yourself, there in the region of the Perizzite and the Repha'ites, when the highland of Ephrayim is too narrow for you.'
[16]The Yosephites said, 'The highland isn't available to us, and there's iron chariotry among all the Kena'anites who live in the vale region, the ones who are in Bet-she'an and in its daughter-towns and the ones who are in the Yizre'el Vale.' [17]Yehoshua said to the household of Yoseph, to Ephrayim and to Menashsheh: 'You're a numerous people. You have great energy. You won't have one lot, [18]because the highland will be yours, because it's forest but you'll clear it, and its furthest extents will be yours because you'll dispossess the Kena'anite when they have iron chariotry, when they're strong.'
18 The entire assembly of the Yisra'elites congregated at Shiloh and placed the appointment tent there, with the country in subjection before them. [2]But there remained seven clans among the Yisra'elites to whom they had not shared out their

domain.

Surveying the land

[3]So Yehoshua said to the Yisra'elites, 'How long are you going to be slack about coming to take possession of the country that Yahweh the God of your ancestors has given you? [4]Provide yourselves three men per clan and I'll send them to set off and go through the country, and write it up on the basis of their domain. Then they're to come to me. [5]They can allocate it for themselves into seven shares. Yehudah is to stay by its border in the south and the household of Yoseph are to stay by their border in the north.
[6]You, you're to write up the country as seven shares and bring it to me here so I can throw lots for you here before Yahweh our God. [7]Because there's no share for the Levites among you, because Yahweh's priesthood is their domain, and Gad, Re'uben and the half-clan of Menashsheh have received their domain across the Yarden towards the sunrise, which Mosheh, Yahweh's servant, gave them.'
[8]The men set off and went. Yehoshua ordered the men who were going to write up the country: 'Go, go about the country, and write it up, come back to me, and I'll pitch the lot for you here before Yahweh in Shiloh.' [9]So the men went and passed through the country, and wrote it up on a document by towns as seven shares. They came to Yehoshua in the camp at Shiloh [10]and Yehoshua pitched the lot for them in Shiloh before Yahweh. So Yehoshua divided up the country before Yisra'el in accordance with their divisions.

Binyamin (Benjamin)

[11]The lot of the Binyaminites' clan by their kin-groups went up. The border of their lot extended between the Yehudahites and the Yosephites.
[12]Their border on the north side ran from the Yarden. The border went up to Yeriho's northern flank and went up into the highland westward. Its furthest extents were at the Bet Aven Wilderness. [13]The border passed on from there to Luz, to the flank of Luz southward (i.e. Bet-el). The border went down to Atrot Addar by the mountain which is on the south of Lower Bet-horon.
[14]The border curved and turned on the west side southward from the mountain which is opposite Lower Bet-horon southward. Its furthest extents were at Ba'al Township (i.e. Ye'arim Township), a town of the Yehudahites. This was the west side.
[15]The south side: from the edge of Ye'arim Township the border extended westward, and extended to Nephtoah Water Spring.
[16]The border went down to the edge of the mountain which is opposite Ben-hinnom Ravine, which is in Repha'ites Vale to the north. It went down Hinnom Ravine to the Yebusite flank on the south and went down to Treader Spring. [17]It curved on the north, extended to Shemesh Spring and extended to Gelilot, which is in front of Red Rocks Ascent. It went down to Bohan ben-Re'uben Stone, [18]passed on to the flank near the steppe, northward, and went down to the steppe. [19]The border passed on to the flank of Bet-hoglah, northward. The border's furthest extents were at the tongue of the Salt Sea to the north, at the end of the Yarden to the south. This was the southern border.
[20]The Yarden constituted its border on the east side.
This is the Binyaminites' domain by its borders all round, by their kin-groups. [21]The towns of the Binyaminites' clan by their kin-groups were:

Yeriho, Bet-hoglah, Qetsits Vale, [22]Bet Ha'arabah, Tsemarayim, Bet-el, [23]Avvim, Parah, Ophrah, [24]Ammonah Hamlet, Ophni and Geba.
Twelve towns and their villages.
[25]Gib'on, The Height, Be'erot, [26]The Watchtower, Kephirah, Motsah, [27]Reqem, Yirpe'el, Tar'alah, [28]Tsela, Eleph and the Yebusite (i.e. Yerushalaim), Gib'ah, Township.
Fourteen towns and their villages.

This is the Binyaminites' domain by their kin-groups.

Shim'on (Simeon), Zebulun

19 The second lot went out for Shim'on, for the Shim'onites' clan by their kin-groups. Their domain was within the Yehudahites' domain. [2]They had as their domain:

Be'er-sheba (or Sheba), Moladah, [3]Shu'al Village, Balah, Etsem, [4]Eltolad, Betul, Hormah, [5]Tsiqlag, Bet-markabot, Susah Village, [6]Bet Leba'ot and Sharuhen.
Thirteen towns and their villages.
[7]Ayin, Rimmon, Eter, Ashan.
Four towns and their villages, [8]and all the villages that are round these towns, as far as Ba'alat Be'er, Ra'mat Negeb.

This is the domain of the Shim'onites' clan by their kin-groups. [9]The Shim'onites' domain was part of the Yehudahites' share because the Yehudahites' share was too big for them, and the Shim'onites received a domain within their domain.
[10]The third lot went up for the Zebulunites by their clans.
The border of their domain ran as far as Sarid. [11]Their border went up westward to Mar'alah, came to Dabbeshet and came to the wadi which is opposite Yoqne'am.

[12]It turned back from Sarid towards the sunrise, along the border of Kislot Tabor. It extended to Daberat and went up to Yaphia.
[13]From there it passed on to the east, towards the sunrise, to Gat Hepher, to Et Qatsin. It extended to Rimmon, curving to Ne'ah.
[14]It turned (the northern border) to Hannaton. Its furthest extents were Yiphtah-'el Ravine, [15]Qattat, Nahalal, Shimron, Yid'alah and Bet Lehem.
Twelve towns and their villages.
[16]This is the Zebulunites' domain by their kin-groups, these towns and their villages.

Yissakar, Asher

[17]The fourth lot went out for Yissakar, for the Yissakarites by their kin-groups.
[18]Their border was Yizre'e'l, Kesulot, Shunem, [19]Hapharayim, Shi'on, Anaharat, [20]Rabbit, Qishyon, Ebets, [21]Remet, Gannim Spring, Haddah Spring and Bet Patstsets.
[22]The border came to Tabor, Shahatsim and Bet Shemesh.
The Yarden was the furthest extents of their border.
Sixteen towns and their villages.
[23]This is the domain of the Zebulunites' clan by their kin-groups, the towns and their villages.
[24]The fifth lot went out for the Asherites' clan by their kin-groups.
[25]Their border was Helqat, Hali, Beten, Akshaph, [26]Alammelek, Am'ad and Mish'al.
It came to Karmel on the west and Shihor Libnat.
[27]It turned back towards the sunrise, to Bet Dagon, and came to Zebulun and Yiphtah-'el Ravine to the north, Bet Ha'emeq and Ne'i'el.
It extended to Kabul on the north, [28]Ebron, Rehob, Hammon and Qanah, as far as Great Tsidon. [29]The border turned back to The Height and as far as the fortified town of Tsor. The border turned back to Hosah. Its furthest extents were at the sea in the area of Akzib, [30]Ummah, Apheq and Rehob.
Twenty-two towns and their villages.
[31]This is the domain of the Asherites' clan by their kin-groups, these towns and their villages.

Naphtali, Dan

[32]The sixth lot went out for the Naphtalites, for the Naphtalites by their kin-groups.
[33]Their border ran from Heleph, Betsa'anannim Oak, Adami Hanneqeb and Yabne'el as far as Laqqum, and the Yarden was its furthest extents.
[34]The border turned back westward to Aznot Tabor and went out from there to Huqoq.
It came to Zebulun on the south.
It came to Asher on the west and Yehudah at the Yarden towards the sunrise.
[35]Its fortified towns: Tsiddim, Tser, Hammat, Raqqat, Kinneret, [36]Adamah, The Height, Hatsor, [37]Qedesh, Edre'i, Hatsor Spring, [38]Yir'on, Migdal-el, Horem, Bet-anat and Bet Shemesh.
Nineteen towns and their villages.
[39]This is the domain of the Naphtalites' clan by their kin-groups, the towns and their villages.
[40]The seventh lot went out for the Danites by their kin-groups. [41]The border of their domain was Tsor'ah, Eshta'ol, Shemesh Town, [42]Sha'alabbin, Ayyalon, Yitlah, [43]Elon, Timnah, Eqron, [44]Elteqeh, Gibbeton, Ba'alat, [45]Yehud, Bene-beraq, Gat-rimmon, [46]Yarkon Water, Raqqon, with the border near Yapho.

[47]But the Danites' border got away from them, and the Danites went up and battled with Leshem and captured it. They struck it down with the mouth of the sword, took possession of it and lived in it. They named it Dan in accordance with the name of their ancestor Dan.

[48]This is the domain of the Danites' clan by their kin-groups, these towns and their villages.

[49]So they finished making the country into domains by its borders. The Yisra'elites gave a domain to Yehoshua ben Nun among them. [50]At Yahweh's bidding they gave him the town that he asked for, Timnat-serah in the highland of Ephrayim. He built up the town and lived in it.
[51]These are the domains that El'azar the priest, Yehoshua ben Nun and the heads of the ancestral households made for the Yisra'elites' clans by lot in Shiloh before Yahweh at the entrance of the appointment tent. So they finished sharing out the country.

The asylum towns

20 Yahweh spoke to Yehoshua: [2]'Speak to the Yisra'elites: "Give yourselves the asylum towns about which I spoke to you through Mosheh, [3]for a killer who strikes a person down by accident (without realizing), to flee there. They will be an asylum for you from the blood restorer.
[4]He will flee to one of these towns, and stand at the entrance of the town gateway and speak in the hearing of that town's elders.

They will receive him into the town among them, and give him a place so he can live with them. [5]When the blood restorer pursues after him, they will not surrender the killer into his hand, because he struck down his neighbour without realizing and he was not hostile to him in previous days.
[6]He is to live in that town until he stands before the assembly for a decision, until the death of the great priest who is there at that time. Then the killer may go back and come to his town and to his home, to the town from which he fled.'"
[7]So they made sacred Qedesh in Galilee in the highland of Naphtali; Shekem in the highland of Ephrayim; and Arba's Township (i.e. Hebron) in the highland of Yehudah. [8]Across the Yarden (Yeriho) towards the sunrise, they made Betser in the wilderness on the flatland, from the clan of Re'uben; Heights-in-Gil'ad from the clan of Gad; and Golan in Bashan from the clan of Menashsheh.
[9]These were the set towns for all the Yisra'elites and for the person who is residing among them to flee there, anyone who struck someone down by accident, so that he would not die by the hand of the blood restorer until he stood before the assembly.

The Levites' needs

21 The heads of the Levites' ancestral households came up to El'azar the priest, to Yehoshua ben Nun and to the heads of the ancestral households of the Yisra'elites' clans. [2]They spoke to them at Shiloh in the country of Kena'an: 'Yahweh himself ordered through Mosheh to give us towns to live in, with their pasturelands for our animals.' [3]So the Yisra'elites gave the Levites part of their domain in accordance with Yahweh's bidding, these towns and their pasturelands.
[4]The lot went out for the Qehatite kin-groups: for the descendants of Aharon [Aaron] the priest, from the Levites, it was from the clan of Yehudah, from the clan of Shim'on, from the clan of Binyamin, by lot, thirteen towns.
[5]For the remaining Qehatites: from the kin-groups of the clan of Ephrayim, from the clan of Dan and from the half-clan of Menashsheh, by lot, ten towns.
[6]For the Gershonites: from the kin-groups of the clan of Yissakar, from the clan of Asher, from the clan of Naphtali and from the half-clan of Menashsheh in Bashan, by lot, thirteen towns.
[7]For the Merarites by their kin-groups: from the clan of Re'uben, from the clan of Gad and from the clan of Zebulun, twelve towns.
[8]The Yisra'elites gave the Levites these towns and their pasturelands, as Yahweh said through Mosheh, by lot.

The Aharonites and the other Qehatites

[9]From the Yehudahites' clan and from the Shim'onites' clan they gave these towns, which will be named, [10]for the descendants of Aharon from the Qehatite kin-groups of the Levites, because the first lot was for them.

[11]They gave to them Arba's Township, the ancestor of the Anaqites (i.e. Hebron) in the highland of Yehudah, and its pastureland round it. [12]The town's fields and its villages they gave to Kaleb ben Yephunneh as his holding, [13]but to the descendants of Aharon the priest, they gave the killer's asylum town, Hebron, and its pastureland, Libnah and its pastureland, [14]Yattir and its pastureland, Eshtemoa and its pastureland, [15]Holon and its pastureland, Debir and its pastureland, [16]Spring and its pastureland, Yuttah and its pastureland, and Bet Shemesh and its pastureland.
Nine towns from these two clans.

[17]And from the clan of Binyamin: Gib'on and its pastureland, Geba and its pastureland, [18]Anatot and its pastureland, and Almon and its pastureland.
Four towns.

[19]All the towns of the descendants of Aharon, the priests: thirteen towns and their pasturelands.
[20]For the kin-groups of the Qehatites, the remaining Levites of the Qehatites, the towns in their lot were:

From the clan of Ephrayim, [21]they gave them the killer's asylum town, Shekem, and its pastureland in the highland of Ephrayim, Gezer and its pastureland, [22]Qibtsayim and its pastureland, and Bet Horon and its pastureland.
Four towns.
[23]From the clan of Dan: Elteqe and its pastureland, Gibbeton and its pastureland, [24]Ayyalon and its pastureland, Gat-rimmon and its pastureland.
Four towns.
[25]From the half-clan of Menashsheh: Ta'nak and its pastureland, and Gat-rimmon and its pastureland.
Two towns.

[26]All the towns: ten, and their pasturelands, for the remaining kin-groups of the Qehatites.

The Gershonites and the Merarites

[27]For the Gershonites, of the kin-groups of the Levites:

From the half-clan of Menashsheh, the killer's asylum town, Golan in Bashan and its pastureland, and Be'eshterah and its pastureland.
Two towns.

[28]From the clan of Yissakar: Qishron and its pastureland, Dobrat and its pastureland, [29]Yarmut and its pastureland, and Gannim Spring and its pastureland.
Four towns.
[30]From the clan of Asher: Mish'al and its pastureland, Abdon and its pastureland, [31]Helqat and its pastureland, and Rehob and its pastureland.
Four towns.
[32]From the clan of Naphtali, the killer's asylum town, Qedesh in Galilee, and its pastureland, Hammot Do'r and its pastureland, and Qartan and its pastureland.
Three towns and their pasturelands.

[33]All the towns of the Gershonites by their kin-groups: thirteen towns and their pasturelands.
[34]For the kin-groups of the Merarites, the remaining Levites:

From the clan of Zebulun: Yoqne'am and its pastureland, Qartah and its pastureland, [35]Dimnah and its pastureland, and Nahalal and its pastureland.
Four towns.
[36]From the clan of Gad, the killer's asylum town, Heights-in-Gil'ad and its pastureland, Mahanayim and its pastureland,
[37]Heshbon and its pastureland, and Ya'zer and its pastureland.
All the towns, four.

[38]All the towns of the Merarites by their kin-groups, the remaining kin-groups of the Levites: their lot was twelve towns.
[39]All the Levites' towns within the Yisra'elites' holding: forty-eight towns and their pasturelands. [40]These would be the towns, town by town and its pastureland round it – so for all these towns.

Not one word failed

[41]So Yahweh gave Yisra'el the entire country that he had sworn to give to their ancestors. They took possession of it and lived in it. [42]Yahweh enabled them to settle down all around in accordance with everything that he had sworn to their ancestors. Not one individual of all their enemies stood against them; all their enemies Yahweh gave into their hand. [43]No word fell, of every good word that God had spoken to the household of Yisra'el. Everything came about.
22 Then Yehoshua called the Re'ubenites, the Gadites and the half-clan of Menashsheh, [2]and said to them: 'You yourselves have kept everything that Mosheh, Yahweh's servant, ordered you, and you've listened to my voice in everything that I ordered you. [3]You haven't abandoned your brothers this long time until this day. You've kept the charge from the order of Yahweh your God. [4]But Yahweh your God has now enabled your brothers to settle down, as he spoke to them. So now, turn your face and get yourselves to your tents, to the region of your holding which Mosheh Yahweh's servant gave you across the Yarden. [5]Only keep careful watch to act on the order and the instruction that Mosheh Yahweh's servant gave you by being loyal to Yahweh your God, by walking in all his ways, by keeping his orders, by attaching yourselves to him, and by serving him with your entire mind and with your entire being.'

A little local difficulty

[6]Yehoshua blessed them and sent them off, and they went to their tents. [7]To one half-clan of Menashsheh Mosheh had given [land] in Bashan, and to the other half-clan Yehoshua had given it with their brothers across the Yarden to the west. Further, when Yehoshua sent them off to their tents and blessed them, [8]he said to them, 'Go back to your tents with great riches, with very much livestock, with silver and with gold, with copper and with iron, and with very much clothing. Share out the spoil of your enemies with your brothers.' [9]So the Re'ubenites, the Gadites and the half-clan of Menashsheh turned back and went from being with the Yisra'elites at Shiloh, which is in the country of Kena'an, to go the region of Gil'ad, to the land of their holding, which they had acquired at Yahweh's bidding through Mosheh.
[10]They came to the area of the Yarden which is in the country of Kena'an, and the Re'ubenites, the Gadites and the half-clan of Menashsheh built an altar there at the Yarden, an altar big in appearance. [11]The Yisra'elites heard: 'Here, the Re'ubenites, the Gadites and the half-clan of Menashsheh have built an altar near the land of Kena'an, in the area of the Yarden, across from the Yisra'elites.'
[12]So the Yisra'elites heard, and the entire assembly of the Yisra'elites congregated at Shiloh to go up to war against them.
[13]The Yisra'elites sent Pinhas ben El'azar, the priest, to the Re'ubenites, the Gadites and the half-clan of Menashsheh in the region of Gil'ad, [14]and ten leaders with him, one leader for each ancestral household, for all the clans of Yisra'el. They were, each individual, the head of an ancestral household for the Yisra'elite divisions.

Misunderstanding cleared up

[15]They came to the Re'ubenites, the Gadites and the half-clan of Menashsheh in the region of Gil'ad and spoke with them:
[16]'The entire assembly of Yisra'el has said this: "What is this trespass that you've committed against Yisra'el's God in turning back today from following Yahweh, in your building yourselves an altar, rebelling today against Yahweh? [17]Was the waywardness at Pe'or a small thing to us, from which we haven't purified ourselves this day (and an epidemic came on Yahweh's assembly), [18]and you yourselves turn back from following Yahweh today? If you rebel against Yahweh, tomorrow he will be

furious with the entire assembly of Yisra'el.
[19]Yet if the land of your holding is taboo, get yourselves across into the land of Yahweh's holding where Yahweh's dwelling is, and hold land among us. Don't rebel against Yahweh and don't rebel against us by your building yourselves an altar other than the altar of Yahweh our God. [20]When Akan ben Zerah trespassed in connection with devoting, fury came on the entire assembly, didn't it. He wasn't the only one who breathed his last for his waywardness."'
[21]The Re'ubenites, the Gadites and the half-clan of Menashsheh answered the heads of the Yisra'elite divisions: [22]'The God over the gods, Yahweh, the God over the gods, Yahweh, he knows, and Yisra'el – it will know: if it was in rebellion or in trespass against Yahweh, don't deliver us today [23]for building ourselves an altar to turn back from following Yahweh. Or if it was for offering up a burnt offering or a grain offering on it, or if for making well-being sacrifices on it, Yahweh – may he look for it from us. [24]But if it wasn't out of anxiety about something that we did this, saying "Tomorrow your children may say to our children, 'What do you and Yahweh the God of Yisra'el have in common? [25]Yahweh has made the Yarden a border between us and you, Re'ubenites and Gadites. You have no share in Yahweh.'" Your children would make our children stop living in awe of Yahweh.

A happy ending

[26]So we said, "Let's please act for ourselves by building an altar, not for burnt offering and not for sacrifice. [27]Rather it will be a witness between us and you and coming generations, for performing Yahweh's service before him, with our burnt offerings and with our sacrifices and with our well-being offerings, and your children will not say tomorrow to our children, 'You have no share in Yahweh.'" [28]We said, "When they say it to us and to our generations tomorrow, we'll say, 'Look at the pattern of Yahweh's altar which our fathers made, not for burnt offering and not for sacrifice, but it's a witness between us and you.'" [29]Far be it from us for us to rebel against Yahweh and turn back today from following Yahweh by building an altar for burnt offering, for grain offering and for sacrifice, apart from the altar of Yahweh our God that's before his dwelling.'
[30]Pinhas the priest, and the congregation's leaders (the heads of the Yisra'elite divisions) who were with him, listened to the things that the Re'ubenites, the Gadites and the Menashshites spoke of, and it was good in their eyes. [31]Pinhas ben El'azar the priest said to the Re'ubenites, the Gadites and the Menashshites, 'Today we acknowledge that Yahweh is among us, in that you haven't committed this trespass against Yahweh. Therefore you've saved the Yisra'elites from Yahweh's hand.'
[32]Pinhas ben El'azar the priest and the leaders went back from the Re'ubenites and from the Gadites from the region of Gil'ad to the country of Kena'an to the Yisra'elites and took back word to them. [33]The thing was good in the Yisra'elites' eyes and they blessed God. They didn't speak of going up against them to make war, to devastate the land in which the Re'ubenites and the Gadites were living.
[34]The Re'ubenites and the Gadites named the altar, that it was a 'Witness between us that Yahweh is our God'.

Beware of the other peoples' faiths

23 A long time later, after Yahweh had enabled Yisra'el to settle down from all their enemies around, and when Yehoshua was old, going on in years, [2]Yehoshua called all Yisra'el, its elders, its leaders, its rulers and its overseers, and said to them, 'I myself have got old, I've gone on in years. [3]You yourselves have seen everything that Yahweh your God did to all these nations from before you, because Yahweh your God – he's the one who was battling for you. [4]See, I've caused the lot to fall for you on these remaining nations as a domain for your clans, from the Yarden (yes, all the nations I cut off) and the Great Sea in the west.
[5]Yahweh your God – he will push them out from before you and dispossess them from before you so you may take possession of their country as Yahweh your God spoke to you. [6]You're to be very firm about keeping everything written in Mosheh's instruction document by acting on it, without departing from it right or left, [7]and without coming among these nations (these that remain with you). You will not commemorate their gods' name, you will not swear, you will not serve them and you will not bow low to them. [8]Rather, you're to attach yourselves to Yahweh your God, as you've done until this day.
[9]Yahweh has dispossessed great and numerous nations from before you, and you: not one individual stood against you until this day. [10]One individual from among you can pursue a thousand, because Yahweh your God – he has been battling for you, as he spoke to you.

Beware of contravening the pact

[11]You're to keep careful watch for yourselves so as to be loyal to Yahweh your God, [12]because if you do turn back and attach yourselves to what is left of these nations (these that remain with you) and intermarry with them and have sex with them and they with you, [13]you're to acknowledge clearly that Yahweh your God won't continue to dispossess these nations from before you. To you they will become a trap and a snare, a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from on this good land that Yahweh our God has given you.
[14]Here I am, going the way of all the earth now. You're to acknowledge with your entire mind and with your entire being that not one word has fallen down of all the good things of which Yahweh your God spoke to you. Everything has come about for you. Not one word of them has fallen down. [15]But as every good thing of which Yahweh your God spoke to you has come about for you, so Yahweh will cause every bad experience to come about for you, until he's eliminated you from on this good land that Yahweh your God has given you. [16]When you contravene the pact of Yahweh your God that he ordered you, and go and serve other gods and bow low to them, Yahweh's anger will rage against you and you will perish quickly from on this good country that he's given you.'
24 Yehoshua gathered all Yisra'el's clans at Shekem and called Yisra'el's elders, its leaders, its rulers and its overseers, and they took their stand before God.

Think back over the story

[2]Yehoshua said to all the people, 'Yahweh, Yisra'el's God, has said this: "Across the river, your ancestors (Terah, Abraham's father and Nahor's father) lived of old and served other gods. [3]I got your ancestor Abraham from across the river and enabled him to go through the entire country of Kena'an, and I made his offspring numerous. I gave him Yitshaq [Isaac], [4]and gave Yitshaq Ya'aqob [Jacob] and Esaw, and I gave Esaw the highland of Se'ir as his domain, while Ya'aqob and his sons went down to Misrayim.

[5]I sent Mosheh and Aharon and I hit Misrayim as I acted in its midst. Afterwards, I got you out. [6]I got your ancestors out of Misrayim and you came to the sea. The Misrayimites pursued after your ancestors with chariotry and with cavalry, to the Reed Sea. [7]They cried out to Yahweh and he put darkness between you and the Misrayimites. He made the sea come over them and it covered them. Your eyes saw what I did to the Misrayimites.

You stayed in the wilderness a long time, [8]but I brought you to the country of the Amorites who were living across the Yarden. They battled with you but I gave them into your hand and you took possession of their country. I eliminated them from before you. [9]Balaq ben Tsippor king of Mo'ab rose up and battled with Yisra'el. He sent and called for Bil'am ben Be'or to slight you. [10]But I was not willing to listen to Bil'am and he really had to bless you. So I saved you from his hand.

[11]You crossed the Yarden and came to Yeriho. The Yeriho landowners, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Kena'anite, the Hittite, the Girgashite, the Hivvite and the Yebusite, battled against you, but I gave them into your hand. [12]I sent off a hornet before you and it drove them out from before you (two Amorite kings), not by your sword and not by your bow. [13]I've given you a country for which you didn't get weary, towns that you didn't build but you've lived in, eating from vineyards and olive groves that you didn't plant."

'You can't serve Yahweh.' 'Yes we can!'

[14]So now, live in awe of Yahweh and serve him with integrity and with truthfulness. Remove the gods that your ancestors served across the river and in Misrayim, and serve Yahweh. [15]If it's bad in your eyes to serve Yahweh, choose for yourselves today whom you'll serve, whether the gods that your ancestors served who were beyond the river, or the gods of the Amorites whose country you're living in. I and my household, we will serve Yahweh.'

[16]The people answered, 'Far be it from us to abandon Yahweh to serve other gods, [17]because Yahweh our God – he's the one who got us and our ancestors up from the country of Misrayim, from a household of serfs, and who did before our eyes these great signs, and kept us the entire way that we went and among all the peoples through whom we passed; [18]and Yahweh drove out all the peoples (the Amorites) living in the country from before us. We'll serve Yahweh as well, because he's our God.'

[19]Yehoshua said to the people, 'You can't serve Yahweh, because he's a sacred God. He's a passionate God. He won't carry your rebellions and wrongdoings. [20]When you abandon Yahweh and serve foreign gods, he'll turn back and bring bad fortune to you and finish you off, after he's been good to you.'

[21]The people said to Yehoshua, 'No, because Yahweh is the one we'll serve.' [22]Yehoshua said to the people, 'You're witnesses against yourselves that you yourselves have chosen for yourselves Yahweh, to serve him.' They said, 'We're witnesses.' [23]'So now remove the foreign gods that are among you and direct your mind to Yahweh the God of Yisra'el.' [24]The people said to Yehoshua, 'Yahweh our God we will serve. To his voice we will listen.'

Confirming the pact anew

[25]Yehoshua solemnized a pact for the people that day and laid down for them a decree and a ruling, at Shekem. [26]Yehoshua wrote these things in God's instruction document. He got a big stone and set it up there under the oak that was in Yahweh's sanctuary. [27]Yehoshua said to all the people, 'Here, this stone – it will be a witness against us, because it – it heard all Yahweh's words that he spoke with us. It will be a witness against you, so you don't act deceitfully towards your God.' [28]And Yehoshua sent the people off, each to their domain.

[29]After that, Yehoshua ben Nun, Yahweh's servant, died, a man of 110 years. [30]They buried him within the border that was his domain in Timnat-serah in the highland of Ephrayim, north of Mount Ga'ash.

[31]Yisra'el served Yahweh all the time of Yehoshua and all the time of the elders who lived on after Yehoshua and who acknowledged all Yahweh's action that he undertook for Yisra'el. [32]The bones of Yoseph, which the Yisra'elites had brought up from Misrayim, they buried in Shekem on the plot in the fields that Ya'aqob had acquired from the sons of Hamor, Shekem's father, for a hundred qesitas. It had become a domain of the Yosephites.

[33]El'azar ben Aharon died and they buried him on the hill of Pinhas his son, which had been given him in the highland of Ephrayim.

Judges

A quick read of Joshua can give one the impression that the story that now follows will relate how everyone lives happily ever after, but the close of Joshua made clear that the Israelites have by no means entered into full possession of the land of Canaan. Moreover, Joshua's challenges to the Israelites at the end of Joshua also raise the question of how faithful Israel will be in fulfilling its own promises.

Judges begins (1.1—2.5) by focusing on the areas of the country over which Israel does not yet have control, and it thus conveys a gloomier impression than the book of Joshua as a whole. Further, the areas that remain under Canaanite control are the most populous areas and the ones most worth possessing. Like Joshua, Judges here moves between 'they didn't gain control' and 'they couldn't gain control' of these areas.

A second introduction to the book (2.6—3.4) then outlines a pattern that runs through much of the book. It introduces a series of stories that relate how Israelites turn away from adherence to Yahweh to serve other deities. Yahweh then himself turns away and leaves them to the mercy of their neighbours. In due course this experience of discipline makes them turn back to Yahweh, and he produces a deliverer who can rescue them from their adversaries.

It is these deliverers who provide the book with its title, 'Judges', though that English word is thus misleading. I use the expression 'exercise authority' to match the rendering elsewhere in this translation. But these leaders are people who don't have an official position like a governor or a king but who by dint of God's spirit coming on them are able to do what needs doing for Israel. Their personalities and gifts are also involved, though they tend to be the kind of people who wouldn't be in positions of official leadership if there were official leaders. God chooses and uses somebody's little brother, somebody who is handicapped, a son of Anat (a name that suggests he is a Canaanite), and then the greatest of the leaders who is – a woman.

Nor are these leaders commonly people of great faith or insight or a high standard of morality. Indeed, there is a troubling arc to the sequence of their stories. As the book unfolds, the leaders become more and more ambiguous figures. They can get the job done, but they lack the moral qualities that one would like to see accompanying their exercise of leadership.

In this respect they mirror the people themselves, and the later chapters in Judges turn it into the most distasteful and disturbing book in the Bible. It becomes a relentless portrayal of human stupidity, failure, and moral and social blindness. Women pay a heavy price in the conflicts and the abuses it reports, though women also exercise remarkable initiatives in different stories in the book.

Its own repeated comment in the closing chapters is that people were doing what was all right in their own eyes, and it adds the further comment that of course there was no king in Israel. The implication is that a king would be able to do something about the situation. The book thus provides some background to the introduction of kings in the next book, 1 Samuel.

If you add up the periods covered by the times of crisis and subsequent quiet in the book, you end up with a history occupying several hundred years. There isn't actually room for that long a period between Joshua (about 1200 BC) and Saul (about 1050 BC). A closer look at the stories, however, reveals that they all concern events and deliverances that are more or less local. They don't involve all the clans. So the periods of years to which the book refers can be overlapping – a time of crisis in one area can be a time of quiet in another. It's then theologically significant that the book portrays all the crises and deliverances as involving 'Israel'. When one suffers, all suffer. Trouble for one part of the body is trouble for the body as a whole.

Real life is more complicated

1 After Yehoshua's [Joshua's] death, the Yisra'elites [Israelites] asked of Yahweh, 'Who is to go up for us against the Kena'anites [Canaanites] first, to do battle with them?' [2]Yahweh said, 'Yehudah [Judah] is to go up. Here, I am giving the country into his hand.' [3]Yehudah said to Shim'on [Simeon], his brother, 'Go up with me into my lot so we can do battle against the Kena'anites, and I'll go with you into your lot as well.' So Shim'on went with him. [4]Yehudah went up, and Yahweh gave the Kena'anite and the Perizzite into their hand. They struck them down at Bezeq, 10,000 people.

[5]They found Adoni Bezeq at Bezeq and battled against him, and struck down the Kena'anite and the Perizzite. [6]Adoni Bezeq fled, but they pursued after him. They caught him and cut off his thumbs and big toes. [7]Adoni-bezeq said, 'Seventy kings, with thumbs and big toes cut off, used to be gleaning under my table. As I have done, so God has made good to me.' They brought him to Yerushalaim [Jerusalem], and he died there.

[8]The Yehudahites battled against Yerushalaim, captured it and struck it down with the mouth of the sword, and the town they sent up in fire. [9]Afterwards, the Yehudahites went down to battle against the Kena'anites living in the highland, the Negeb and the foothills.

[10]Yehudah went against the Kena'anites who were living in Hebron (Hebron's name was Arba's Township before). They struck down Sheshay, Ahiman and Talmay. [11]From there, it went against the people living in Debir (Debir's name was Sepher Township before).

[12] Kaleb [Caleb] said, 'The man who strikes down Sepher Township and captures it: I'll give him Aksah my daughter as wife.' [13]Otni'el ben Qenaz, Kaleb's brother who was younger than him, captured it, and he gave him Aksah his daughter as wife. [14]When she came, she incited him to ask for some fields from her father. She got down from her donkey and Kaleb said to her, 'What is it?' [15]She said to him, 'Give me a blessing, because you've given me a region in the south. Give me waterholes.' So Kaleb gave her the upper waterholes and the lower waterholes.

Who could and who couldn't

[16]The descendants of the Qenite, Mosheh's [Moses'] father-in-law, went up from Palms Town with the Yehudahites into the

Yehudah Wilderness that's south of Arad, and he went and lived with the people. [17]Yehudah went with its brother Shim'on and they struck down the Kena'anites living in Tsepat. They devoted it [*haram*], and named the town Hormah. [18]Yehudah captured Azzah [Gaza] and its border, Ashqelon and its border, and Eqron and its border. [19]Yahweh was with Yehudah, and it took possession of the highland, because it couldn't dispossess the people living in the vale because they had iron chariotry. [20]They gave Hebron to Kaleb as Mosheh spoke, and he dispossessed the three Anaqites from there. [21]But the Yebusites living in Yerushalaim the Binyaminites [Benjaminites] didn't dispossess. The Yebusites have lived with the Binyaminites in Yerushalaim until this day.

[22]Yoseph's [Joseph's] household, they too, went up to Bet-el; Yahweh was with them. [23]Yoseph's household investigated Bet-el (the town's name was Luz before), [24]and the men keeping watch saw a man coming out of the town and said to him, 'Show us the way into the town, will you, and we will act in commitment with you.' [25]He showed them the way into the town and they struck down the town with the mouth of the sword, but the man and his entire kin-group they sent off. [26]The man went to the Hittites' region and built a town, and named it Luz. That's its name until this day.

[27]Menashsheh didn't take possession of Bet-she'an and its daughter-towns, Ta'nak and its daughter-towns, the people living in Dor and its daughter-towns, the people living in Yible'am and its daughter-towns, or the people living in Megiddo and its daughter-towns. The Kena'anites were resolved to live in this region. [28]When Yisra'el became strong it made the Kena'anites into a workforce, but it didn't dispossess them at all.

Wailing

[29]Ephrayim didn't dispossess the Kena'anites who were living in Gezer; the Kena'anites lived among them in Gezer. [30]Zebulun didn't dispossess the people living in Qitron or the people living in Nahalol; the Kena'anites lived among them and became a workforce. [31]Asher didn't dispossess the people living in Akko or the people living in Tsidon, Ahlab, Akzib, Helbah, Aphiq or Rehob. [32]The Asherites lived among the Kena'anites living in the region, because they didn't dispossess them. [33]Naphtali didn't dispossess the people living in Bet-shemesh or the people living in Bet-anat. They lived among the Kena'anites living in the region and the people living in Bet-shemesh and Bet Anat became a workforce for them.

[34]The Amorites forced the Danites into the highland because they didn't let them come down into the vale. [35]The Amorites resolved to stay in Mount Heres in Ayyalon and in Sha'albim. But the hand of Yoseph's household became heavy and they became a workforce. [36]The Amorites' border went from Scorpions Ascent, from Sela, on upwards.

2 Yahweh's envoy went up from Gilgal to Bokim and said, 'I enabled you to go up from Misrayim [Egypt] and I brought you to the country that I swore to your ancestors. I said, "I will not contravene my pact with you, ever. [2]You yourselves will not solemnize a pact towards the people living in this country. You're to tear down their altars." But you didn't listen to my voice. What is this you've done? [3]So I've also said, "I won't drive them out from before you. They'll be at your sides and their gods will be a snare to you."' [4]When Yahweh's envoy spoke these words to all the Yisra'elites, the people lifted up their voice and wailed, [5]and named that place Bokim ['Wailers'], but they sacrificed there to Yahweh.

The power of forgetting

[6]Yehoshua had sent the company off, and the Yisra'elites had gone each person to his domain to take possession of the country. [7]The people served Yahweh all Yehoshua's time and all the time of the elders who lived on after Yehoshua, who had seen all Yahweh's great work that he did for Yisra'el.

[8]Yehoshua ben Nun, Yahweh's servant, died, a man of 110 years, [9]and they buried him within the border that was his domain at Timnat-heres in the highland of Ephrayim, north of Mount Ga'ash. [10]That entire generation also joined its ancestors, and another generation arose after them who didn't acknowledge Yahweh, or the work he had done for Yisra'el either. [11]The Yisra'elites did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes. They served the Masters [12]and abandoned Yahweh, their ancestors' God, who had got them out of the country of Misrayim. They followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were round them, and bowed low to them, and provoked Yahweh.

[13]So they abandoned Yahweh and served the Master and the Ashtars, [14]and Yahweh's anger raged against Yisra'el and he gave them into the hand of people who plundered them. He surrendered them into the hand of their enemies all round. They could no longer stand before their enemies. [15]Wherever they went out, Yahweh's hand was against them to make things go badly, as Yahweh had spoken and as Yahweh had sworn to them. It put great pressure on them.

[16]Yahweh made people to exercise authority arise and they delivered them from the hand of their plunderers, [17]but they also didn't listen to the people who exercised authority for them, because they whored after other gods and bowed low to them. They departed quickly from the way that their ancestors had walked by listening to Yahweh's orders. They didn't do so.

When Yahweh feels sorry for them

[18]When Yahweh made people to exercise authority arise for them, Yahweh would be with the one exercising authority and he would deliver them from the hand of their enemies all the time of the one exercising authority, because Yahweh felt sorry on account of their groan in the face of the people afflicting and crushing them. [19]But when the one exercising authority died, they would go back to acting more devastatingly than their ancestors in following other gods to serve them and bow low to them. They didn't drop any of their practices and their tough-minded way.

[20]So Yahweh's anger raged against Yisra'el. He said, 'Since this nation have contravened the pact with which I ordered their ancestors and haven't listened to my voice, [21]I for my part will not continue to dispossess anyone from before them, from the nations that Yehoshua left when he died', [22]in order to test Yisra'el by them, whether they're keeping Yahweh's way by walking

in them, as their ancestors kept it, or not. [23]So Yahweh had let these nations settle down without dispossessing them quickly, and had not given them into Yehoshua's hand.

3 These are the nations that Yahweh let settle down, to test Yisra'el by them, all who had not known any of the battles in Kena'an, [2]only in order for Yisra'el's generations to know them, by teaching them about battle – only the people who had not known them before: [3]the five Pelishtite lords and all the Kena'anites, the Tsidonites and the Hivvites living in the highland of the Lebanon from Ba'al Hermon Mountain as far as Lebo Hamat. [4]They were for testing Yisra'el by them, to know whether they would listen to Yahweh's order which he had given their ancestors through Mosheh.

The 'major' judges

Kaleb's little brother again

[5]So the Yisra'elites lived among the Kena'anite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Hivvite and the Yebusite, [6]and got their daughters for themselves as wives and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods. [7]The Yisra'elites did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes. They put Yahweh their God out of mind and served the Masters and the Asherahs. [8]Yahweh's anger raged against Yisra'el and he surrendered them into the hand of Kushan Rish'atayim, the king of Aram-of-the-Two-Rivers. The Yisra'elites served Kushan Rish'atayim for eight years.

[9]The Yisra'elites cried out to Yahweh and Yahweh made a deliverer arise for the Yisra'elites and he delivered them: Otni'el ben Qenaz, Kaleb's brother who was younger than him. [10]Yahweh's spirit came on him and he exercised authority for Yisra'el. He went out to battle and Yahweh gave Kushan Rish'atayim, the king of Aram, into his hand. His hand was powerful over Kushan Rish'atayim, [11]and the region was calm for forty years.

Otni'el ben Qenaz died, [12]and the Yisra'elites again did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes. Yahweh made Eglon king of Mo'ab strong over Yisra'el because they did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes, [13]and he got the Ammonites and Amaleq to join him. He went and struck Yisra'el down, and took possession of Palms Town. [14]The Yisra'elites served Eglon king of Mo'ab for eighteen years.

Another unlikely saviour

[15]The Yisra'elites cried out to Yahweh and Yahweh made a deliverer arise for them, Ehud ben Gera, a Binyaminite, a man restricted in his right hand. The Yisra'elites sent an offering by his hand to Eglon king of Mo'ab. [16]Ehud made himself a sword with two edges, half a metre in length. He wrapped it on under his uniform on his right side, [17]and presented the offering to Eglon king of Mo'ab. Now Eglon was a very stout man.

[18]When he had finished presenting the offering, he sent off the company who had been carrying the gift, [19]but he himself went back from the sculptures that are near Gilgal and said, 'I have a secret message for you, Your Majesty.' He said, 'Silence', and all the people who stood by him went out from his presence. [20]When Ehud came to him, he was sitting in the cool upper quarters that he had, alone. Ehud said, 'I have a word from God for you.' He got up from his seat, [21]and Ehud put out his left hand, took the sword from on his right side and plunged it into his insides. [22]Even the handle went in after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade, because he didn't pull the sword out of his insides. The dirt came out.

[23]Ehud went out through the porch, shut the doors of the upper quarters on him and locked them [24]as he went out.

His servants came and looked: there, the doors of the upper quarters were locked. They said, 'Yes, he's relieving himself in the cool lounge', [25]and waited until they were shamed. But there – he wasn't opening the doors of the upper quarters. So they got the key and opened them, and there – their lord was fallen on the ground, dead.

[26]Ehud had escaped while they delayed, and had passed the sculptures. He escaped to Se'irah [27]and, when he came, blew on the horn in the highland of Ephrayim. The Yisra'elites went down with him from the highland; he was before them. [28]He said to them 'Pursue after me, because Yahweh has given your enemies, Mo'ab, into your hand.' They went down after him and captured Mo'ab's Yarden [Jordan] crossings, and didn't let anyone cross. [29]They struck down Mo'ab at that time, some 10,000 men, every individual hefty and everyone a forceful man. Not one escaped. [30]So Mo'ab bowed down that day under Yisra'el's hand, and the region was calm for eighty years.

Shamgar, Deborah, Lapiddot and Baraq

[31]After him there was Shamgar ben Anat. He struck down 600 Pelishtites [Philistines] with an ox goad. He, too, was one who delivered Yisra'el.

4 The Yisra'elites again did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes when Ehud had died, [2]and Yahweh surrendered them into the hand of Yabin king of Kena'an who reigned in Hatsor. His army officer was Sisera; he was living in Haroshet Haggoyim. [3]The Yisra'elites cried out to Yahweh because he had 900 iron chariots, and he had afflicted Yisra'el through his strength for twenty years.

[4]Now Deborah, a woman who was a prophetess, the wife of Lapiddot, was exercising authority for Yisra'el at that time. [5]She would sit under Deborah's Palm between The Height and Bet-el in the highland of Ephrayim, and the Yisra'elites would go up to her for a decision.

[6]She sent and called for Baraq ben Abino'am, from Qedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, 'Yahweh the God of Yisra'el has ordered you, has he not: "Go, march to Mount Tabor, and take with you 10,000 men from the Naphtalites and from the Zebulunites. [7]I shall march Sisera, Yabin's army officer, to you, to Wadi Qishon, with his chariotry and his horde, and I shall give them into your hand."'

[8]Baraq said to her, 'If you go with me, I'll go, but if you don't go with me, I won't go.' [9]She said, 'I'll definitely go with you, only it won't be your glory on the journey that you're going on, because it's into the hand of a woman that Yahweh will surrender Sisera.' So Deborah set off and went with Baraq to Qedesh, [10]and Baraq called out Zebulun and Naphtali to Qedesh. Ten thousand men went up after him, and Deborah went up with him. [11]Now Heber the Qenite had split from Qayin, from the descendants of Hobab, Mosheh's father-in-law, and spread his tent by the oak at Tsa'anannim, which was near Qedesh.

[12]They told Sisera that Baraq ben Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor, [13]and Sisera called out all his chariotry (900 iron chariots) and all the company that was with him from Haroshet-goyim to Wadi Qishon.

Ya'el

[14]Deborah said to Baraq, 'Set off, because this is the day that Yahweh has given Sisera into your hand. Yahweh has gone out before you, hasn't he.' So Baraq went down from Mount Tabor, with 10,000 men behind him, [15]and Yahweh threw Sisera, all his

chariotry and all the camp into confusion at the mouth of the sword before Baraq.
Sisera got down from his chariot and fled on foot, [16]while Baraq pursued after the chariotry and after the camp as far as Haroshet Haggoyim. Sisera's entire camp fell to the mouth of the sword. Not even one was left.
[17]Now Sisera had fled on foot to the tent of Ya'el, the wife of Heber the Qenite, because there was peace between Yabin king of Hatsor and the household of Heber the Qenite. [18]Ya'el came out to meet Sisera and said to him, 'Turn aside, sir, turn aside to me. Don't be afraid.' So he turned aside to her into the tent and she covered him with a rug. [19]He said to her, 'Please give me a little water to drink, because I'm thirsty.' She opened a skin of milk and gave him a drink, and covered him. [20]He said to her, 'Stand at the tent entrance. If someone comes and asks you, "Is there anyone here?" you're to say, "There's no one."'
[21]But Ya'el, Heber's wife, got a tent peg and picked up a hammer in her hand. She came to him stealthily and drove the peg through his temple so it went down into the ground; he was in a deep sleep, he was weary. So he died.
[22]And there was Baraq, pursuing Sisera. Ya'el went out to meet him. She said to him, 'Come, I'll let you see the man that you're looking for.' He came in to her, and there was Sisera, fallen dead, the peg in his temple.
[23]That day God made Yabin king of Hatsor bow down before the Yisra'elites. [24]The Yisra'elites' hand kept getting tougher on Yabin king of Kena'an until they had cut down Yabin king of Kena'an.

Yahweh's faithful acts

5 Deborah (and Baraq ben Abino'am) sang that day:

[2]At people exercising authority who were letting themselves go in Yisra'el,
at a company offering itself freely: bless Yahweh!
[3]Listen, kings,
give ear, sovereigns!
I myself, I shall sing for Yahweh,
I shall make music for Yahweh the God of Yisra'el.

[4]Yahweh, when you came out from Se'ir,
when you marched from Edomite country,
Earth trembled,
yes, heavens poured,
Yes, clouds poured water,
[5]when mountains quaked,
Before Yahweh the one of Sinay,
before Yahweh the God of Yisra'el.

[6]In the time of Shamgar ben Anat,
in the time of Ya'el,
Journeys left off,
people going on paths went by roundabout ways.
[7]Peasantry left off,
left off in Yisra'el,
Until I, Deborah, arose,
arose as mother in Yisra'el.
[8]It chose new gods,
then there was battling in the gateways.
Shield and spear did not appear
among 40,000 in Yisra'el.
[9]My heart was with Yisra'el's commanders,
who offered themselves freely in the company.

Bless Yahweh,
[10]riders on tawny donkeys!
You who sit on saddle blankets,
you who go on a journey, talk.

[11]Above the voice of dealers among watering holes,
there they are to commemorate Yahweh's faithful acts,
Faithful acts for his peasantry in Yisra'el;
then Yahweh's company went down to the gateways.

Who came and who didn't

[12]Stir, stir, Deborah,
Stir, stir, sound out a song!
Set off, Baraq,
take your captives, ben Abino'am!

[13]Then those of the august ones who were left came down,
Yahweh's company came down for me among the strong men,
[14]From Ephrayim people whose root is in Amaleq,
after you, Binyamin with your kin.
From Makir commanders came down,
from Zebulun people wielding the marshal's staff.
[15]The officers in Yissakar [Issachar] were with Deborah;
as Yissakar, so was Baraq,
sent into the vale behind him.
Among Re'uben's divisions,
great searchings of heart.
[16]Why did you sit among the folds
to listen to the whistlings for the flocks?
Among Re'uben's divisions,
great searchings of heart.
[17]Gil'ad dwelled across the Yarden;
Dan: why did he stay by the ships?
Asher lived at the sea coast
and dwelled by its harbours.
[18]Zebulun was a people that reviled its life to the death;
Naphtali was on the heights of the fields.

[19]Kings came, battled,
kings of Kena'an battled then.
At Ta'nak by Megiddo's water
they got no gain of silver.
[20]From the heavens the stars battled,
from their causeways they battled with Sisera.
[21]Wadi Qishon swept them away,
the rushing wadi, Wadi Qishon:
go on with vigour, my soul!
[22]Then horse hoofs pounded,
with the galloping, the galloping of his sturdy ones.
[23]'Curse Meroz', Yahweh's envoy said,
'utterly curse the people living in it,
Because they didn't come when Yahweh was helping,
when Yahweh was helping against the strong men.'

Sisera's mother waits

[24]Most blessed of women be Ya'el,
wife of Heber the Qenite,
most blessed of tent women.
[25]He asked for water, she gave milk;
in a bowl fit for august people she presented curds.
[26]She put out her hand for the peg,
her right hand for the labourers' hammer.
She hammered Sisera, smashed his head,
hit and pierced his temple.
[27]Between her feet he bent down,
he fell, he lay.
Between her feet he bent down, he fell;
where he bent down, there he fell, destroyed.

[28]Through the window Sisera's mother peered,
she gazed through the lattice.
'Why is his chariot taking time to come,
why have the rumblings of his chariots delayed?'
[29]The smartest of her ladies answer her,
indeed she gives back her word to herself:
[30]'They've found and shared out the spoil, haven't they,
a woman, two women, for each man,
Spoil of dyed cloth for Sisera,
spoil of dyed cloth embroidered,
two embroidered cloths for the necks as spoil.'

[31]So may all your enemies perish, Yahweh,
but may his friends be like the sun coming out in its strength.

The region was calm for forty years.

The man hiding to beat out wheat

6 The Yisra'elites did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes and he gave them into the hand of Midyan for seven years. [2]The hand of Midyan was powerful over Yisra'el. Because of Midyan, the Yisra'elites made themselves hideouts that were in the mountains, caves and strongholds. [3]If Yisra'el had sown, Midyan, Amaleq and the Easterners would go up. They would go up against it [4]and camp against them, and devastate the region's yield until you come to Azzah. They wouldn't let anything remain alive in Yisra'el, either sheep or ox or donkey, [5]because they and their livestock would go up with their tents. They would come like a locust swarm in their large number. There was no counting them or their camels.

So they came into the region to devastate it, [6]and Yisra'el became very low before Midyan. The Yisra'elites cried out to Yahweh. [7]When the Yisra'elites cried out to Yahweh on account of Midyan, [8]Yahweh sent someone as a prophet to the Yisra'elites. He said to them, 'Yahweh the God of Yisra'el has said this: "I'm the one who got you up from Misrayim, got you out of the household of serfs, [9]rescued you from the hand of Misrayim and from the hand of all the people who afflicted you. I drove them out from before you and gave you their country. [10]I said to you, 'I am Yahweh your God. You will not live in awe of the gods of the Amorites in whose country you're living.' But you didn't listen to my voice."'

[11]Yahweh's envoy came and sat under the oak at Ophrah that belonged to Yo'ash the Abi'ezrite. His son Gid'on [Gideon] was beating out wheat in the winepress to keep it safe from before Midyan. [12]Yahweh's envoy appeared to him and said to him, 'Yahweh is with you, forceful strong man.' [13]Gid'on said to him, 'Pardon me, my Lord: Yahweh is with us? So why has all this befallen us? Where are all his extraordinary acts that our ancestors recounted to us, saying "Yahweh got us up from Misrayim, didn't he"? Yahweh has now left us alone and given us into Midyan's fist.'

Asking for a sign

[14]Yahweh turned his face to him and said, 'Go in this energy of yours and deliver Yisra'el from Midyan's fist. I've sent you, haven't I.' [15]He said to him, 'Pardon me, my Lord: how can I deliver Yisra'el? Here, my family is the poorest in Menashsheh and I'm the youngest in my father's household.' [16]Yahweh said to him, 'But I'll be with you, and you'll strike Midyan down as if they were one man.'

[17]He said to him, 'If I've found grace in your eyes, please perform a sign for me that you're the one speaking with me. [18]Don't move away from here, please, until I come to you and bring my offering out and set it down before you.' He said, 'I myself will stay until you come back.'

[19]When Gid'on had come in, he prepared a kid goat from the flock and a barrel of flour into flatbread. When he'd put the meat in a basket and put the broth in a pot, he took them out to him under the oak. So he brought them up [20]and God's envoy said to him, 'Get the meat and the flatbread and set them down on this rock, and pour out the broth.' He did so. [21]Yahweh's envoy put out the end of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the flatbread. Fire went up from the crag and devoured the meat and the flatbread, as Yahweh's envoy went from before his eyes.

[22]Gid'on saw that it was Yahweh's envoy. Gid'on said, 'Oh, Lord Yahweh, that therefore I've seen Yahweh's envoy face to face!' [23]Yahweh said to him, 'Things will be well for you. Don't be afraid. You won't die.'

[24]Gid'on built an altar there for Yahweh and called it 'Yahweh-things-will-be-well'. Until this day it's still in Ophrah of the Abi'ezrites.

The mixed-up father

[25]That night Yahweh said to him, 'Get the ox bullock that belongs to your father and a second bullock of seven years. Tear down the Master's altar that belongs to your father and cut down the totem pole that's by it, [26]and build an altar for Yahweh your God on the top of this stronghold, in proper order. Get the second bullock and offer it up as a burnt offering with the wood of the totem pole that you cut down.' [27]So Gid'on got ten men from among his servants and did as Yahweh had spoken to him, but as he was too afraid of his father's household and of the people of the town to do it by day, he did it by night.

[28]The people of the town started early in the morning and there, the Master's altar was demolished, the totem pole that was by it was cut down and the second bull was sacrificed on the altar that had been built. [29]They said, one to his neighbour, 'Who did this thing?' They enquired and sought, and said, 'Gid'on ben Yo'ash did this thing.'

[30]The people of the town said to Yo'ash, 'Bring your son out: he's to die, because he demolished the Master's altar and because he cut down the totem pole that was by it.' [31]But Yo'ash said to all who stood round him, 'Do you yourselves argue for the Master? Or do you yourselves deliver him? The person who argues for him should be put to death by morning. If he's a god, he should argue for himself, because someone has demolished his altar.' [32]That day they called him Yerubba'al ('Master-Must-Argue'), saying 'The Master must argue against him, because he demolished his altar.'

The fleece

[33]Now all Midyan, Amaleq and the Easterners gathered together, crossed over and camped in the Yizre'e'l Vale, [34]and Yahweh's spirit clothed itself in Gid'on. He blew on the horn, and the Abi'ezrites had themselves called out to follow him.

[35]When he sent envoys through all Menashsheh, they too had themselves called out to follow him, and when he sent envoys through Asher, through Zebulun and through Naphtali, they went up to meet them.
[36]Gid'on said to God, 'If you're really going to deliver Yisra'el by my hand, as you spoke: [37]here, I'm placing a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there's dew on the fleece alone but on all the ground it's dry, I'll acknowledge that you will deliver Yisra'el by my hand as you spoke.' [38]So it happened. He started early next day, squeezed the fleece and wrung out dew from the fleece, a full bowl of water.
[39]Gid'on said to God, 'May your anger not rage against me and I'll speak just one more time. May I please test with the fleece only one more time. May there please be dry on the fleece alone but on all the ground may there be dew.' [40]God did so that night. There was dry on the fleece alone but on the ground there was dew.
7 Yerubba'al (i.e. Gid'on) and all the company with him started early and camped above Harod Spring; the Midyanite camp was north of him at Moreh Hill, in the vale. [2]Yahweh said to Gid'on, 'The company that's with you is too big for me to give Midyan into their hand, so Yisra'el doesn't take glory for itself over me, saying "My hand delivered me." [3]Now call out, please, in the ears of the company, "Whoever is afraid and trembling is to go back and fly from Mount Gil'ad."' Twenty-two thousand of the company went back; 10,000 remained.

How to increase the odds against yourself

[4]Yahweh said to Gid'on, 'The company is still big. Get them to go down to the water and I'll smelt them for you there. The one of whom I say to you, "This one is to go with you", he's to go with you. Everyone that I say to you, "This one's not to go with you", he's not to go.'
[5]So he got the company to go down to the water. Yahweh said to Gid'on, 'Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue as a dog laps, you're to place apart; and everyone who bends down on his knees to drink.' [6]The number of people who lapped with their hand into their mouth was 300. All the rest of the company bent down on their knees to drink water. [7]Yahweh said to Gid'on, 'With the 300 men who were lapping I shall deliver you and give Midyan into your hand, while the entire company are to go each individual to his place.' [8]So they got the company's provisions in their hand, and their horns, while he sent off every Yisra'elite, each one to his tents, but kept strong hold of the 300 men.
The Midyanite camp was below him in the vale. [9]That night Yahweh said to him, 'Set off, go down against the camp, because I've given it into your hand. [10]If you're afraid to go down, you yourself go down to the camp with Purah your boy [11]and listen to what they speak of, and afterwards your hands will be strong and you'll go down against the camp.' So he himself went down with Purah his boy to the edge of where the men organized into companies were in the camp. [12]Midyan, Amaleq and all the Easterners were lying in the vale like a locust swarm in their large number, and there was no counting their camels, like the sea on the seashore in their large number.

The man with a dream

[13]Gid'on came, and there, a man was recounting a dream to his neighbour. He said, 'Here, I had a dream. There, a loaf of barley bread was rolling against the Midyanite camp. It came to a tent and struck it down, and it fell. It turned it over, upside down. The tent fell.' [14]His neighbour answered, 'This is nothing but the sword of Gid'on ben Yo'ash, the Yisra'elite. God has given Midyan and the entire camp into his hand.' [15]When Gid'on heard the recounting of the dream and its explaining, he bowed low. He went back to the Yisra'elite camp and said, 'Set off, because Yahweh has given the Midyanite camp into your hand.'
[16]He divided the 300 men into three units and put horns into the hand of each of them, with empty pitchers and torches inside the pitchers. [17]He said to them, 'Look at me and do the same. Here am I, coming against the edge of the camp. As I do, so you're to do. [18]I'll blow on my horn, I and everyone who's with me, and you're to blow on your horns, as well, round the entire camp, and you're to say, "Yahweh's and Gid'on's!"'
[19]So Gid'on and the 300 men who were with him came against the edge of the camp at the start of the middle watch. They had only then actually set up the watchmen. They blew on the horns, with the pitchers to be smashed that were in their hand, [20]and the three units blew on their horns and broke the pitchers and took strong hold of the torches in their left hand while the horns for blowing were in their right hand. They called, 'Yahweh's sword and Gid'on's' [21]and stood each person where he was round the camp. The entire camp ran and shouted and fled. [22]The 300 horns blew and Yahweh set one person's sword against his neighbour in the entire camp. The camp fled as far as Bet Shittim, towards Tsererah, as far as the edge of Meholah Meadow near Tabbat.

Oreb and Ze'eb

[23]Yisra'elites from Naphtali, from Asher and from all Menashsheh had themselves called out, and pursued after Midyan, [24]while Gid'on sent envoys through the entire highland of Ephrayim saying, 'Go down to meet Midyan and capture their water as far as Bet Barah and the Yarden.' All the Ephrayimites had themselves called out, and they captured the water as far as Bet Barah and the Yarden. [25]They captured two Midyanite officers, Oreb and Ze'eb, and killed Oreb at Oreb's Crag and killed Ze'eb at Ze'eb's Winepress. So they pursued Midyan, and the head of Oreb and Ze'eb they brought to Gid'on from across the Yarden.
8 But the Ephrayimites said to him, 'Why did you do this thing to us, not calling for us when you went to battle against Midyan?' They argued with him strongly. [2]He said to them, 'What have I done now compared with you? Aren't Ephrayim's gleanings better than Abi'ezer's reaping? [3]Into your hand God gave the Midyanite officers Oreb and Ze'eb. What could I do compared with you?' Then their feelings against him relaxed, when he spoke this word.
[4]Gid'on came to the Yarden. He was crossing, he and the 300 men who were with him, faint as they were pursuing. [5]He said to the people of Sukkot, 'Please give us loaves of bread for the company that's after me, because they're faint and I'm pursuing after

Zebah and Tsalmunna, the Midyanite kings.' [6]The officials of Sukkot said to him, 'Is the fist of Zebah and Salmunna in your hand
now, that we should give your army bread?' [7]Gid'on said, 'Therefore, when Yahweh gives Zebah and Salmunna into my hand,
I'll thresh your flesh with wilderness thorns and with briars.'
[8]From there he went up to Penu'el and spoke to them in this same way, and the people of Penu'el answered him as the people
of Sukkot had answered. [9]So he also said to the people of Penu'el, 'When I come back with things being well, I'll demolish this
tower.'

They were my brothers

[10]Now Zebah and Tsalmunna were at Qarqor and their camp with them, some 15,000, all that was left of the entire camp of the
Easterners; the fallen were 120,000 men drawing the sword. [11]Gid'on went up the tent-dwellers road, east of Nobah and
Yogbehah, and struck down the camp when the camp was feeling confident. [12]Zebah and Tsalmunna fled and he pursued after
them. He captured the two Midyanite kings, Zebah and Tsalmunna, and made the entire camp tremble.
[13]Gid'on ben Yo'ash came back from the battle, from Heres Ascent. [14]He captured a boy from among the people of Sukkot and
questioned him, and he wrote down for him the officials of Sukkot and its elders, seventy-seven people. [15]He came to the people
of Sukkot and said, 'Here are Zebah and Tsalmunna, about whom you reviled me, saying "Is the fist of Zebah and Salmunna in
your hand, that we should give bread to your weary men?"' [16]He got the town's elders, and wilderness thorns and briars, and
taught the people of Sukkot with them. [17]The tower at Penu'el he demolished, and he killed the town's people.
[18]He said to Zebah and to Tsalmunna, 'Where are the men that you killed at Tabor?' They said, 'They were just like you, the
very appearance of a king's sons.' [19]He said, 'They were my brothers, my mother's sons. As Yahweh lives, if you had let them
live, I would not have killed you.' [20]He said to Yeter, his firstborn, 'Get up, kill them.' But the boy didn't draw his sword, because
he was afraid, because he was still a boy. [21]Zebah and Tsalmunna said, 'You yourself get up and attack us, because "As a man is,
so is his strength."' So Gid'on got up and killed Zebah and Tsalmunna, and took the crescents that were on their camels' necks.

'I'm not the hero; the hero is God'

[22]The Yisra'elites said to Gid'on, 'Rule over us, both you and your son and your grandson, because you've delivered us from
the hand of Midyan.' [23]Gid'on said to them, 'I myself won't rule over you and my son won't rule over you. Yahweh is the one
who will rule over you.'
[24]But Gid'on said to them, 'I will ask something of you. Each man, give me the earring that was his spoil' (because they had
gold earrings, because they were Yishma'e'lites). [25]They said, 'We'll certainly give them.' They spread out a coat and threw
there, each man, the earring that was his spoil. [26]The weight of the gold earrings that he asked for came to 1,700 in gold, apart
from the crescents, pendants and purple robes that were on the Midyanite kings, and apart from the collars that were on their
camels' necks. [27]Gid'on made it into a chasuble and placed it in his town, in Ophrah. All Yisra'el whored after it there. It became
a snare to Gid'on and to his household.
[28]So Midyan bowed down before the Yisra'elites. They didn't raise their head again. The region was calm for forty years in
Gid'on's time.
[29]Yerubba'al ben Yo'ash went and lived at home. [30]Gid'on had seventy sons who issued from his own body, because he had
many wives. [31]His secondary wife who was in Shekem also gave birth to a son for him; he named him Abimelek. [32]Gid'on ben
Yo'ash died in a good old age and was buried in his father Yo'ash's tomb in Ophrah of the Abi'ezrites.

The man who would be king

[33]When Gid'on died, the Yisra'elites again whored after the Masters, and they made the Pact Master into god for themselves.
[34]The Yisra'elites didn't keep Yahweh their God in mind, the one who rescued them from the hand of all their enemies round
them. [35]They didn't act in commitment with the household of Yerubba'al (Gid'on) in accordance with all the good that he had
done in Yisra'el.
9 Abimelek, son of Yerubba'al, went to Shekem to his mother's brothers and spoke to them and to the entire kin-group in his
mother's ancestral household: [2]'Speak, will you, in the ears of all the Shekem landowners: "Which is better for you, seventy
men ruling over you (all the sons of Yerubba'al), or one man ruling over you? Be mindful that I am your own flesh and blood."'
[3]His mother's brothers spoke all these things about him in the ears of all the Shekem landowners. Their mind turned away to
follow Abimelek, because (they said), 'He's our brother', [4]and they gave him seventy in silver from the house of the Pact Master.
With these, Abimelek hired empty-headed and wild men and they followed him. [5]He came to his father's house in Ophrah and
killed his brothers, the sons of Yerubba'al, seventy men on one stone. But Yotam, youngest son of Yerubba'al, was left, because
he hid.
[6]All the Shekem landowners and the entire Bet Millo gathered, and went and installed Abimelek as king by the oak at the
column which was in Shekem.

A parable about leadership

[7]People told Yotam and he went and stood on top of Mount Gerizim. He lifted his voice and called to them: 'Listen to me,
Shekem landowners, so God may listen to you. [8]The trees went with resolve to anoint a king over themselves. They said to the
olive tree, "Do reign over us." [9]The olive tree said to them, "Should I leave off from my richness, I by whom people honour God

and human beings, and go to wave over the trees?” [10]So the trees said to the fig tree, “You go reign over us.” [11]The fig tree said to them, “Should I leave off from my sweetness, my good fruit, and go to wave over the trees?” [12]So the trees said to the vine, “You go reign over us.” [13]The vine said to them, “Should I leave off from my new wine, which makes God and human beings rejoice, and go to wave over the trees?”

[14]So all the trees said to the thorn bush, “You go reign over us.” [15]The thorn bush said to the trees, “If you’re going to anoint me as king over you with truthfulness, come take shelter in my shade. But if not, may fire come out of the thorn bush and devour the cedars of the Lebanon.”

[16]So now, if you’ve acted in truthfulness and integrity and made Abimelek king, and if you’ve done something good by Yerubba’al and by his household, and if you’ve acted towards him in accordance with the dealing of his hands – [17]that my father battled on your account and threw his life a distance away and rescued you from the hand of Midyan . . .

[18]But you people have risen up against my father’s household today and killed his sons, seventy men on one stone, and made Abimelek, his handmaid’s son, king over the Shekem landowners, because he’s your brother.

Ambition rebounds

[19]If you’ve acted in truthfulness and integrity with Yerubba’al and with his household this day, rejoice in Abimelek, and may he rejoice in you, too. [20]But if not, may fire come out from Abimelek and devour the Shekem landowners and Bet Millo, and may fire come out from the Shekem landowners and from Bet Millo and devour Abimelek!’ [21]Then Yotam took flight. He escaped and went to Be’er, and lived there, away from the presence of Abimelek his brother.

[22]Abimelek held office over Yisra’el for three years, [23]but God sent a bad spirit between Abimelek and the Shekem landowners, and the Shekem landowners broke faith with Abimelek, [24]so that the violence against the seventy sons of Yerubba’al might come home and so that the bloodshed be put on Abimelek their brother who killed them and on the Shekem landowners who had strengthened his hands in the killing of his brothers. [25]The Shekem landowners laid ambushes for him on the tops of the mountains and robbed anyone who passed by them on the road, and it was told Abimelek.

[26]Ga’al ben Ebed and his brothers came and passed through Shekem, and the Shekem landowners put their trust in him. [27]They went out to the fields, cut their vineyards and trod them, and made a great celebration. They came into their god’s house and ate and drank, and slighted Abimelek. [28]Ga’al ben Ebed said, ‘Who is Abimelek, and who is Shekem, that we should serve him? Isn’t he the son of Yerubba’al, and Zebul is his appointee? Serve the men of Hamor, the ancestor of Shekem! Why should we be people who serve him? [29]If only this people were in my hand! I would remove Abimelek. Someone would have said to Abimelek, “Amass your army and go out!”’

The ambush

[30]Zebul, the town official, heard the words of Ga’al ben Ebed, and his anger raged. [31]He sent envoys to Abimelek at Tormah to say, ‘Here, Ga’al ben Ebed and his brothers are coming to Shekem, and here, they’re besieging the town against you. [32]So now, set off by night, you and the company that’s with you, and make an ambush in the fields. [33]In the morning, at sunrise, you should start early and charge against the town. Here, he and the company that’s with him are going to go out against you, and you can do to him whatever your hand finds to do.’

[34]So Abimelek and the entire company that was with him set off by night and laid an ambush against Shekem in four columns. [35]Ga’al ben Ebed went out and stood at the entrance of the town gateway, and Abimelek and the company that was with him arose from the ambush.

[36]Ga’al saw the company and said to Zebul, ‘There, a company is coming down from the tops of the mountains!’ Zebul said to him, ‘You’re seeing the shadow of the mountains as if they were men.’ [37]Ga’al spoke once again and said, ‘There, a company is coming down from the centre of the land, and a company is coming from the Elon Me’onenim road!’ [38]Zebul said to him, ‘Where then is your mouth with which you say, “Who is Abimelek that we should serve him?” This is the company that you rejected, isn’t it! Please go out now, and do battle against it!’

[39]So Ga’al went out before the Shekem landowners and battled against Abimelek, [40]but Abimelek pursued him and he fled from before him. Many people fell, run through, as far as the entrance of the gateway. [41]Abimelek stayed in Arumah, but Zebul drove out Ga’al and his brothers from living in Shekem.

Undone by a woman

[42]Next day, the people went out to the fields, and Abimelek was told. [43]He got the company, divided it into three columns and set an ambush in the fields. He looked: there was the people coming out from the town. He set upon them and struck them down. [44]Abimelek and the columns that were with him charged and stood at the entrance of the town gateway. The other two columns charged against everyone who was in the fields and struck them down, [45]while Abimelek was battling against the town all that day. He captured the town and killed the people that were in it, demolished the town and sowed it with salt.

[46]All the Shekem Tower landowners heard, and came into a tunnel at the house of the Pact God. [47]It was told Abimelek that all the Shekem Tower landowners had collected together. [48]Abimelek went up Mount Tsalmon, he and the entire company that was with him. Abimelek got axes in his hand, cut a tree branch, lifted it and put it on his shoulder. He said to the company that was with him, ‘What you have seen I did, hurry, do like me.’ [49]The entire company also cut a branch each, followed Abimelek, placed them against the tunnel and set fire to the tunnel over them. All the people in the Shekem Tower also died, some thousand men and women.

[50]Abimelek then went to Tebets, camped against Tebets and captured it. [51]There was a strong tower inside the town and all the

men and women, all the town's landowners, fled there, shut themselves in and went up on to the tower roof. [52]Abimelek came right up to the tower and battled against it, and drew up close to the tower entrance to burn it in fire. [53]But a woman threw an upper millstone on Abimelek's head and broke his skull. [54]He quickly called to the boy carrying his things and said to him, 'Draw your sword and put me to death, so they don't say of me, "A woman killed him."' So his boy thrust him through, and he died.
[55]The Yisra'elites saw that Abimelek was dead, and went each man to his place.

Peace for a while

[56]So God turned back Abimelek's bad action which he had undertaken towards his father, in killing his seventy brothers, [57]and God turned back on their head all the bad action of the people of Shekem. The slight by Yotam son of Yerubba'al came true for them.

10 After Abimelek, there arose to deliver Yisra'el Tola ben Pu'ah, son of Dodo, a Yissakarite. He was living in Shamir in the highland of Ephrayim. [2]He exercised authority for Yisra'el for twenty-three years. He died, and was buried in Shamir.
[3]After him, there arose Ya'ir the Gil'adite. He exercised authority for Yisra'el for twenty-two years. [4]He had thirty sons riding on thirty donkey colts, and he had thirty towns (they call them Ya'ir's Villages until this day) which were in the region of Gil'ad. [5]Ya'ir died and was buried in Qamon.
[6]But the Yisra'elites again did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes and served the Masters, the Ashtars, the gods of Aram, the gods of Tsidon, the gods of Mo'ab, the gods of the Ammonites and the gods of the Pelishtites. They abandoned Yahweh and did not serve him. [7]Yahweh's anger raged against Yisra'el and he surrendered them into the hand of the Pelishtites and into the hand of the Ammonites. [8]They shattered and crushed the Yisra'elites that year – for eighteen years, all the Yisra'elites who were across the Yarden in the Amorites' country, which was in Gil'ad. [9]The Ammonites also crossed the Yarden to battle against Yehudah, against Binyamin and against the household of Ephrayim. It put great pressure on Yisra'el.
[10]So the Yisra'elites cried out to Yahweh: 'We've done wrong against you, because we've abandoned our God and served the Masters.'

God finds it hard to be tough

[11]Yahweh said to the Yisra'elites, 'Isn't it the case that from the Misrayimites, from the Amorites, from the Ammonites, from the Pelishtites . . . [12]And the Tsidonites and Amaleq and Ma'on, they afflicted you, and you cried out to me and I delivered you from their hand. [13]But you – you abandoned me and served other gods. Therefore I won't deliver you again. [14]Go and cry out to the gods that you've chosen. They can deliver you in your time of pressure.'
[15]But the Yisra'elites said to Yahweh, 'We've done wrong. You yourself, act towards us in accordance with what's good in your eyes. Only please rescue us this day.' [16]They removed the foreign gods from among them and served Yahweh, and his heart was overwhelmed by Yisra'el's oppression.
[17]The Ammonites had themselves called out and camped in Gil'ad, and the Yisra'elites gathered and camped at The Watchtower. [18]The company (Gil'ad's officers) said, one to his neighbour, 'Who is the man who will start battling against the Ammonites? He's to be head over all the people who live in Gil'ad.'

11 Now Yiphtah the Gil'adite was a forceful strong man, but he was the son of a whore. Gil'ad fathered Yiphtah, [2]but Gil'ad's wife gave birth to sons for him, and his wife's sons grew up and drove Yiphtah out. They said to him, 'You're to have no domain of your own in our father's household, because you're the son of another woman.' [3]So Yiphtah ran away from before his brothers and lived in the region of Good. Empty-headed people collected together to Yiphtah and went out with him.
[4]After a time, the Ammonites battled with Yisra'el, [5]and when the Ammonites battled with Yisra'el, the Gil'adite elders went to get Yiphtah from the region of Good. [6]They said to Yiphtah, 'Come, will you, and be our commander, so we can battle against the Ammonites.'

An invitation Yiphtah can't refuse

[7]Yiphtah said to the Gil'adite elders, 'You're the people who were hostile to me and drove me out of my father's household, aren't you. So why have you come to me now when things are pressing for you?' [8]The Gil'adite elders said to Yiphtah, 'That's why we've come back to you now, so you can go with us and battle against the Ammonites, and you will be head of all the people living in Gil'ad for us.'
[9]Yiphtah said to the Gil'adite elders, 'If you're bringing me back to battle against the Ammonites and Yahweh gives them over before me, I myself will be your head.' [10]The Gil'adite elders said to Yiphtah, 'Yahweh himself will be listening between us if we don't act in accordance with your word, just so.' [11]So Yiphtah went with the Gil'adite elders, and the people made him head and commander over them. Yiphtah spoke all his words before Yahweh at The Watchtower.
[12]Yiphtah sent envoys to the Ammonites' king to say, 'What is between me and you that you've come against me to battle against my land?' [13]The Ammonites' king said to Yiphtah's envoys, 'Yisra'el took my land when it went up from Misrayim, from the Armon as far as the Yabboq, and as far as the Yarden. So now do give it back peacefully.'
[14]Yiphtah once again sent envoys to the Ammonites' king. [15]He said to him, 'Yiphtah has said this: "Yisra'el didn't take Mo'ab's land or the Ammonites' land, [16]because when they went up from Misrayim, Yisra'el went through the wilderness as far as the Reed Sea, then came to Qadesh. [17]Yisra'el sent envoys to the king of Edom to say, 'Please may I pass through your country', but the king of Edom didn't listen. It also sent to the king of Mo'ab and he wasn't willing. Yisra'el lived at Qadesh, [18]then went through the wilderness and went round the country of Edom and the country of Mo'ab, and came east of the country

of Mo'ab. They camped across the Arnon and they didn't come inside Mo'ab's border, because Mo'ab's border is the Arnon.

How Yisra'el tried to be peaceable

[19]Then Yisra'el sent envoys to Sihon king of the Amorites, king of Heshbon. Yisra'el said to him, 'Please may I pass through your country to get to my place.' [20]But Sihon didn't trust Yisra'el to pass through his border. Sihon gathered his entire company and camped at Yahats, and battled with Yisra'el. [21]But Yahweh the God of Yisra'el gave Sihon and his entire company into Yisra'el's hand, and they struck them down. So Yisra'el took possession of the entire country of the Amorites living in that country. [22]They took possession of the entire border of the Amorites from the Arnon as far as the Yabboq, and from the wilderness to the Yarden.

[23]So now, Yahweh the God of Yisra'el – he dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Yisra'el, and are you to dispossess it? [24]Won't you possess what Kemosh your god enabled you to possess, and we'll possess all that Yahweh our God dispossessed from before us? [25]And are you now so much better than Balaq ben Tsippor, king of Mo'ab? Did he argue at all with Yisra'el or battle at all with them?

[26]While Yisra'el has been living in Heshbon and in its daughter-towns, in Ar'or and in its daughter-towns, and in all the towns that are on the sides of the Arnon for 300 years, why haven't you rescued them during this time? [27]I for my part haven't wronged you, but you for your part are dealing badly with me by battling against me. May Yahweh, who exercises authority, decide authoritatively today between the Yisra'elites and the Ammonites."'

[28]The Ammmonites' king didn't listen to the words of Yiphtah which he sent to him. [29]Then Yahweh's spirit came on Yiphtah and he passed through Gil'ad and Menashsheh, passed Watchtower in Gil'ad and from Watchtower in Gil'ad passed on to the Ammonites.

The man whose promise makes the blood run cold

[30]Yiphtah made a pledge to Yahweh: 'If you do actually give the Ammonites into my hand, [31]then the one coming out to meet me, who comes out of the doors of my house when I come back from the Ammonites with things being well, will be Yahweh's. I shall offer this one up as a burnt offering.'

[32]So Yiphtah passed on to the Ammonites to do battle against them, and Yahweh gave them into his hand. [33]He struck them down from Aro'er as far as when you come to Minnit, twenty towns, and as far as Keramim Meadow, in a very great rout. So the Ammonites bowed down before the Yisra'elites.

[34]Yiphtah came home to The Watchtower, and there was his daughter coming out to meet him with a tambourine and with dancing. There was just her, an only child; apart from her he had no son or daughter. [35]When he saw her, he tore his clothes and said, 'Oh, my daughter, you've bent me down, bent me down; you yourself have become someone bringing disaster on me. I opened my mouth myself to Yahweh. I can't go back.' [36]She said to him, 'Father, you opened your mouth to Yahweh. Do to me as it came from your mouth, after Yahweh has performed full redress for you from your enemies, the Ammonites.'

[37]She said to her father, 'May this thing be done for me. Let me go for two months so I can walk and go down on the mountains and bewail my girlhood, I and my friends.' [38]He said, 'Go', and sent her for two months. She and her friends went and bewailed her girlhood on the mountains. [39]At the end of two months she came back to her father and he performed the pledge that he had made in connection with her. She had not had sex with a man.

It became a decree in Yisra'el: [40]from time to time Yisra'elite girls would go to commemorate the daughter of Yiphtah the Gil'adite, for four days in the year.

Shibboleth

12 Then the Ephrayimites had themselves called out, crossed to Tsaphon and said to Yiphtah, 'Why did you cross over to battle against the Ammonites and not call for us to go with you? We'll burn your house in fire over you.' [2]Yiphtah said to them, 'I was involved in an argument, my people and the Ammonites, seriously. I called out to you and you didn't deliver me from their hand. [3]I saw that you were not a deliverer and I took my life in the palm of my hand and passed over to the Ammonites, and Yahweh gave them into my hand. So why have you gone up against me this day to do battle against me?'

[4]Yiphtah collected all the Gil'adites and did battle with Ephrayim. The Gil'adites struck Ephrayim down, because they said, 'You're Ephrayimite escapees, Gil'ad within Ephrayim – within Menashsheh.' [5]Gil'ad captured Ephrayim's Yarden crossings, and when Ephrayimite escapees would say, 'I want to cross', the Gil'adites said to him, 'Are you an Ephrayimite?', and he said, 'No'. [6]They then said to him, 'Say *shibbolet*, please', and he said *sibbolet*, and couldn't speak in that way. So they took hold of him and killed him by the Yarden crossings. Forty-two thousand Ephrayimites fell at that time.

[7]Yiphtah exercised authority for Yisra'el for six years. Then Yiphtah the Gil'adite died, and was buried in the towns of Gil'ad.

[8]After him, Ibtsan from Bet Lehem exercised authority for Yisra'el. [9]He had thirty sons and thirty daughters whom he sent off abroad, and he brought in thirty girls for his sons from abroad. He exercised authority for Yisra'el for seven years. [10]Ibtsan died, and was buried in Bet Lehem.

[11]After him, Elon the Zebulunite exercised authority for Yisra'el. He exercised authority for Yisra'el for ten years. [12]Elon the Zubulunite died, and was buried in Ayyalon in the region of Zebulun.

[13]After him, Abdon ben Hillel the Pir'atonite exercised authority for Yisra'el. [14]He had forty sons and thirty grandsons, riding on seventy donkeys. He exercised authority for Yisra'el for eight years. [15]Abdon ben Hillel the Pir'atonite died, and was buried in Pir'aton in the region of Ephrayim, in the highland of the Amaleqites.

Entertaining angels unawares

13 The Yisra'elites again did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes and Yahweh gave them into the hand of the Pelishtites for forty years.
[2]There was a certain man from Tsor'ah, from the kin-group of Dan. His name was Manoah. His wife was infertile; she had not given birth. [3]Yahweh's envoy appeared to the woman and said to her, 'Here, please, you're infertile, you haven't given birth, but you're going to get pregnant and give birth to a son. [4]So now keep watch, please, so you don't drink wine or liquor and don't eat anything taboo, [5]because here, you're going to get pregnant and give birth to a son, and no razor is to go up on to his head, because the boy is to be a consecrated person for God from the womb. He's the one who will start to deliver Yisra'el from the hand of the Pelishtites.'
[6]The woman came and said to her husband, 'A supernatural man came to me; his appearance was like that of a divine envoy, very awe-inspiring. I didn't ask him where he was from and he didn't tell me his name. [7]He said to me, "Here, you're going to get pregnant and give birth to a son. So now don't drink wine or liquor and don't eat anything taboo, because the boy's to be a consecrated person for God from the womb until the day of his death."'
[8]Manoah entreated Yahweh: 'Pardon me, Lord, may the supernatural man whom you sent please come to us again and instruct us what we're to do for the boy who's to be born?' [9]God listened to Manoah's voice, and God's envoy again came to the woman. She was sitting in the fields and Manoah her husband was not with her. [10]The woman hurried and ran and told her husband, and said to him, 'There, the man who came that day has appeared to me.'

A logical woman

[11]Manoah got up and followed his wife. He came to the man and said to him, 'Are you the man who spoke to the woman?' He said, 'I am.' [12]Manoah said, 'May your words come true now! What will be the rule for the boy and the work for him?' [13]Yahweh's envoy said to Manoah, 'The woman is to keep watch in connection with everything that I said. [14]Of anything that comes from the grapevine she's not to eat. Wine and liquor she's not to drink. Anything taboo she's not to eat. Everything that I ordered her, she's to keep watch.'
[15]Manoah said to Yahweh's envoy, 'We'll please hold you back and prepare a kid goat from the flock before you.' [16]Yahweh's envoy said to Manoah, 'If you hold me back, I won't eat of your meal, but if you make a burnt offering, you may offer it up for Yahweh' (because Manoah didn't know that it was Yahweh's envoy). [17]Manoah said to Yahweh's envoy, 'What is your name? When your words come true, we will honour you.' [18]Yahweh's envoy said to him, 'Why is it that you ask my name when it's extraordinary?'
[19]Manoah got a kid goat from the flock and a grain offering and offered them up on a crag for Yahweh, and he did something extraordinary as Manoah and his wife were looking. [20]When the flame went up from on the altar to the heavens, Yahweh's envoy went up in the altar flame as Manoah and his wife were looking. They fell on their faces to the earth. [21]Yahweh's envoy didn't appear ever again to Manoah and his wife.
Then Manoah knew that it had been Yahweh's envoy. [22]Manoah said to his wife, 'We'll die, we'll die, because we've seen God!' [23]His wife said to him, 'If Yahweh wanted to put us to death, he wouldn't have received the burnt offering and the grain offering from our hand and he wouldn't have let us see all these things, or just now have let us hear something like this.'
[24]The woman gave birth to a son and named him Shimshon [Samson]. The boy grew, and Yahweh blessed him. [25]Yahweh's spirit started to impel him in Dan's Camp between Tsor'ah and Eshta'ol.

The right one for me

14 Shimshon went down to Timnah and saw a woman in Timnah among the Pelishtite girls. [2]He went up and told his father and his mother and said, 'I saw a woman in Timnah among the Pelishtite girls, so now, get her for me as wife.' [3]His father and his mother said to him, 'Isn't there a wife among your brothers' girls or among all my people, that you're going to take a wife from the foreskinned Pelishtites?' Shimshon said to his father, 'Get that one for me, because she's right in my eyes.' [4]His father and his mother didn't know that it stemmed from Yahweh, because he was looking for an opportunity from the Pelishtites. At that time the Pelishtites were ruling over Yisra'el.
[5]Shimshon went down to Timnah with his father and his mother and they came as far as the vineyards at Timnah. And there, a lion whelp, roaring as it met him. [6]Yahweh's spirit thrust itself on to him and he tore it apart as one might tear apart a kid. There was nothing in his hand. He didn't tell his father and his mother what he'd done.
[7]He went down and spoke to the woman. She was right in Shimshon's eyes. [8]He went back some time later to get her, and he turned aside to see the remains of the lion. There, a swarm of bees was in the lion's corpse, with honey. [9]He scraped it out into his palms and went on, eating it. He went to his father and to his mother and gave them some, and they ate it. He didn't tell them that he had scraped the honey from the lion's corpse.
[10]His father went down to the woman and Shimshon made a banquet there, because that was what the young men used to do. [11]When they saw him, they got thirty good friends and they came to be with him.

The conundrum

[12]Shimshon said to them, 'I shall propound a conundrum to you, please. If you can properly explain it to me in the seven days of the banquet and solve it, I'll give you thirty shirts and thirty changes of clothing. [13]But if you can't explain it, you're to give me thirty shirts and thirty changes of clothing.' They said to him, 'Propound your conundrum and we'll listen.' [14]He said to them:

From the eater there came out something to eat,

From the vigorous there came out something sweet.

They couldn't explain the conundrum for three days.
[15]On the seventh day they said to Shimshon's wife, 'Coax your husband so he explains the conundrum for us, or else we'll burn you and your father's household in fire. Was it to dispossess us that you invited us? Wasn't it?' [16]So Shimshon's wife wailed at him and said, 'Really you dislike me. You don't love me. You propounded a conundrum to my people and you haven't explained it to me.' He said to her, 'There, I didn't explain it to my father and to my mother, and am I to explain it to you?' [17]She wailed at him for the seven days that their banquet lasted. On the seventh day he explained it to her, because she pressed him, and she explained the conundrum to the members of her people. [18]So the men of the town said to him on the seventh day, before the sun went down:

What's sweeter than honey,
What's more vigorous than a lion?

He said to them,

If you had not ploughed with my heifer
You would not have solved my conundrum!

[19]Yahweh's spirit thrust itself on to him and he went down to Ashqelon and from them he struck down thirty men. He got their strip and gave the changes of clothing to the men who had explained the conundrum. But his anger raged and he went up to his father's house. [20]Shimshon's wife came to belong to his good friend, one who had been his friend.

Shimshon's redress

15 After some time, during the time of the wheat harvest, Shimshon visited his wife with a kid goat from the flock. He said, 'I want to come in and have sex with my wife in the room', but her father wouldn't let him come in. [2]Her father said, 'I said for sure that you totally disliked her and I gave her to your good friend. Her little sister is better than her. She can be yours in place of her, can't she?' [3]Shimshon said to them, 'This time I'm free of guilt in relation to the Pelishtites when I deal badly with them!'
[4]Shimshon went and caught 300 foxes and got torches. He made them face tail to tail and put a torch between two tails, in the middle, [5]set fire to the torches and sent them off into the Pelishtites' standing grain. He burned up the stacked grain, and both the standing grain and the olive vineyard. [6]The Pelishtites said, 'Who did this?' And they said, 'Shimshon, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he took his wife and gave her to his good friend.' So the Pelishtites went up and burned her and her father in fire.
[7]Shimshon said to them, 'If you act like this, I shall definitely have redress against you, and only after shall I leave off.' [8]He struck them down, leg upon thigh, in a great rout. He then went down and lived in a cleft in Etam Rock. [9]The Pelishtites went up and camped against Yehudah and ran loose in Lehi, [10]and the Yehudahites said, 'Why have you gone up against us?' They said, 'We've gone up to bind Shimshon, to do to him as he did to us.' [11]So 3,000 men from Yehudah went down to the cleft in Etam Rock and said to Shimshon, 'Don't you acknowledge that the Pelishtites are ruling over us? So why have you done this to us?' He said to them, 'As they did to me, so I did to them.'

Jawbone

[12]They said to him, 'It's to bind you that we've gone down, to give you over into the Pelishtites' hand.' Shimshon said to them, 'Swear to me that you yourselves won't attack me.' [13]They said to him, 'No, but we'll simply bind you and give you over into their hand. We definitely won't put you to death.' So they bound him with two new ropes and got him to go up from the Rock. [14]As he came to Lehi and the Pelishtites shouted on meeting him, Yahweh's spirit thrust itself on to him and the ropes that were on his arms became like flax that burns up in fire. His bonds melted from on his hands. [15]He found a fresh donkey jawbone, put out his hand and got it, and struck down a thousand men with it. [16]Shimshon said,

With a donkey jawbone – a donkey-heap, two donkey-heaps;

With a donkey jawbone I've struck down a thousand.

[17]As he finished speaking, he threw the jawbone from his hand. He called that place Lehi ['Jawbone'] Height.
[18]He was very thirsty. He called to Yahweh and said, 'You yourself have given this great deliverance by your servant's hand. Now am I to die of thirst and fall into the hand of the foreskinned?' [19]God split the hollow that was at Lehi, and water came out from it. He drank, and his spirit came back and he revived. That's why it has been named Haqqore ['The Caller'] Spring, which is in Lehi, until this day.
[20]He exercised authority for Yisra'el in the time of the Pelishtites for twenty years.

Love actually

16 Shimshon went to Azzah and saw there a woman who was a whore, and he had sex with her. [2]Someone said to the Gazites, ‘Shimshon has come here.’ They came round and laid an ambush for him all night at the town gateway. They were still all night, saying ‘At morning light, we’ll kill him.’ [3]But Shimshon lay in bed until midnight, then got up at midnight, took hold of the doors of the town gateway and the two gateposts, pulled them out with the bar, put them on his shoulders and took them up to the top of the mountain that’s east of Hebron.

[4]After that he loved a woman in Wadi Soreq named Delilah. [5]The Pelishtites’ lords went up to her and said to her, ‘Coax him and see whereby is his great energy and whereby we can overcome him and bind him, so as to subdue him. We – we’ll each give you 1,100 in silver.’

[6]So Delilah said to Shimshon, ‘Please tell me whereby is your great energy and whereby you could be bound so as to subdue you.’ [7]Shimshon said to her, ‘If they bind me with seven fresh cords that haven’t been dried, I’d become weak. I’d be like any human being.’ [8]So the Pelishtites’ lords took up to her seven fresh cords that hadn’t been dried and she bound him with them, [9]while the ambush was sitting waiting for her in a room. She said to him, ‘Pelishtites are on you, Shimshon!’, and he snapped the tendons as a strand of fibre snaps when it smells fire. So his energy didn’t become known.

[10]Delilah said to Shimshon, ‘Here, you’ve played about with me. You’ve spoken lies to me. Now, please tell me whereby you could be bound.’ [11]He said to her, ‘If they actually bind me with new ropes with which no work has been done, I’d become weak, I’d be like any human being.’ [12]So Delilah got new ropes and bound him with them, and said to him, ‘Pelishtites are on you, Shimshon!’, while the ambush was sitting waiting in a room. He snapped them from on his arms like a thread.

He didn’t realize that Yahweh had left him

[13]Delilah said to Shimshon, ‘Until now you’ve played about with me. You’ve spoken lies to me. Tell me whereby you could be bound.’ He said to her, ‘If you weave seven braids from my head with the web.’ [14]She pinned it with a peg and said to him, ‘Pelishtites are on you, Shimshon!’ He woke up from his sleep and pulled out the peg (the loom) and the web.

[15]She said to him, ‘How can you say “I love you” when your mind isn’t with me? These three times you’ve played about with me and not told me whereby is your great energy.’ [16]Because she pressed him with her words all the time and begged him, and his spirit was tired to death, [17]he told her everything in his mind. He said to her, ‘No razor has gone up on my head, because I’ve been a consecrated person for God from my mother’s womb. If my hair were cut, my energy would depart from me and I’d be weak. I’d be like any human being.’ [18]Delilah saw that he had told her everything in his mind, and she sent and called for the Pelishtites’ lords: ‘Come up this time, because he’s told me everything in his mind.’ The Pelishtites’ lords went up to her and took up the silver in their hand.

[19]She got him to go to sleep on her lap, and called for a man and cut off the seven braids on his head. She started to humble him, and his energy departed from him. [20]She said, ‘Pelishtites are on you, Shimshon!’ He woke up from his sleep and said, ‘I’ll go out as at other times and shake myself free.’ He didn’t know that Yahweh had departed from him.

[21]The Pelishtites took hold of him and gouged out his eyes. They took him down to Azzah and bound him in copper shackles, and he became a grinder in the prison.

But Shimshon’s hair began to grow again

[22]But the hair on his head started to grow, when it had been cut off.

[23]Now the Pelishtites’ lords gathered to offer a great sacrifice for Dagan their god, and for a celebration. They said, ‘Our god has given Shimshon, our enemy, into our hand.’ [24]The people saw him and praised their god, because (they said) ‘Our god has given our enemy into our hand, the one who wasted our country and multiplied the number of us run through.’ [25]When their heart felt good, they said ‘Call for Shimshon. He must make fun for us.’ So they called for Shimshon from the prison house and he entertained them.

They stood him between the pillars, [26]and Shimshon said to the boy who had a strong hold of him by the hand, ‘Let me be and let me feel the pillars that the house depends on, so I can lean on them.’ [27]The house was full of men and women. All the Pelishtites’ lords were there. On the roof were some 3,000 men and women watching Shimshon, making fun.

[28]Shimshon called to Yahweh and said, ‘My Lord Yahweh, please be mindful of me. Please just this once, God, make me strong so I can take redress from the Pelishtites, redress for one of my two eyes.’ [29]And Shimshon grasped the two middle pillars that the house was established on and leaned on them, one with his right hand and one with his left. [30]Shimshon said, ‘I myself can die with the Pelishtites’, and he pushed energetically. The house fell on the lords and on the entire company that was in it. The people whom he put to death when he died were more than he put to death when he lived.

[31]His brothers and his father’s entire household went down, lifted him, took him up, and buried him between Tsor’ah and Eshta’ol in the grave of Manoah his father. He had exercised authority for Yisra’el for twenty years.

Everyone did what was all right in their own eyes

17 There was a man from the highland of Ephrayim; his name was Mikah. [2]He said to his mother, ‘The 1,100 in silver that were taken from you, and you uttered a curse and also said it in my ears: here, the silver is with me. I’m the one who took it.’ His mother said, ‘May my son be blessed by Yahweh.’ [3]He gave back the 1,100 in silver to his mother, and his mother said ‘I’m definitively making the silver sacred for Yahweh from my hand for my son to make a statue and a cast image. I now give it back to you.’ [4]So he gave the silver back to his mother and she got 200 in silver and gave it to a smith. He made a statue and a cast image, and it was in Mikah’s house.

[5]This man Mikah had a house of God. He made a chasuble and effigies, and commissioned one of his sons and he became

priest for him. [6]At that time there was no king in Yisra'el. An individual would do what was all right in his own eyes. [7]But there was a boy from Bet Lehem in Yehudah, from the clan of Yehudah. He was a Levite and had been residing there, [8]but this individual went from the town, from Bet Lehem in Yehudah, to reside wherever he could find somewhere, and he came to the highland of Ephrayim, as far as the house of Mikah, as he made his way. [9]Mikah said to him, 'Where do you come from?' He said to him, 'I'm a Levite from Bet Lehem in Yehudah but I'm going so as to reside wherever I can find somewhere.' [10]Mikah said to him, 'Stay with me. You'll be a father and a priest for me. I'll give you ten in silver a year, a set of clothes and your living.' So the Levite went. [11]The Levite agreed to live with the man, and the boy became to him like one of his sons.

[12]So Mikah commissioned the Levite, and the boy became priest for him. He was in Mikah's household. [13]Mikah said, 'Now I know that Yahweh will be good to me, because the Levite has become priest for me.'

Desperate Dan

18 At that time there was no king in Yisra'el, and at that time the clan of Dan was looking for a domain for itself to live in, because until that day nothing had fallen to it as a domain among Yisra'el's clans.

[2]The Danites sent from their kin-group five men from their total number, men of ability, from Tsor'ah and from Eshta'ol, to investigate the country and search it out. So they said to them, 'Go and search out the country', and they came to the highland of Ephrayim, as far as Mikah's house, and stayed the night there.

[3]When they were near Mikah's house and recognized the young Levite's accent they turned aside there and said to him, 'Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? What are you here for?' [4]He said to them, 'Mikah acted like this and like this for me. He hired me and I became priest for him.' [5]They said to him, 'Please ask of God so we can know if the journey on which we're going will be successful.' [6]The priest said to them, 'Go, things will be well. The journey on which you're going is in front of Yahweh.'

[7]The five men went and came to Layish. They saw the people that was within it, living in confidence in accordance with the rule of the Tsidonites, calm and confident, with no one in the region possessing them by force, bringing shame regarding anything; though they were far away from the Tsidonites and had nothing to do with anyone.

[8]So they came to their brothers in Tsor'ah and Eshta'ol, and their brothers said to them, 'What did you find?' [9]They said, 'Set off, let's go up against them, because we've looked at the region: there, it's very good, and you're sitting still! Don't be slow to go, to come and take possession of the region. [10]When you come, you'll come to a people that feels confident, and the region is wide on both sides. Because God has given it into your hand, a place where there's no lack of anything that's in the earth.'

The unfortunate Mikah

[11]So 600 men of the Danite clan from Tsor'ah and Eshta'ol, wrapped round with battle equipment, moved on from there [12]and went up and camped in Ye'arim Township in Yehudah (for that reason they call that place 'Dan's Camp' until this day – there, it's west of Ye'arim Township). [13]They passed on from there to the highland of Ephrayim and came as far as Mikah's house. [14]The five men who had gone to investigate the region of Layish said to their brothers, 'Do you know that in these houses there is a chasuble and effigies and a statue and a cast image? Now acknowledge what you're to do.'

[15]They turned aside there and came into the young Levite's house at Mikah's house and asked him whether things were well with him, [16]while 600 men wrapped round with battle equipment were standing at the entrance of the gateway (the men who were from the Danites). [17]The five men who had gone to investigate the country went up, came in there, took the statue, the chasuble, the effigies and the cast image, while the priest was standing at the entrance of the gateway, with the 600 men wrapped round with battle equipment.

[18]When these men came into Mikah's house and took the statue with the chasuble, the effigies and the cast image, the priest said to them, 'What are you doing?' [19]They said to him, 'Quiet. Put your hand on your mouth. Go with us and become a father and a priest for us. Is it better for you to be a priest for the household of one man or to be a priest for a clan, a kin-group in Yisra'el?'

[20]The priest's heart felt good, so he got the chasuble, the effigies and the cast image, and came among the company. [21]They turned their face and went, and put the little ones, the livestock and the valuables before them.

The unfortunate people of Layish

[22]When they had gone a distance from Mikah's house, the men who were in the households that were near Mikah's house had themselves called out, caught up with the Danites [23]and called to the Danites. They turned round and said to Mikah, 'What's the matter with you, that you've had yourself called out?' [24]He said, 'You took my gods that I made, and the priest, and you went. What do I still have? And you say to me, "What's the matter with you?"' [25]The Danites said to him, 'Don't make your voice heard among us, or men who are fierce in spirit may come upon you and gather up your life and the life of your household.'

[26]So the Danites went on their way. Mikah saw that they were stronger than him, turned his face and went back to his house, [27]while they took what Mikah had made and the priest that he had. They came to Layish, to a people calm and confident, and struck them down with the mouth of the sword, and burned their town in fire. [28]There was no one to rescue because it was far away from Tsidon and they had nothing to do with anyone (it was in the vale that belonged to Bet-rehob).

They built up the town and lived in it, [29]and named the town Dan, after the name of Dan, their ancestor, who had been born to Yisra'el (the town's name was Layish originally, however). [30]The Danites set up the statue for themselves, and Yehonatan ben Gershom, son of Mosheh, he and his sons, were priests for the clan of Dan until the time of the country's exile. [31]They put in place for themselves Mikah's statue that he had made, the entire time that the house of God was at Shiloh.

The broken marriage that might recover

19 At that time, when there was no king in Yisra'el, a Levite individual residing in the remote parts of the highland of Ephrayim
got himself a woman as a secondary wife from Bet Lehem in Yehudah, [2]but his wife whored against him and went from
being with him to her father's household in Bet Lehem in Yehudah, and she was there for a full four months. [3]Her husband set off
and followed her to speak to her heart to get her to come back. His boy and a pair of donkeys were with him.
She let him come into her father's house, and the girl's father saw him and rejoiced to meet him. [4]His father-in-law, the girl's
father, took strong hold of him, and he stayed with him for three days. They ate and drank and stayed the night there.
[5]On the fourth day they started early in the morning and got up to go, but the girl's father said to his son-in-law, 'Strengthen
your heart with a bit of bread, and go afterwards.' [6]So the two of them sat down and ate together, and drank. The girl's father said
to the man, 'Do resolve to stay the night. Your heart will feel good.' [7]The man got up to go, but his father-in-law pressed him, and
he went back and stayed the night there.
[8]They started early in the morning on the fifth day to go, but the girl's father said, 'Do strengthen your heart and wait till the
day declines', and the two of them ate. [9]The man got up to go, he and his wife and his boy, but his father-in-law, the girl's father,
said to him, 'Here, please, the day is slackening towards evening. Please stay the night. Here, it's the time of day for spreading
tents. Stay the night here. Your heart will feel good, and you can start early on your way tomorrow and go to your tent.'

A foreign town won't be safe?

[10]The man was not willing to stay the night, and he got up and went. He came as far as in front of Yebus (i.e. Yerushalaim).
With him were a pair of laden donkeys, and his wife was with him. [11]As they were near Yebus and the day had worn far on, the
boy said to his lord, 'Come on, please let's turn aside into this town of the Yebusites and stay the night in it.' [12]His lord said to
him, 'We won't turn aside into a foreign town where there aren't any Yisra'elites. We'll pass on as far as Gib'ah.'
[13]So he said to his boy, 'Come on, we'll get near one of the places and stay the night in Gib'ah or in The Height.' [14]So they
passed on, and as they went, the sun set on them beside Gib'ah which belongs to Binyamin, [15]and they turned aside there to come
in to stay the night in Gib'ah.
They came in and sat in the town square, but there was no one gathering them into his house to stay the night. [16]But there, an
old man came in from his work, from the fields, in the evening. The man was from the highland of Ephrayim; he was a resident in
Gib'ah, while the men of the place were Binyaminites. [17]He lifted his eyes and saw the man on a journey, in the town square.
The old man said, 'Where are you going and where do you come from?' [18]He said to him, 'We're passing through from Bet-
lehem in Yehudah as far as the remote parts of the highland of Ephrayim. I'm from there but I went as far as Bet Lehem in
Yehudah and I'm going to Yahweh's house. But there's no one gathering me into his house. [19]Our donkeys have got both straw
and fodder and I and your handmaid and the boy with your servants have also got bread and wine. There's no lack of anything.'
[20]The old man said, 'Welcome to you. All your needs are definitely my responsibility. You're definitely not to stay the night in
the square.'

The horrific ending

[21]So he brought him into his house and fed the donkeys, and they bathed their feet and ate and drank. [22]While they were
making their heart feel good, there, men from the town, scoundrels, surrounded the house, banging on the door. They said to the
man who was the master of the house, the old man, 'Bring out the man who came to your house, so we can have sex with him.'
[23]The man who was the master of the house went out to them and said to them, 'No, my brothers, don't do something so bad,
will you, after this man has come to my house. Don't perform this villainy. [24]Here is my daughter, a young girl, and his wife. I'll
bring them out to you, please. Humble them. Do to them what's good in your eyes. But to this man you will not perform this
villainy.'
[25]The men were not willing to listen to him, so the man took strong hold of his wife and made her go out to them, outside. They
had sex with her and acted abusively to her all night until morning, and sent her off as dawn came up. [26]The woman came as
morning turned its face and fell at the entrance of the man's house where her lord was, until daylight.
[27]Her lord got up in the morning, opened the doors of the house and went out to go on his journey, and there was the woman
who was his secondary wife, fallen at the entrance of the house, her hands on the threshold. [28]He said to her, 'Get up, let's go.'
There was no response, so he got her on to the donkey.
The man set off and went to his own place. [29]He came to his house and got a knife, took strong hold of his wife, cut her up limb
by limb into twelve parts and sent her off through Yisra'el's entire border. [30]Everyone who saw said, 'Such a thing hasn't
happened and hasn't been seen from the day the Yisra'elites went up from the country of Misrayim until this day. Apply yourself
to this. Take counsel. Speak.'

The outrage

20 All the Yisra'elites went out and the assembly congregated as one person, from Dan as far as Be'er Sheba and the region of
Gil'ad, to Yahweh at The Watchtower. [2]The cornerstones of the entire people, all Yisra'el's clans, took their stand as the
congregation of God's people, 400,000 men on foot, drawing a sword. [3]The Binyaminites heard that the Yisra'elites had gone up
to The Watchtower.
The Yisra'elites said, 'Speak: how did this bad thing happen?' [4]The man who was a Levite, the husband of the woman who had
been killed, said, 'I came, I and my secondary wife, to Gib'ah which belongs to Binyamin, to stay the night. [5]The landowners in

Gib'ah set upon me and surrounded the house against me at night. They thought about killing me and they humbled my wife, and she died. [6]So I took hold of my wife and cut her in pieces, and sent her off through every area in Yisra'el's domain, because they had committed a deliberate wickedness that's an act of villainy in Yisra'el. [7]Here, all you Yisra'elites, come up with your word, your counsel, here and now!'

[8]The entire company got up as one man, saying 'We won't go, not one of us, to his tent; we won't depart, not one of us, to his home. [9]This is the thing that we will now do to Gib'ah, against it, by lot. [10]We'll get ten men per hundred for all Yisra'el's clans, a hundred per thousand, a thousand per ten thousand, to get provisions for the company, to take action by going to Geba in Binyamin in accordance with the total villainy that it's done in Yisra'el.'

The redress that misfires

[11]So all the Yisra'elites gathered against the town, united as one man. [12]The Yisra'elite clans sent men through all the Binyaminite clans, saying 'What is this bad thing that has happened among you? [13]So now give us the scoundrels who are in Gib'ah. We'll put them to death and burn away what is bad from Yisra'el.' But the Binyaminites were not willing to listen to the voice of their brothers, the Yisra'elites, [14]and the Binyaminites gathered from the towns to Gib'ah to go out to do battle with the Yisra'elites.

[15]That day the Binyaminites registered from the towns 26,000 men drawing a sword, apart from the people living in Gib'ah, with 700 picked men registered [16]from this entire company, 700 picked men restricted in their right hand, each one able to sling a stone at a hair and not go wrong.

[17]The Yisra'elites apart from Binyamin registered 400,000 men drawing a sword, each one a man of battle. [18]They set off and went up to Bet-el and asked of God: the Yisra'elites said, 'Who's to go up for us first for the battle with the Binyaminites?' Yahweh said, 'Yehudah first'. [19]The Yisra'elites set off in the morning and camped against Gib'ah.

[20]So the Yisra'elites went out to do battle with Binyamin. The Yisra'elites lined up for battle with them at Gib'ah, [21]but the Binyaminites went out from Gib'ah and devastated Yisra'el that day, 22,000 men to the ground. [22]The company (the Yisra'elites) summoned up its strength and again lined up for battle in the place where they had lined up the previous day. [23]The Yisra'elites went up and wailed before Yahweh until the evening and asked of Yahweh, 'Shall we go up again to battle with the descendants of Binyamin my brother?' and Yahweh said, 'Go up against him.' [24]So the Yisra'elites drew near to the Binyaminites on the second day, [25]but Binyamin came out from Gib'ah to meet them on the second day and devastated the Yisra'elites, 18,000 more to the ground, all these men drawing a sword.

The ambush that succeeds

[26]All the Yisra'elites and the entire company went up and came to Bet-el. They wailed and sat there before Yahweh and fasted that day until the evening, and offered up burnt offerings and well-being sacrifices before Yahweh. [27]The Yisra'elites asked of Yahweh (God's pact chest was there at that time [28]and Pinhas son of El'azar son of Aharon was standing before him at that time), 'Shall I go out once more to battle with the descendants of Binyamin my brother, or leave off?' Yahweh said, 'Go up, because I shall give them into your hand tomorrow.'

[29]Yisra'el put men in ambush against Gib'ah all round. [30]On the third day the Yisra'elites went up against the Binyaminites and lined up against Gib'ah as on other times, [31]and the Binyaminites came out to meet the company. They were drawn away from the town and began to strike down some of the company, run through, as on other times, on the causeways (of which one goes up to Bet-el and one to Gib'ah) in the fields, some thirty men in Yisra'el. [32]The Binyaminites said, 'They've taken a beating before us as before', but the Yisra'elites had said, 'We'll flee and draw them away from the town on to the causeways.'

[33]So while all the Yisra'elites got up from their place and lined up at Ba'al Tamar, the Yisra'elite ambush was breaking out from its place, from the Geba wilderness, [34]and 10,000 picked men from all Yisra'el came from south of Gib'ah. The battle was heavy and they didn't acknowledge that something bad was closing in on them. [35]So Yahweh defeated Binyamin before Yisra'el. That day the Yisra'elites devastated Binyamin, 25,100 men, all these drawing a sword. [36a]The Binyaminites saw that they had taken a beating.

The terrible slaughter of Binyamin

[36b]The Yisra'elites had given ground to Binyamin, because they relied on the ambush that they set against Gib'ah. [37]While one ambush quickly charged against Gib'ah, the other ambush advanced and struck down the entire town with the mouth of the sword.

[38]The set time for the Yisra'elites with the ambush was: make a great uprising of smoke go up from the town [39]and the Yisra'elites would turn about in the battle. While Binyamin started striking down some thirty men in Yisra'el, run through, because (they said) 'It's taking a terrible beating before us like the first battle', [40]when the uprising (the smoke column) started to go up from the town, Binyamin turned his face behind him, and there, the entire town had gone up into the heavens.

[41]Yisra'el circled round and Binyamin became fearful because it saw that something bad had closed in on it. [42]They turned their face before Yisra'el to the wilderness road, but the battle caught up with it, while the men from the towns were devastating it inside it. [43]They surrounded Binyamin, pursued him to Menuhah and trod him down as far as in front of Gib'ah on the east.

[44]There fell of Binyamin 18,000 that day, all these forceful men. [45]They turned their face and fled to the wilderness, to Rimmon Cliff, but on the causeways they gleaned 5,000 men, then caught up with them at Gid'om, and struck down 2,000 of them. [46]So all the fallen from Binyamin that day were 25,000 men drawing a sword, all these forceful men. [47]Six hundred men turned their face and fled to the wilderness, to Rimmon Cliff, and lived at Rimmon Cliff for four months, [48]while the Yisra'elites went back to the

Binyaminites and struck them down with the mouth of the sword – both the entire town (the people), and the animals and everything that was to be found. They also burned in fire all the towns that were to be found.

How not to save the situation

21 Now the Yisra'elites had sworn at The Watchtower, 'None of us will give his daughter to Binyamin as a wife.' [2]The company came to Bet-el and sat there before God until the evening. They lifted up their voice, and wailed and wailed, loudly. [3]They said, 'Why, Yahweh God of Yisra'el, has this happened in Yisra'el, so a clan is counted missing today from Yisra'el?'

[4]Next day the people started early and built an altar there, and offered up whole offerings and well-being sacrifices. [5]The Yisra'elites said, 'Who is there from all Yisra'el's clans that didn't come up in the congregation to Yahweh?' Because there had been a great oath regarding anyone who didn't come up to Yahweh at The Watchtower: 'He will absolutely be put to death.'

[6]So the Yisra'elites felt sorry towards Binyamin their brother and said, 'Today a clan has been cut off from Yisra'el. [7]What can we do for them, for wives for those who are left, when we have sworn by Yahweh not to give them any of our daughters as wives?'

[8]They said, 'Who is there from Yisra'el's clans who didn't go up to Yahweh at The Watchtower?' There, no one had come from Yabesh-in-Gil'ad to the camp, to the congregation; [9]the company had registered, and there was no one there from the people living in Yabesh-in-Gil'ad. [10]So the assembly sent 12,000 of the forceful men and ordered them, 'Go and strike down the people living in Yabesh-in-Gil'ad with the mouth of the sword, and the women and little ones. [11]This is the thing that you're to do: you're to devote every male and every woman who has slept with a male.'

[12]But they found from the people living in Yabesh-in-Gil'ad 400 young girls who had not had sex by sleeping with a male, and they brought them to the camp at Shiloh, which is in the country of Kena'an. [13]The entire assembly sent and spoke to the Binyaminites who were at Rimmon Cliff and called out peace to them. [14]So Binyamin came back at that time and they gave them the women whom they'd let live from the women of Yabesh-in-Gil'ad.

Everyone was doing what was all right in his own eyes

But they didn't find for them [all] in this way. [15]As the company felt sorry for Binyamin because Yahweh had made a breach in Yisra'el's clans, [16]the elders of the assembly said, 'What can we do for wives for those who are left, because the women have been annihilated from Binyamin?' [17]They said, 'An escape possession for Binyamin – a clan will not be wiped out from Yisra'el! [18]But we ourselves can't give them wives from among our daughters' (because the Yisra'elites had sworn, 'Cursed is the person who gives a wife to Binyamin').

[19]So they said, 'Here, from time to time it's Yahweh's festival at Shiloh' (which is north of Bet-el, east of the causeway going up from Bet-el to Shekem and south of Lebonah). [20]They ordered the Binyaminites, 'Go and make an ambush in the vineyards [21]and look. There, if the daughters of Shiloh go out to join in the dances, you go out of the vineyards. Each of you capture a wife for himself from the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the region of Binyamin. [22]When their fathers or their brothers come to argue with us, we'll say to them, "Be gracious to us over them, because we didn't each get his wife in the battle, because you yourselves didn't give them to them at a time when you would be liable."'

[23]The Binyaminites did so and carried off wives in accordance with their number from the dancers whom they seized. Then they went and returned to their domain, and built up the towns and lived in them.

[24]The Yisra'elites went off from there at that time, each to his clan and to his kin-group. They left from there, each to his domain.

[25]At that time there was no king in Yisra'el. Each person would do what was all right in his own eyes.

Ruth

Ruth is a short story about the aftermath of a series of calamities that befalls an Israelite family. Although Ruth herself may be the book's most prominent character, Na'omi is almost as important, and it is worth also reading the story from the angles of Elimelek, Mahlon, Kilyon, Orpah, Boaz, Obed, and other characters who are even more minor.

In the Hebrew Bible Ruth appears in the company of the Song of Songs, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther. The Jewish community reads each of these 'Five Scrolls' on one main occasion each year. Ruth is used at the Shabu'ot Festival (Pentecost), in the light of its focus on harvest. The story also provides fine examples of commitment to the Torah, and the giving of the Torah became a theme of the Shabu'ot Festival.

In the order of books in the English Bible, Ruth offers a breath of fresh air after the unpleasantness of the later stories in Judges. It contributes to the transition from Judges to 1 and 2 Samuel in another way, in that we discover at the very end of Ruth that we are reading the story of how David acquired his great-grandmother. That note adds extra significance to the fact that the book's heroine is a Moabite. Elsewhere, the Scriptures emphasize the importance of not intermarrying with people such as Moabites who could lead Israelites to serve other gods. Ruth makes explicit that foreigners who come to serve Yahweh are a different matter. Israel is always open to such foreigners. Its faith is not ethnically based.

The book presupposes a cultural context in which the men have the formal authority in society, and it tells a story about how women may nevertheless be able to take responsibility for their destiny. It makes little reference to God directly acting, and it thus reminds readers how God often works via human planning and initiative and through coincidences. And it shows how a traditional culture can provide safety nets for vulnerable people through the expectations laid on the 'restorer' (English translations often use the word *redeemer*). The restorer is a senior member of the extended family who is expected to be willing to use his resources to help members of the family get back on their feet and to restore equilibrium when things get out of order.

How Na'omi's life falls apart

1 During the time when the people who exercised authority were doing so, there was a famine in the country and a man went from Bet Lehem in Yehudah [Judah] to reside in Mo'abite country, he, his wife and his two sons. [2]The man's name was Elimelek, his wife's name was Na'omi, and his two sons' names were Mahlon and Kilyon – Ephratites from Bet Lehem in Yehudah.

So they came to Mo'abite country and they were there, [3]but Elimelek, Na'omi's husband, died. She remained, she and her two sons. [4]They took up for themselves Mo'abite wives; the name of the first was Orpah and the name of the second, Ruth. They lived there some ten years, [5]but the two of them, Mahlon and Kilyon, also died, and the woman was left without her two sons and without her husband.

[6]She set off, she and her daughters-in-law, and went back from Mo'abite country, because she had heard in Mo'abite country that Yahweh had attended to his people by giving them bread. [7]So she left the place where she was, her two daughters-in-law with her, and they went on the road to go back to the region of Yehudah.

[8]But Na'omi said to her two daughters-in-law, 'Go, get back, each one to her mother's household. May Yahweh act in commitment with you as you've acted with the dead men and with me. [9]May Yahweh grant to you that you find a place to settle down, each one in the household of her husband.' She kissed them and they lifted up their voice and cried. [10]They said to her, 'But we should go back with you to your people.'

The choice

[11]Na'omi said, 'Go back, my daughters, why should you go with me? Do I still have sons inside me so they can become husbands for you? [12]Go back, my daughters, go, because I'm too old to belong to a man. If I said there's hope for me, even if I both belonged to a man tonight and also gave birth to sons, [13]would you therefore wait until they grew up, would you therefore hold yourself back from belonging to a man? No, my daughters, because things are much more bitter for me than for you, because Yahweh's hand has gone out against me.'

[14]They lifted up their voice and cried again and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth attached herself to her. [15]So she said, 'There, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods. Go back after your sister-in-law.' [16]Ruth said, 'Don't press me to abandon you by turning back from following you, because where you go I shall go and where you stay the night I shall stay the night. Your people will be my people and your God will be my God. [17]Where you die I'll die, and there I'll be buried. So may Yahweh do to me, and so may he do more, if death divides between me and you . . .'

[18]She saw that she was showing herself firm about going with her, and she left off from speaking to her. [19]So the two of them went on until they came to Bet Lehem. When they came to Bet Lehem, the entire town was astir over them. They said, 'Is this Na'omi?' [20]She said to them, 'Don't call me Na'omi ['Lovely'], call me Mara ['Bitter'], because Shadday has made things very bitter for me. [21]I went full. Yahweh has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Na'omi when Yahweh has humbled me, when Shadday has dealt badly with me?'

She's a Mo'abite, for goodness' sake!

[22]So Na'omi went back, she and Ruth the Mo'abite her daughter-in-law with her, coming back from Mo'abite country. They came to Bet Lehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

Now Na'omi had a relative of her husband's, a forceful strong man, from Elimelek's kin-group. His name was Bo'az. [2]Ruth the

2 Mo'abite said to Na'omi, 'Please, may I go to the fields and I'll glean among the ears of grain behind someone in whose eyes I
may find grace.' She said to her, 'Go, daughter.' [3]So she went.
She came and gleaned in the fields behind the reapers and chance took her to the share in the fields belonging to Bo'az, who
was from Elimelek's kin-group. [4]And there was Bo'az, coming from Bet Lehem. He said to the reapers, 'Yahweh be with you',
and they said to him, 'Yahweh bless you.' [5]Bo'az said to his boy who was standing by the reapers, 'Who does that girl belong to?'
[6]The boy who was standing by the reapers said, 'She's a Mo'abite girl who came back with Na'omi from Mo'abite country. [7]She
said, "Please, may I glean and gather among the sheaves behind the reapers." She came and stood from then, in the morning, until
now. Her stay in the house has been short.'
[8]Bo'az said to Ruth, 'Listen, daughter, will you. You're not to go to glean in another field. No, you will not pass on from here.
Attach yourself to my girls, [9]your eyes on the field that they reap. Follow them. I've ordered the boys not to touch you, haven't I.
When you're thirsty, go to the containers and drink from what the boys draw.'

The God of coincidences

[10]She fell on her face and bowed low to the ground and said to him, 'Why have I found grace in your eyes, as you're
recognizing me, and I'm a foreigner?' [11]Bo'az answered her, 'It's been fully told me everything that you've done for your mother-
in-law after the death of your husband. You abandoned your father and your mother and the country that was your homeland and
went to a people that you had not acknowledged in previous days. [12]May Yahweh make good for your deed. May your wages be
complete from Yahweh the God of Yisra'el [Israel], under whose skirts you've come to take shelter.' [13]She said, 'May I find
grace in your eyes, sir, because you've comforted me and spoken to your maidservant's heart, and I'm not one of your
maidservants.'
[14]Bo'az said to her at the mealtime, 'Come up here and eat some of the bread and dip your bit in the vinegar.' So she sat by the
side of the reapers, he passed her the roasted grain, and she ate and was full, and she had some left over. [15]She got up to glean, and
Bo'az ordered his boys, 'She can also glean among the sheaves, and you will not put her down. [16]You can also pull some out for
her from the bundles, and abandon them and she can glean. You will not reprimand her.'
[17]She gleaned in the fields until the evening and beat out what she'd gleaned. It came to something like a barrel of barley. [18]She
picked it up and came to the town, and her mother-in-law saw what she'd gleaned, and she got out and gave her what was left over
from when she'd been full.
[19]Her mother-in-law said to her, 'Where did you glean today? Where did you work? Blessed be the man who recognized you.'
She told her mother-in-law who she had worked with and said, 'The name of the man that I worked with today was Bo'az.'

How not to leave the initiative to the man

[20]Na'omi said to her daughter-in-law, 'May he be blessed by Yahweh, who hasn't abandoned his commitment with the living
and with the dead.' Na'omi said to her, 'The man is a close relative of ours. He's one of our restorers.' [21]Ruth the Mo'abite said,
'He also said to me, "You're to attach yourself to my boys until they've finished the entire harvest that belongs to me."' [22]Na'omi
said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law, 'Daughter, it will be good that you go out with his girls, and people don't come upon you in
another field.' [23]So she attached herself to Bo'az's girls to glean until the finish of the barley harvest and the wheat harvest, and
lived with her mother-in-law.
3 Na'omi her mother-in-law said to her, 'My daughter, shouldn't I seek a place for you to settle down that will be good for you?
[2]So now, Bo'az is our relative, isn't he. You've been with his girls. Here, he's winnowing the barley on the threshing floor
tonight. [3]Have a bath, put on your make-up, put on your best clothes and go down to the threshing floor. Don't make yourself
known to the man until he's finished eating and drinking. [4]When he lies down and you know the place where he lies down, come
in and uncover his feet and lie down. He himself will tell you what you should do.' [5]She said to her, 'Everything that you say to
me, I'll do.'
[6]She went down to the threshing floor and acted in accordance with all that her mother-in-law had ordered her. [7]Bo'az ate and
drank and his heart felt good. He came to lie down at the edge of the heap. She came quietly, uncovered his feet and lay down.

The obstacle to a happy ending

[8]In the middle of the night the man gave a start and twisted round: there, a woman lying at his feet! [9]He said, 'Who are you?'
She said, 'I'm Ruth, your handmaid. You should spread your skirt over your handmaid, because you're a restorer.'
[10]He said, 'May you be blessed of Yahweh, daughter. You've made your last act of commitment better than your first in not
following the young men, whether a poor one or a wealthy one. [11]So now, my daughter, don't be afraid; all that you say I will do
for you, because everyone at my people's gateway acknowledges that you're a forceful woman. [12]But now, because it's true that
I'm a restorer, but there's also a restorer nearer than me, [13]stay the night tonight, and in the morning, if he will act as restorer,
good, he may act as restorer. But if he doesn't want to act as your restorer, I myself will act as your restorer, as Yahweh lives. Lie
down until the morning.'
[14]So she lay at his feet until the morning but got up before one person could recognize his neighbour. He said, 'It shouldn't
become known that the woman came to the threshing floor', [15]but he said, 'Bring the shawl that you have on and hold it.' She
held it and he weighed out six measures of barley and put it on her.
He went to the town, [16]and she came to her mother-in-law. She said, 'How are you, my daughter?' She told her all that the man
had done for her, [17]and said, 'He gave me these six measures of barley, because he said "Don't come to your mother-in-law
empty-handed."' [18]She said, 'Stay, my daughter, until you know how the matter falls, because the man won't relax. Rather he'll

finish the thing today.’

How not to get overextended in property ownership

4 Now Bo’az had gone up to the gateway and sat down there. And there, the restorer of whom Bo’az had spoken was passing.
He said, ‘Come over, sit down here, so-and-so.’ He turned aside and sat down. [2]He got ten men from the town’s elders and
said, ‘Sit down here’, and they sat down. [3]He said to the restorer, ‘The share in the fields that belonged to our brother, to
Elimelek: Na’omi, who has come back from Mo’abite country, is disposing of it. [4]I myself said, “I must open your ear, saying
‘Acquire it in the presence of the people who are sitting here, in the presence of the elders of my people. If you’re to act as
restorer, restore, but (if he’s not to restore) do tell me, so I may know, because there’s no one to act as restorer apart from you, but
I’m after you.’”’ He said, ‘I’ll act as restorer.’
[5]But Bo’az said, ‘On the day you acquire the fields from Na’omi’s hand and from Ruth the Mo’abite, you will have acquired
the dead man’s wife, to set up the dead man’s name over his domain.’ [6]The restorer said, ‘I can’t act as restorer for myself, or I’ll
devastate my domain. You act as restorer for yourself regarding my position as restorer, because I cannot act as restorer.’
[7]Now this is how it was formerly in Yisra’el, in connection with acting as restorer and with transfer. To make any matter firm, a
man took off his boot and gave it to his neighbour. This was the attestation process in Yisra’el. [8]So the restorer said to Bo’az,
‘Acquire it for yourself’, and took off his boot. [9]Bo’az said to the elders and the entire people, ‘You’re witnesses today that I’ve
acquired from Na’omi’s hand everything that belonged to Elimelek and everything that belonged to Kilyon and Mahlon. [10]I’ve
also acquired Ruth the Mo’abite, Mahlon’s wife, for myself as wife, to set up the dead man’s name over his domain, so the dead
man’s name is not cut off from among his brothers and from the gateway of his place. You’re witnesses today.’

How David acquired his grandfather

[11]The entire company that was at the gateway and the elders said, ‘Witnesses! May Yahweh make the woman who is coming
into your house like Rahel and like Le’ah, both of whom built up Yisra’el’s household. Act capably in Ephratah, call out a name
in Bet Lehem! [12]May your household be like the household of Perets, to whom Tamar gave birth for Yehudah, through the
offspring that Yahweh will give you through this girl.’
[13]So Bo’az got Ruth and she became his wife. He had sex with her and Yahweh enabled her to get pregnant. She gave birth to a
son, [14]and the women said to Na’omi, ‘Yahweh be blessed, who hasn’t held back a restorer for you today. May his name be called
out in Yisra’el! [15]For you he will be one who gives life back and provides for your old age, because your daughter-in-law who
loves you has borne him, she who has been better for you than seven sons.’
[16]Na’omi got the child and put him in her arms and became a nurse for him. [17]The neighbours named him, saying ‘A son has
been born to Na’omi’, and named him Obed. He was father of Yishay [Jesse], father of David.
[18]This is the family history of Perets. Perets fathered Hetsron. [19]Hetsron fathered Ram. Ram fathered Amminadab.
[20]Amminadab fathered Nahshon. Nahshon fathered Salmah. [21]Salmon fathered Bo’az. Bo’az fathered Obed. [22]Obed fathered
Yishay. Yishay fathered David.

1 Samuel

In the English Bible, 1 Samuel follows on from Ruth. That story ends by telling us about a line of people descended from Ruth and Boaz, the last of whom is David, and 1 Samuel is another take on David's backstory – on the process that led to David's becoming king. To complement that point, in the Hebrew Bible 1 Samuel directly follows Judges. Judges ends with a rueful comment on how people have been doing what was all right in their own eyes because there was no king in Israel. The implication is that Israel needed someone to exercise ongoing authority and get people to take Yahweh seriously. A king might be able to do so.

It's the first of two books named after Samuel. He did not write them; he dies halfway through 1 Samuel. But he is a huge figure in 1 Samuel, one of the three big men in the book. The account of his birth is a powerful story of a woman's boldness in coming before God with the pain in her life and in challenging God to do something about it, and of this woman's courage in then giving up the son who is the answer to her prayers, so that he can be Yahweh's servant.

Samuel is the last of the 'judges', the leaders of Israel who dominate the book of Judges, people who act effectively and with great authority though without the official position of someone like a king. Samuel is also the first great prophet. It's no coincidence that Yahweh produces him at the same time as kings emerge in Israel. One of the chief responsibilities of a prophet is to be the king's conscience, to challenge him about what he ought to be doing – and more often about what he ought not to be doing. Samuel is responsible for designating and anointing Saul, the second of the three huge figures, and then for pronouncing Yahweh's decommissioning of him. He is then responsible for designating and anointing David. He even reappears at the end of the book, coming back from the dead to meet with Saul on the eve of Saul's last battle.

The background to Samuel's anointing of Saul is the people's desire to have a king like other peoples. This desire fits with that comment at the end of Judges, yet the people are going back on a distinctive aspect of their life, the principle that Yahweh is their king, though humanly speaking it's hard to imagine how they could have gone on as a people without some form of central government to replace the decentralized system whereby no organization holds the clans together. Although asking for a king implies rejecting Yahweh as king, Yahweh accedes to their request and nominates the king. Chapters 8—12 of the book expound all sides of Samuel's and Yahweh's attitude to kingship, which one may infer applies to other forms of leadership. There are advantages and disadvantages to having a leader. It costs people, in varying ways.

Yahweh's mixed feelings about Israel having kings is the background to Saul's having successes but then experiencing Yahweh's rejection for failures that may not seem very culpable. He is a tragic figure, a man enlisted to do a job that Yahweh didn't really want done and that he himself didn't really want, but who becomes attached to the job even as he is making mistakes that lead to his rejection. Eventually Yahweh sends a 'bad spirit' to Saul – not an evil spirit (the Old Testament doesn't talk about those) but a depressed and angry spirit, a bad temper.

The third huge figure is David, who is designated by Yahweh as Saul's successor and who shows himself to be someone who always trusts in Yahweh and is a courageous fighter, a faithful subject, a magnetic personality, an energetic campaigner, a ruthless commander, a shrewd compromiser and a magnanimous victor. Although anointed by Samuel in Yahweh's name, before becoming king he has to wait until Yahweh has finished with Saul; he is also a man who is prepared to wait rather than trying to force things. Eventually Saul and his son Jonathan (David's best friend) meet their death in battle, which opens up the future for David.

The pain of childlessness

1 There was a man from Twin Heights in Tsophim, from the highland of Ephrayim, whose name was Elqanah ben Yeroham, son of Elihu son of Tohu son of Tsuph, an Ephrayimite. [2]He had two wives; the name of one was Hannah, the name of the second was Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

[3]That man used to go up from his town from year to year to bow low and to sacrifice for Yahweh of Armies at Shiloh. The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Pinhas, were priests for Yahweh there.

[4]A day came when Elqanah sacrificed, and he would give portions to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and her daughters. [5]To Hannah he would give a portion for two people because he loved Hannah, whereas Yahweh had closed up her womb, [6]and her rival would provoke her greatly to make her fret because Yahweh had closed up her womb. [7]So he would do, year after year. As often as she went up to Yahweh's house, she would provoke her in this way, and she would cry and not eat. [8]Elqanah, her husband, said to her, 'Hannah, why do you cry, why don't you eat, why does your heart feel bad? Aren't I better for you than ten sons?'

[9]Hannah got up after the eating in Shiloh and after the drinking. Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of Yahweh's palace. [10]She was bitter in spirit but she made a plea to Yahweh and cried and cried, [11]and she made a pledge. She said, 'Yahweh of Armies, if you actually look at your handmaid's humbling and you're mindful of me, and you don't put your handmaid out of mind but give your handmaid a male offspring, I'll give him to Yahweh all the days of his life. No razor will go up on his head.'

A face transformed

[12]Because she was doing much pleading before Yahweh, and Eli was watching her mouth, [13]and Hannah was speaking in her heart (only her lips were quivering, but her voice did not make itself heard), Eli thought she was drunk. [14]Eli said to her, 'How long will you behave like a drunk? Put your wine away from you.' [15]Hannah answered, 'No, sir, I'm a tough-spirited woman and I haven't drunk wine or liquor. I've poured myself out before Yahweh. [16]Don't make your handmaid into a scoundrelous woman, because it was out of the dimensions of my tetchiness and my provocation that I've spoken until now.' [17]Eli answered, 'Go, things

will be well. The God of Yisra'el: he will give the thing that you've asked of him.' [18]She said, 'May your maidservant find grace in your eyes.'

The woman went on her way and ate, and her face was no longer [the same]. [19]They started early in the morning, bowed low before Yahweh, and went back and came to their home in The Height. Elqanah had sex with his wife Hannah and Yahweh was mindful of her, [20]and at the end of the year Hannah had got pregnant. She gave birth to a son and named him Shemu'el [Samuel], because 'I asked [*sha'al*] for him from Yahweh.'

[21]The man, Elqanah, went up with his entire household to offer Yahweh the yearly sacrifice and his pledge, [22]but Hannah didn't go up, because (she said to her husband) 'When the boy is weaned I'll bring him. We'll see Yahweh's face, and he'll live there permanently.' [23]Elqanah her husband said to her, 'Do what's good in your eyes; stay till you've weaned him. Only, may Yahweh implement his word.' So the woman stayed and nursed her son until she'd weaned him. [24]She took him up with her when she had weaned him, with a three-year-old bull, a barrel of flour and a skin of wine, and brought him to Yahweh's house at Shiloh. He was a boy. [25]They slaughtered the bull and brought the boy to Eli.

On giving up your son

[26]She said, 'Pardon me, sir, as surely as you live, sir, I'm the woman who stood with you here to make my plea to Yahweh. [27]It was for this boy that I made my plea, and Yahweh gave me what I asked of him. [28]I myself am also giving him to Yahweh; for all the days that he lives he's given to Yahweh.' He bowed low there to Yahweh,

2 and Hannah made her plea:

My heart has exulted in Yahweh,
my horn has lifted high through Yahweh.
My mouth has opened wide at my enemies,
because I have rejoiced in your deliverance.
[2]There's no sacred one like Yahweh,
because there's no one apart from you,
there's no crag like our God.
[3]Don't do much speaking of lofty, lofty speech,
nor should outspoken speech come out of your mouth.
Because Yahweh is a God who knows;
by him actions are weighed.
[4]The bows of strong men are broken,
but people who were falling have belted on forcefulness.
[5]People who were full have hired themselves out for bread,
but the hungry left off from being hungry.
While the infertile woman has given birth to seven,
the woman with many children is withered.
[6]Yahweh is one who puts to death and brings to life,
sends down to She'ol and brings up.
[7]Yahweh is one who makes poor and makes wealthy,
puts down, also lifts up.
[8]He is one who raises the poor from the dirt,
lifts up the needy from the dump,
To sit with important people;
he gives them a seat of splendour as their domain.
Because earth's pillars belong to Yahweh;
he set the world upon them.
[9]He keeps the feet of the people who are loyal to him,
but the faithless go silent into the darkness.
Because it's not by energy that a person prevails;
[10]Yahweh – people who argue with him shatter.
The One on High thunders in the heavens;
Yahweh judges the ends of the earth.
He gives vigour to his king,
lifts up the horn of his anointed one.

Ministers who indulge themselves

[11]Elqanah went home to The Height, while the boy was ministering to Yahweh in the presence of Eli the priest. [12]Now Eli's sons were scoundrels; they didn't acknowledge Yahweh. [13]The priests' rule with the people was: when each person was offering a sacrifice, the priest's boy would come while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand. [14]He would thrust it into the pan or the kettle or the cauldron or the pot; all that the fork brought up, the priest would take with it. In this way they would act with all Yisra'el [Israel] who came there to Shiloh. [15]Further, before they turned the fat into smoke, the priest's boy would come and say to the individual making the sacrifice, 'Give over some meat for roasting for the priest; he won't take boiled meat

from you, only raw.' [16]Should the individual say to him, 'They should actually turn the fat into smoke now, then take for yourself whatever your appetite longs for', he would say 'No, but you're to give it over now, or I'm taking it by force.'

[17]The boys' wrongdoing in Yahweh's presence was very great, because the men disdained Yahweh's offering.

[18]So Shemu'el was ministering in the presence of Yahweh, a boy wrapped round in a linen chasuble. [19]His mother would make a little coat for him and bring it up for him from year to year when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. [20]Eli would bless Elqanah and his wife and say, 'May Yahweh give you offspring from this woman in place of the one she asked for from Yahweh', and they would go to their place. [21]Because Yahweh attended to Hannah, she got pregnant and she gave birth to three sons and two daughters, but the boy Shemu'el grew up with Yahweh.

Why do you kick at my sacrifices?

[22]When Eli was very old, he heard of all that his sons were doing to all Yisra'el and how they were sleeping with the women who fulfilled duties at the entrance of the appointment tent. [23]He said to them, 'Why do you do such actions as these that I am hearing of, bad actions of yours, from all these people? [24]Don't, my sons, because the report is not good that I'm hearing Yahweh's people passing on. [25]If an individual does wrong against an individual, God may plead for him, but if an individual does wrong against Yahweh, who will make a plea for him?' But they wouldn't listen to their father's voice because Yahweh wanted to put them to death. [26]But the boy Shemu'el was continuing to grow and seem good both with Yahweh and with people.

[27]A supernatural man came to Eli and said to him: 'Yahweh has said this: "Did I clearly reveal myself to your father's household when they were in Misrayim [Egypt], belonging to Par'oh's [Pharaoh's] household? [28]I chose him out of all Yisra'el's clans as a priest for me, to go up on my altar, to burn incense, to carry a chasuble before me, and I gave your father's household all the Yisra'elites' gift offerings. [29]Why do you kick at my sacrifice and at my offering which I ordered, at my abode? You've honoured your sons more than me in fattening yourselves on the first of every offering of Yisra'el as my people.

A trustworthy priest

[30]Therefore (a declaration of Yahweh the God of Yisra'el), I did say that your household and your father's household would go about before me permanently, but now (Yahweh's declaration), far be it from me, because the people who honour me I honour, but the people who despise me will become slight.

[31]Here, a time is coming when I shall cut off your arm and the arm of your father's household, so that there will be no one as an elder in your household. [32]You will look at the pressure that comes on [my] abode, despite all the good that is done to Yisra'el, and there will be no one as an elder in your household for the entire time. [33]While I shall not cut off every individual of yours from my altar, so as to consume your eyes and make your spirit grieve, the entire abundance of your household: people will die. [34]This will be the sign for you that will come on your two sons, on Hophi and Pinhas: the two of them will die on one day.

[35]I shall set up for myself a trustworthy priest. He will act in accordance with what is in my mind and in my spirit. I shall build a trustworthy household for him and he will go about before my anointed one for all time. [36]Anyone who is left of your household will come to bow low to him for a payment in silver and a loaf of bread. He will say, 'Assign me to one of the priestly duties so I can eat a bit of bread.'"'

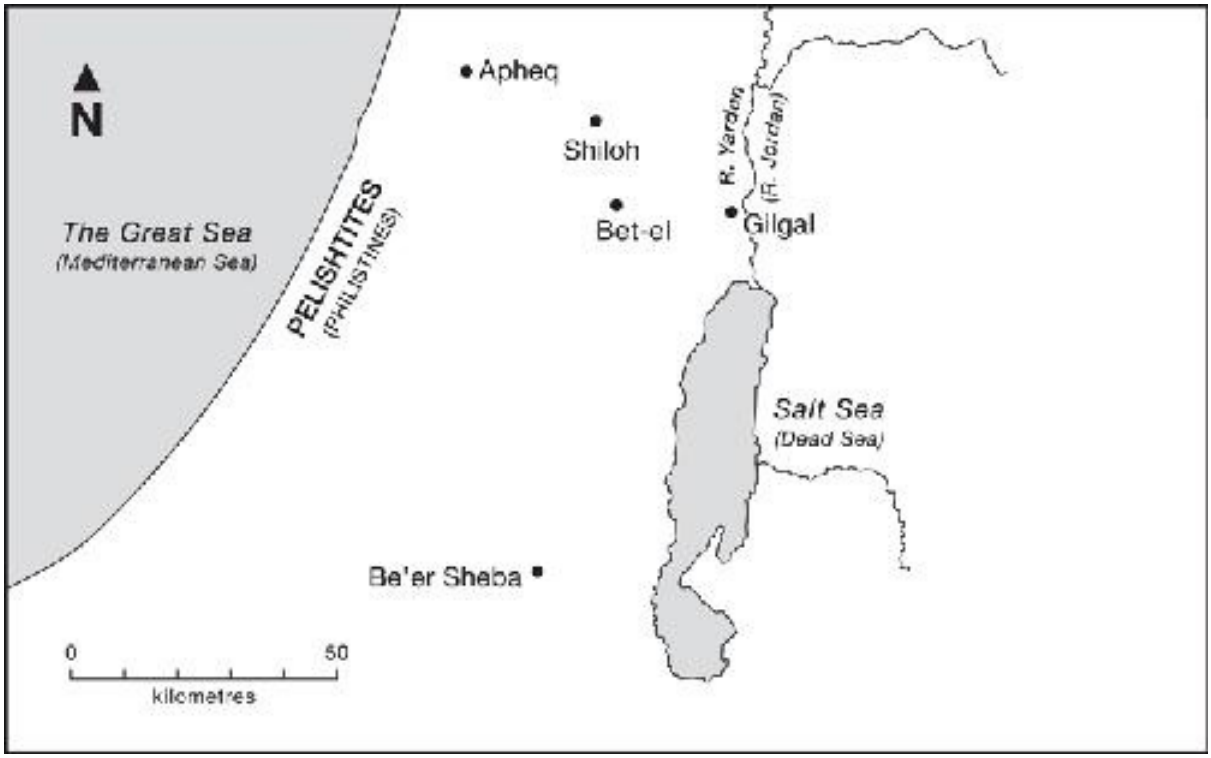
A summons, not a call

3 The boy, Shemu'el, was ministering to Yahweh in the presence of Eli. Yahweh's word was rare at that time; there was no vision spreading about. [2]On a day when Eli was lying down in his place (his eyes had started to fail; he couldn't see) [3]but God's lamp had not yet gone out, and Shemu'el was lying down in Yahweh's palace where God's chest was, [4]Yahweh called to Shemu'el.

He said, 'I'm here', [5]and ran to Eli and said, 'I'm here, because you called to me.' He said, 'I didn't call. Go back, lie down.' He went and lay down. [6]Yahweh called yet again, 'Shemu'el', and Shemu'el got up and went to Eli and said, 'I'm here, because you called to me.' He said, 'I didn't call, son, go back, lie down.' [7]Now Shemu'el hadn't yet acknowledged Yahweh; Yahweh's word hadn't yet revealed itself to him.

[8]Yahweh again called Shemu'el, a third time, and he got up, went to Eli and said, 'I'm here, because you called to me.' Eli perceived that Yahweh was calling to the boy. [9]Eli said to Shemu'el, 'Go, lie down, and if he calls to you, you're to say, "Speak, Yahweh, because your servant is listening."' So Shemu'el went and lay down in his place.

[10]Yahweh came and took his stand and called as at the other times, 'Shemu'el, Shemu'el'. Shemu'el said, 'Speak, because your servant is listening.'



Yisra'el at the time of Shemu'el (Samuel)

The message no one would want to give

[11]Yahweh said to Shemu'el, 'Here, I'm going to do a thing in Yisra'el such that everyone who hears it – both his ears will tingle. [12]That day I shall implement regarding Eli everything I spoke concerning his household, beginning and finishing it. [13]I told him that I'm going to exercise authority over his household permanently for the waywardness that he knew about, that his sons were slighting [me] for themselves and he didn't stop them. [14]Therefore I swear concerning Eli's household: if the waywardness of Eli's household finds expiation by sacrifice or by offering, permanently . . .'

[15]Shemu'el lay down until the morning, then opened the doors of Yahweh's house. But Shemu'el was afraid of telling Eli the vision. [16]Eli called Shemu'el: 'Shemu'el, my son'. He said, 'I'm here.' [17]He said, 'What was the thing that he spoke to you? Don't hide any of it from me, please. May God do so to you, and may he do more, if you hide from me anything of all that he said to you.' [18]Shemu'el told him all the things and didn't hide it from him. He said, 'He is Yahweh. He will do what is good in his eyes.'

[19]Shemu'el grew up, and as Yahweh was with him, he didn't allow any of his words to fall to the ground. [20]All Yisra'el from Dan as far as Be'er Sheba acknowledged that Shemu'el was trustworthy as a prophet belonging to Yahweh. [21]Yahweh again appeared at Shiloh, in that Yahweh revealed himself to Shemu'el at Shiloh with Yahweh's word,

4 and Shemu'el's word came to all Yisra'el.

Get the chest

[1b]Yisra'el went out to meet the Pelishtites [Philistines] in battle, and camped at Help Stone [Eben Ha'ezer], while the Pelishtites camped at Apheq. [2]The Pelishtites lined up to meet Yisra'el and the battle spread, and Yisra'el took a beating before the Pelishtites. They struck down some 4,000 men in their line in the fields.

[3]The company came to the camp and Yisra'el's elders said, 'Why did Yahweh defeat us today before the Pelishtites? Let's get Yahweh's pact chest from Shiloh for ourselves, so he will come among us and deliver us from our enemies' fist.' [4]So the company sent to Shiloh and carried from there the pact chest of Yahweh of Armies, who sits above the sphinxes. Eli's two sons, Hophni and Pinhas, were with God's pact chest there.

[5]When Yahweh's pact chest came into the camp, all Yisra'el gave a great shout, and the earth resounded. [6]The Pelishtites heard the sound of the shout and said, 'What's this sound of a great shout in the Hebrews' camp?' They came to know that Yahweh's chest had come into the camp.

[7]The Pelishtites were afraid, because they said, 'A god has come into the camp', and they said, 'Alas for us! A thing like this has not happened to us in previous days. [8]Alas for us! Who will rescue us from the hand of these august gods? These are the gods that struck down the Misrayimites in total defeat in the wilderness. [9]Summon up your strength, be men, Pelishtites, so you don't serve the Hebrews as they served you. Be men! Do battle!'

[10]So the Pelishtites did battle and Yisra'el took a beating. They fled, each one to his tents. The rout was very great, and from Yisra'el 30,000 men on foot fell, [11]while God's chest was taken, and Eli's two sons, Hophni and Pinhas, died.

The splendour is gone

[12]A Binyaminite [Benjaminite] man ran from the line and came to Shiloh that day, with his uniform torn and earth on his head.
[13]He came, and there, Eli was sitting on a seat by the road, watching, because his heart was trembling for God's chest. When the man came to tell of it in the town, the entire town cried out. [14]Eli heard the sound of the cry and said, 'What's this sound of an uproar?' The man hurried and came, and told Eli.
[15]Eli was a man of ninety-eight years. His eyes were set and he couldn't see. [16]The man said to Eli, 'I'm the one coming from the line. I myself fled from the line today.' He said, 'What was the thing that happened, son?' [17]The man bringing the news replied, 'Yisra'el fled before the Pelishtites. It was both a great disaster to the company, and also your two sons, Hophni and Pinhas, are dead, and God's chest was taken.' [18]When he made mention of God's chest, he fell backwards from on his seat by the side of the gateway. His neck broke and he died, because the man was old and heavy. He had exercised authority for Yisra'el for forty years.
[19]His daughter-in-law, Pinhas's wife, was pregnant, soon to give birth. She heard the report about God's chest being taken and her father-in-law and her husband being dead, and she bent down and gave birth, because her labour pains came over her. [20]At the time of her dying, the women standing by her spoke: 'Don't be afraid, because you've given birth to a son.' She didn't answer. She didn't give her mind to it.
[21]She called the boy Ikabod ['Where Is the Splendour?'], saying 'The splendour has gone into exile from Yisra'el', in connection with God's chest being taken, and with her father-in-law and with her husband. [22]She said, 'The splendour has gone into exile from Yisra'el, because God's chest has been taken.'

You can't mess with the chest

5 When the Pelishtites took God's chest, they brought it from Help Stone to Ashdod. [2]The Pelishtites took God's chest and brought it to Dagon's house and set it beside Dagon. [3]The Ashdodites started early next day and there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before Yahweh's chest. So they took Dagon and put him back in his place.
[4]They started early in the morning next day and there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before Yahweh's chest, with Dagon's head and both the palms of his hands cut off, on the threshold. Only [the body of] Dagon remained to him. [5]That's why Dagon's priests and all the people who come to Dagon's house don't tread on Dagon's threshold in Ashdod, until this day.
[6]Yahweh's hand was heavy on the Ashdodites. He desolated them and struck them down with haemorrhoids, Ashdod and its territories. [7]The Ashdodites saw that it was so, and said, 'The chest of Yisra'el's God is not to stay with us, because his hand has been tough with us and with Dagon our god.' [8]They sent and gathered all the Pelishtites' lords to them and said, 'What shall we do with the chest of Yisra'el's God?' They said, 'The chest of Yisra'el's God should get itself round to Gat.' So they took the chest of Yisra'el's God round. [9]After they had taken it round, Yahweh's hand came against the town with a great turmoil. He struck the town's people from young to old, and haemorrhoids broke out on them.
[10]So they sent God's chest off to Eqron. But when God's chest came to Eqron, the Eqronites cried out, 'They've brought the chest of Yisra'el's God round to me to put me and my people to death.' [11]So they sent off and gathered all the Pelishtites' lords and said, 'Send the chest of Yisra'el's God off so it goes back to its place. It will not put me and my people to death', because there was a deathly turmoil in the entire town. God's hand was very heavy there. [12]The men who didn't die were struck down by the haemorrhoids. The town's cry for help went up to the heavens.

The need for reparation

6 Yahweh's chest was in the Pelishtites' country for seven months. [2]The Pelishtites called for the priests and for the diviners: 'What shall we do about Yahweh's chest? Let us know what we're to send it off with to its place.' [3]They said, 'If you're going to send off the chest of Yisra'el's God, don't send if off empty-handed. Rather, you're definitely to send a reparation back to him. Then you'll find healing. He'll get himself acknowledged by you; why should his hand not depart from you?'
[4]They said, 'What's the reparation that we should send back to him?' They said, 'Five gold haemorrhoids and five gold rats, the number of the Pelishtites' lords, because the same epidemic came to all of them, and to your lords. [5]You're to make models of your haemorrhoids and models of your rats that have been devastating the country, and give honour to the God of Yisra'el. Maybe he will ease his hand from upon you and from upon your gods and from upon your country. [6]Why would you harden your mind as Misrayim and Par'oh hardened their mind? When he had acted abusively to them, they sent them off and they went, didn't they.
[7]So now, get and make ready a new cart and two nursing cows on which no yoke has come. Harness the cows to the cart but take their young ones back home, from following them. [8]Get Yahweh's chest and put it on the cart. The gold articles that you're sending back to him as a reparation you're to put in a receptacle by its side, and send it off so it goes, [9]and you're to look. If it goes up the road to his border, to Bet Shemesh, he's the one who did this huge bad thing to you. If not, we'll know that it was not his hand touched us. It was a chance that happened to us.'
[10]The people did so. They got two nursing cows, harnessed them to a cart, shut up their young ones at home, [11]and put Yahweh's chest on the cart, with the receptacle and the gold rats and the models of their haemorrhoids.

Too hot to handle

[12]The cows went straight by the road, on the Bet Shemesh road. By a causeway they went steadily and lowed and didn't depart right or left, with the Pelishtites' lords following them as far as the Bet Shemesh border.
[13]Bet Shemesh people were reaping the wheat harvest in the vale. They lifted up their eyes and saw the chest, and rejoiced to

see it. [14]The cart came to the fields of Yehoshua of Bet-shemesh and stood there. There was a big stone there. They split the wood of the cart and offered up the cows as a burnt offering for Yahweh. [15]The Levites took down Yahweh's chest and the receptacle that was with it, in which were the gold articles, and put them on the big stone. The people of Bet-shemesh offered up whole offerings and offered sacrifices that day for Yahweh. [16]The Pelishtites' five lords looked, and went back to Eqron that day.

[17]These are the gold haemorrhoids that the Pelishtites gave back as a reparation to Yahweh: one for Ashdod, one for Azzah [Gaza], one for Ashqelon, one for Gat, one for Eqron. [18]The gold rats: the number of all the Pelishtites' towns belonging to the Pelishtites' five lords, both fortified town and country hamlet, as far as the big stone on which they set down Yahweh's chest, until this day in the fields of Yehoshua of Bet-shemesh.

[19]But he struck down the people of Bet-shemesh because they looked in Yahweh's chest. He struck down seventy individuals (50,000 individuals) among the people. The people took up grieving because Yahweh had struck the people down with a heavy blow.

[20]The people of Bet-shemesh said, 'Who can stand before Yahweh, this sacred God? To whom might he go up from us?' [21]So they sent envoys to the people living in Ye'arim Township to say, 'The Pelishtites have sent Yahweh's chest back. Come down, take it up to you.'

7 The people of Ye'arim Township came and took Yahweh's chest up and brought it into the house of Abinadab, on the hill. They made his son El'azar sacred to keep Yahweh's chest.

Yahweh helped us as far as this

[2]From the day the chest lived at Ye'arim Township time went on; twenty years passed. The entire household of Yisra'el grieved after Yahweh, [3]and Shemu'el said to the entire household of Yisra'el, 'If with your entire heart you're coming back to Yahweh, remove the foreign gods and the Ashtars from among you. Direct your heart firmly towards Yahweh and serve him alone, and he will rescue you from the hand of the Pelishtites.' [4]So the Yisra'elites removed the Masters and the Ashtars and served Yahweh alone.

[5]Shemu'el said, 'Gather all Yisra'el at The Watchtower and I'll plead with Yahweh on your behalf.' [6]They gathered at The Watchtower and drew water and poured it out before Yahweh. They fasted that day and said there, 'We have done wrong against Yahweh.' So Shemu'el exercised authority for the Yisra'elites at The Watchtower.

[7]The Pelishtites heard that the Yisra'elites had gathered at The Watchtower and the Pelishtites' lords went up against Yisra'el. The Yisra'elites heard and were afraid of the Pelishtites. [8]So the Yisra'elites said to Shemu'el, 'Don't be deaf to us and not cry out to Yahweh our God so he may deliver us from the hand of the Pelishtites.' [9]So Shemu'el got a suckling lamb and offered it up as a whole burnt offering for Yahweh. Shemu'el cried out to Yahweh on behalf of Yisra'el, and Yahweh answered him. [10]As Shemu'el was offering up the burnt offering, the Pelishtites were coming up for battle against Yisra'el, but Yahweh thundered with a loud voice that day against the Pelishtites and threw them into a turmoil, and they took a beating before Yisra'el. [11]The Yisra'elites went out from The Watchtower, pursued the Pelishtites and struck them down as far as below Bet Kar.

[12]Shemu'el got a stone and put it between The Watchtower and The Tooth, and named it 'Help Stone'. He said, 'As far as this Yahweh helped us.' [13]The Pelishtites bowed down and didn't any more come within Yisra'el's border again. Yahweh's hand was against the Pelishtites all the days of Shemu'el. [14]The towns that the Pelishtites had taken from Yisra'el came back to Yisra'el, from Eqron as far as Gat. Yisra'el rescued their border from the hand of the Pelishtites, and there was peace between Yisra'el and the Amorites.

Appoint us a king

[15]Shemu'el exercised authority for Yisra'el all the days of his life. [16]He went year by year and travelled round to Bet-el, Gilgal and The Watchtower and exercised authority for Yisra'el at all these sites; [17]then his return to The Height, because his home was there. He exercised authority for Yisra'el there and built an altar for Yahweh there.

8 When Shemu'el was old, he made his sons into people who exercised authority for Yisra'el. [2]The name of his firstborn son was Yo'el and the name of his second Abiyyah; they were authorities in Be'er Sheba. [3]But his sons didn't walk in his ways. They turned after profit and accepted bribes, and overturned the exercise of authority.

[4]So all Yisra'el's elders gathered and came to Shemu'el at The Height, [5]and said to him, 'Here, you've got old and your sons haven't walked in your ways. Now appoint us a king to exercise authority for us like all the nations.' [6]The thing was bad in Shemu'el's eyes, when they said 'Give us a king to exercise authority for us', and Shemu'el made a plea to Yahweh.

[7]Yahweh said to Shemu'el, 'Listen to the people's voice in everything that they say to you, because it's not you they've rejected, because it's me they've rejected from being king over them. [8]In accordance with all the deeds they've done from the day I brought them up from Misrayim and until this day, they've abandoned me and served other gods, so they're doing also to you. [9]So now listen to their voice. Only testify against them solemnly and tell them about the authority of the king who will reign over them.'

What a king will be like

[10]Shemu'el spoke all Yahweh's words to the people who were asking for a king from him. [11]He said, 'This will be the authority of the king who will reign over you. Your sons he'll take and make into his chariotry and into his cavalry for himself and they'll run before his chariotry, [12]making them divisional officers and unit officers for himself, and for ploughing his fields and reaping his harvest and making his battle equipment and his chariot equipment. [13]Your daughters he'll take as perfumers, cooks and bakers. [14]Your fields, your vineyards and your olive groves, the best, he'll take and give to his servants. [15]Of your seed and your

vineyards he'll take a tenth and give to his courtiers and to his servants. [16]Your servants and your maidservants, your best young men and your donkeys, he'll take and make into his workforce. [17]Of your flock he'll take a tenth and you yourselves will become servants to him. [18]You will cry out on that day on account of your king whom you've chosen for yourselves, but Yahweh will not answer you on that day.'

[19]The people refused to listen to Shemu'el's voice and said, 'No! Rather, there is to be a king over us, [20]so we can become like all the nations. Our king will exercise authority, and go out before us and fight our battles.' [21]Shemu'el listened to all the people's words and spoke them in Yahweh's ears. [22]Yahweh said to Shemu'el, 'Listen to their voice. Make a king for them.' Shemu'el said to the Yisra'elites, 'Go, each one, to his town.'

How Sha'ul lost some donkeys

9 There was a man from Binyamin; his name was Qish ben Abi'el, son of Tseror son of Bekorat son of Aphiah, a Binyaminite – a forceful man. [2]He had a son; his name was Sha'ul [Saul], young and good-looking. There was no one better-looking among the Yisra'elites than him. From his shoulders up, he was loftier than all the people.

[3]Donkeys belonging to Qish, Sha'ul's father, got lost, and Qish said to Sha'ul his son, 'Please take one of the boys with you, and set off and go look for the donkeys.' [4]They passed through the highland of Ephrayim and passed through the region of Shalishah, but they didn't find them. They passed through the region of Sha'alim, but they were not there. They passed through the region of Binyamin and didn't find them. [5]When they came to the region of Tsuph, Sha'ul said to his boy who was with him, 'Come on, let's go back, so my father doesn't leave off from the donkeys and get anxious about us.'

[6]He said to him, 'Here, please, there's a supernatural man in this town. The man is honoured. Everything that he speaks does come about. Let's go there now. Maybe he'll tell us about our journey that we've gone on.' [7]Sha'ul said to his boy, 'But here, we can go, but what are we to bring the man, because the bread is exhausted from our bags and there's no present to bring to the supernatural man. What is there with us?' [8]The boy again answered Sha'ul, 'Here, there's a quarter-sheqel of silver present in my hand. I'll give it to the supernatural man so he can tell us about our journey.' ([9]Formerly in Yisra'el, an individual said this when he was going to enquire of God: 'Come on, let's go to the seer', because the prophet today was formerly called the seer.)

An extraordinary coincidence

[10]So Sha'ul said to his boy, 'Your words are good. Come on, let's go.' So they went to the town where the supernatural man was. [11]When they were going up the ascent to the town and they found girls going out to draw water, they said to them, 'Is the seer here?' [12]They answered them, 'He is, there, before you. Hurry now, because today he's come to the town because the people have a sacrifice at the shrine today. [13]As you come into the town, there you'll find him before he goes up to the shrine to eat, because the people won't eat until he comes, because he has to say the blessing for the sacrifice. After that, the people who've been invited will eat. So now, go up, because this very day you'll find him.' [14]So they went up to the town. As they were coming into the middle of the town – there was Shemu'el, going out to meet them, going up to the shrine.

[15]Now Yahweh had had a word in Shemu'el's ear the day before Sha'ul came: [16]'This very time tomorrow I shall send you a man from the region of Binyamin, and you're to anoint him as ruler over my people Yisra'el. He will deliver my people from the hand of the Pelishtites, because I've seen my people, because their cry has come to me.' [17]When Shemu'el saw Sha'ul, Yahweh himself avowed to him, 'Here is the man of whom I said to you, "This is the man who will put some restraint on my people."' [18]Sha'ul went up to Shemu'el in the middle of the gateway and said, 'Please tell me where the seer's house is.'

An unexpected banquet

[19]Shemu'el answered Sha'ul, 'I'm the seer. Go up before me to the shrine and you can eat with me today. I'll send you off in the morning, but everything that's on your mind I'll tell you. [20]As for your donkeys that got lost three days ago: don't set your mind on them, because they've been found. And who is the object of all Yisra'el's desire? You and your entire ancestral household.'

[21]Sha'ul answered, 'I'm a Binyaminite, aren't I, from the smallest of Yisra'el's clans, and my kin-group is the littlest of all the kin-groups in the clans of Binyamin. Why have you spoken to me of such a thing?'

[22]Shemu'el took Sha'ul and his boy, brought them into the hall and gave them a place at the head of the people who had been invited; they were some thirty individuals. [23]Shemu'el said to the cook, 'Give me the portion that I gave you, about which I said to you, "Put it by you."' [24]The cook lifted up the thigh and what was on it and put it before Sha'ul.

He said, 'There is what has remained, put before you. Eat, because it was kept for you for the set time when I said "I am inviting the people."' So Sha'ul ate with Shemu'el that day, [25]then they came down from the shrine to the town, and he spoke with Sha'ul on the roof.

How Sha'ul found more than he bargained for

[26]They started early, and at break of day Shemu'el called to Sha'ul on the roof: 'Get up, and I'll send you off.' Sha'ul got up, and the two of them, he and Shemu'el, went outside. [27]As they were going down to the edge of the town Shemu'el said to Sha'ul, 'Say to the boy that he's to pass on before us' (and he passed on) 'but you stand here this very moment and I shall let you hear God's word.'

10 Shemu'el got a flask of oil and poured it on his head and kissed him, and said, 'Yahweh anoints you as ruler over his domain, does he not. [2]When you go from being with me today, you'll find two men by Rahel's grave within the border of

Binyamin at Tseltsah. They'll say to you, "The donkeys that you went to look for have been found. Here, your father's given up on the thing about the donkeys and got anxious about you, saying 'What shall I do about my son?'" [3]You're to go on from there, and further on you'll come as far as Tabor Oak. Three men will find you there, coming up to God to Bet-el, one carrying three kid goats, one carrying three loaves of bread and one carrying a skin of wine. [4]They'll ask you if things are well with you, and they'll give you two loaves of bread. You're to accept them from their hand.

[5]After this you're to come to God's Hill, where the Pelishtites' outpost is. When you come into the town there, you'll come upon a group of prophets going down from the shrine, with mandolin, tambourine, pipe and guitar before them. They'll be prophesying. [6]Yahweh's spirit will thrust itself on to you and you'll prophesy with them. You'll turn into another person. [7]When these signs come about for you, do for yourself what your hand finds, because God will be with you.

Is Sha'ul a prophet, too?

[8]You're to go down before me to Gilgal. There; I'm going to come down to you to offer up burnt offerings and to make well-being sacrifices. You're to wait seven days until I come to you and make known to you what you're to do.' [9]As he turned his face to go from being with Shemu'el, God gave him another mind.

All these signs came about that day. [10]They came there, to the hill, and here – a group of prophets coming to meet him. God's spirit thrust itself on to him and he prophesied among them. [11]Everyone who knew him in previous days looked – and here, he was prophesying with prophets. The people said, one to his neighbour, 'What's this that's happened to ben Qish? Is Sha'ul among the prophets, too?' [12]One person from there answered, 'And who is their father?' That's why it became an aphorism, 'Is Sha'ul among the prophets, too?' [13]He finished prophesying and came to the shrine.

[14]Sha'ul's uncle said to him and to his boy, 'Where did you go?' He said, 'To look for the donkeys. We saw that they weren't there, and we came to Shemu'el.' [15]Sha'ul's uncle said, 'Please tell me what Shemu'el said to you.' [16]Sha'ul said to his uncle, 'He did tell us that the donkeys had been found.' As for the matter of the kingship, he didn't tell him what Shemu'el said.

How not to evade being enlisted

[17]Shemu'el called out the people to Yahweh at The Watchtower. [18]He said to the Yisra'elites, 'Yahweh the God of Yisra'el has said this: "I am the one who brought Yisra'el up from Misrayim. I rescued you from the hand of Misrayim and from the hand of all the kingdoms that afflicted you", [19]but today you people have rejected your God who was a deliverer for you from all your bad experiences and your pressures. You said to him, "No, rather you're to set a king over us." So now, take your stand before Yahweh by your clans and by your families.'

[20]Shemu'el presented all the Yisra'elite clans, and the clan of Binyamin was taken. [21]He presented the clan of Binyamin by its kin-groups and the kin-group of the Matrites arose, and Sha'ul ben Qish was taken. They looked for him but he couldn't be found, [22]so they asked of Yahweh again, 'Has anyone else come here?' Yahweh said, 'There, he's hiding with the things.' [23]They ran and got him from there and he took his stand among the people. He was loftier than all the people, from his shoulders up. [24]Shemu'el said to all the people, 'Have you seen the one that Yahweh has chosen, that there's no one like him among all the people?' All the people shouted and said, 'Long live the king.'

[25]Shemu'el spoke to the people about the rule for the kingship, wrote it in a document and set it down before Yahweh. Then Shemu'el sent all the people off, each to his house. [26]Sha'ul also went to his house at Gib'ah, and with him went the force whose heart God had touched. [27]When scoundrels said, 'How can this man deliver us?', and despised him and didn't bring him an offering, he was like someone deaf.

Anger as a fruit of the Spirit

11 Nahash the Ammonite went up and camped against Yabesh-in-Gil'ad. All the men of Yabesh said to Nahash, 'Solemnize a pact to us and we'll serve you.' [2]Nahash the Ammonite said to them, 'On this basis I'll solemnize one to you, on the basis of gouging out the right eye of every one of you. I'll make it a reviling to all Yisra'el.' [3]The elders of Yabesh said to him, 'Let us go for seven days and we'll send envoys through all Yisra'el's border. If there's no one who'll be a deliverer for us, we'll come out to you.'

[4]The envoys came to Gib'ah-of-Sha'ul and spoke the words in the people's ears, and the entire people lifted up their voice and wailed. [5]And there, Sha'ul was coming in behind the herd from the fields. Sha'ul said, 'What's happened to the people, that they're wailing?' They told him the words of the men from Yabesh.

[6]God's spirit thrust itself on to Sha'ul when he heard these words, and his anger raged right up. [7]He got a pair from the herd and cut them up and sent them off through the entire border of Yisra'el by the hand of envoys, saying 'Anyone of you who doesn't go out after Sha'ul and after Shemu'el: so it will be done to his herd.' Dread of Yahweh fell on the people and they went out as one person. [8]He numbered them at Bezeq; there were 300,000 Yisra'elites and 30,000 Yehudahites [Judahites]. [9]They said to the envoys who had come, 'Say this to the people of Yabesh-in-Gil'ad: "Tomorrrow there will be deliverance for you, when the sun gets hot."' The envoys came and told the people of Yabesh and they rejoiced. [10]The people of Yabesh said, 'Tomorrow we'll go out to you and you can act towards us in accordance with everything that's good in your eyes.'

No redress

[11]Next day Sha'ul made the company into three units, and they came into the middle of the camp during the morning watch and struck down Ammon until the day got hot. Those who remained dispersed; among them there did not remain two together. [12]The

people said to Shemu'el, 'Who was the person who said "Is Sha'ul to reign over us?" Give the people over and we'll put them to death.' [13]But Sha'ul said, 'No one is to be put to death this day, because today Yahweh has brought about deliverance in Yisra'el.'
[14] Shemu'el said to the people, 'Come, let's go to Gilgal and renew the kingship there.' [15]So all the people went to Gilgal and made Sha'ul king there before Yahweh at Gilgal. They made well-being sacrifices there before Yahweh. Sha'ul and all the Yisra'elites rejoiced greatly there.

12 Shemu'el said to all Yisra'el, 'Here, I listened to your voice regarding all that you said to me and I made a king reign over you. [2]So now, there is your king walking about before you. I myself am old and grey, but my sons – here they are, with you. I myself have walked about before you from my youth until this day. [3]Here I am. Vow against me in the presence of Yahweh and in the presence of his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken? Whom have I defrauded? Whom have I crushed? From whose hand have I taken a ransom so I might close my eyes to him? I'll give it back to you.'
[4]They said, 'You haven't defrauded us, you haven't crushed us, you haven't taken anything from anyone's hand.' [5]He said to them, 'Yahweh is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that you haven't found anything in my hand.' They said, 'He is witness.' [6]Shemu'el said to the people, 'Yahweh, who made Mosheh and Aharon [Moses and Aaron] and who brought your ancestors up from the country of Misrayim.

Take your stand and face facts

[7]So now take your stand so that I may enter into judgement with you before Yahweh on the basis of all Yahweh's acts of faithfulness which he performed with you and with your ancestors.
[8]When Ya'aqob [Jacob] came to Misrayim and your ancestors cried out to Yahweh, Yahweh sent Mosheh and Aharon and got your ancestors out of Misrayim and enabled them to live in this place. [9]But they put Yahweh their God out of mind and he sold them into the hand of Sisera the army officer at Hatsor, into the hand of the Pelishtites and into the hand of the king of Mo'ab, and they battled against them.
[10]They cried out to Yahweh and said, "We've done wrong, because we've abandoned Yahweh and served the Masters and the Ashtars, but now, deliver us from the hand of our enemies and we will serve you." [11]Yahweh sent Yerubba'al, Bedan, Yiphtah and Shemu'el, and rescued you from the hand of your enemies all round, and you lived in confidence. [12]But you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites was coming against you and you said to me, "No, rather a king must reign over us", when Yahweh your God was your king.
[13]So now, here is the king that you chose, that you asked for. Here, Yahweh has put a king over you. [14]If you live in awe of Yahweh, serve him, listen to his voice and do not rebel against Yahweh's bidding, and both you and the king who reigns over you follow Yahweh your God . . .
[15]But if you don't listen to the voice of Yahweh your God but rebel against Yahweh's bidding, Yahweh's hand will be against you and against your ancestors.

The sin of not praying

[16]Further, take your stand now and see this great thing that Yahweh is going to do before your eyes. [17]It's the wheat harvest today, isn't it. I shall call to Yahweh and he will give thunder and rain. You will acknowledge and see that you did a thing that was extremely bad in Yahweh's eyes, in asking for a king for yourselves.'
[18]So Shemu'el called to Yahweh and Yahweh gave thunder and rain that day. All the people were in great awe of Yahweh and of Shemu'el. [19]All the people said to Shemu'el, 'Plead on behalf of your servants to Yahweh your God so we don't die, because we've added something bad to all our wrongdoings in asking for a king for ourselves.'
[20]Shemu'el said to the people, 'Don't be afraid. You yourselves have undertaken all this bad action. Nevertheless don't turn aside from following Yahweh. Serve Yahweh with your entire mind. [21]You're not to turn aside, because [it would be] after something empty, things that are no use and cannot rescue, because they're empty. [22]Because Yahweh won't take leave of his people, for the sake of his great name, because Yahweh resolved to make you a people for him. [23]Further, as for me, far be it from me to do wrong against Yahweh by leaving off from pleading for you. I shall instruct you in the way that's good and right. [24]Nevertheless, live in awe of Yahweh and serve him in truthfulness with your entire mind, because you can see how he has done great things for you. [25]But if you actually do what's bad: both you and your king, you'll be swept away.'

The king takes decisive action

13 Sha'ul had been one year reigning and he reigned two years over Yisra'el. [2]Then Sha'ul chose for himself 3,000 men from Yisra'el; 2,000 were with Sha'ul at Mikmas and in the highland at Bet-el, and 1,000 were with Yonatan [Jonathan] at Gib'ah-in-Binyamin. The rest of the company he sent off, each one, to his tents.
[3]Yonatan struck down the Pelishtites' outpost that was at Geba, and the Pelishtites heard. Sha'ul himself blew on the horn throughout the country, saying 'The Hebrews are to hear!' [4]and all Yisra'el heard: 'Sha'ul has struck down the Pelishtites' outpost, and now Yisra'el has come to stink to the Pelishtites.' The people had themselves called out behind Sha'ul at Gilgal, [5]while the Pelishtites gathered to battle with Yisra'el: 30,000 chariotry, 6,000 cavalry and a company like the sand that is on the seashore in their large number. They went up and camped at Mikmas, east of Bet Aven. [6]When the Yisra'elites saw that things were pressing for them, that the company was hard pressed, the company hid in caves, in thickets, in cliffs, in pits and in cisterns, [7]while Hebrews crossed the Yarden [Jordan] to the region of Gad and Gil'ad.
Sha'ul was still at Gilgal, while the entire company following him trembled. [8]He waited seven days for the set time that Shemu'el said, but Shemu'el didn't come to Gilgal, and the company was dispersing from him. [9]So Sha'ul said, 'Bring up to me

the burnt offering and the well-being sacrifices', and he offered up the burnt offering. [10]As he finished offering up the burnt offering, there was Shemu'el coming. Sha'ul went out to meet him, to bless him.

You've been stupid

[11]But Shemu'el said, 'What have you done?' Sha'ul said, 'When I saw that the company was dispersing from me, and you yourself had not come at the set time, and the Pelishtites were gathering at Mikmas, [12]I said, "The Pelishtites will now come down to me at Gilgal and I haven't sought to gain Yahweh's goodwill." So I forced myself and offered up the burnt offering.'

[13]Shemu'el said to Sha'ul, 'You've been idiotic. You haven't kept the order of Yahweh your God, which he gave you. Because Yahweh would now have made your kingship over Yisra'el stand permanently, [14]but now your kingship won't stand. Yahweh has sought for himself a man in accordance with his own mind. Yahweh has ordered that he is to be ruler over his people, because you haven't kept what Yahweh ordered you.' [15]And Shemu'el set off and went up from Gilgal to Gib'ah-in-Binyamin.

Sha'ul numbered the company of those that could be found with him, some 600 men. [16]Sha'ul and Yonatan his son and the company that could be found with them were staying at Geba in Binyamin and the Pelishtites had camped at Mikmas. [17]A group wreaking devastation went out of the Pelishtites' camp in three columns. One column would turn its face towards the Ophrah road, towards the Shu'al region. [18]One column would turn its face towards the Bet Horon road. One column would turn its face towards the border road overlooking Tsebo'im Ravine, towards the wilderness.

[19]Now no smith could be found in all the country of Yisra'el because the Pelishtites had said, 'So that the Hebrews cannot make sword or lance.' ([20]So all Yisra'el went down to the Pelishtites for anyone to sharpen his ploughshare, his pick, his axe and his sickle. [21]The charge was two thirds of a sheqel for the ploughshare and for the picks, and a third for a fork, for the axes and for setting the goad.) [22]So on a day of battle no sword or lance could be found in the hand of any of the company that was with Sha'ul and with Yonatan, though it could be found belonging to Sha'ul and to Yonatan his son.

A bright idea on the part of Yonatan (Yehonatan)

[23]So the Pelishtites' garrison had gone out to the pass at Mikmas.

14 A day came and Yonatan ben Sha'ul said to the boy who was his equipment-bearer, 'Come on, let's cross over to the Pelishtites' garrison that's across over there.' He didn't tell his father.

[2]Sha'ul was staying on the edge of Gib'ah, under the pomegranate tree which is at Migron. The company that was with him was some 600 men, [3]with Ahiyyah ben Ahitub, who was brother of Ikabod ben Pinhas, son of Eli, Yahweh's priest at Shiloh, carrying a chasuble; the company didn't know that Yonatan had gone.

[4]Between the crossings by which Yonatan sought to cross to the Pelishtites' garrison there was a craggy outcrop on one side of the crossing and a craggy outcrop on the other side of the crossing. The name of the one was Swamp and the name of the other was Thorn. [5]The one outcrop was a pillar on the north near Mikmas, the other on the south near Geba.

[6]So Yehonatan said to the boy who was his equipment-bearer, 'Come on, let's cross over to the garrison of these foreskinned men. Maybe Yahweh will act on our behalf, because Yahweh has no difficulty in delivering by many or by few.' [7]His equipment-bearer said to him, 'Do all that's in your mind. Follow your inclination. Here, I'm with you. Just what's in your mind.'

[8]Yehonatan said, 'Here, we're going to cross over to the men and we'll show ourselves to them. [9]If they say this to us, "Stay still till we reach you", we'll stand where we are and not go up to them. [10]But if they say this, "Come up to us", we'll go up, because Yahweh will have given them into our hand. This will be the sign for us.'

Yonatan and his boy

[11]So the two of them showed themselves to the Pelishtites' garrison, and the Pelishtites said, 'There, Hebrews coming out of the holes where they hid themselves.' [12]The men in the garrison avowed to Yonatan and to his equipment-bearer, 'Come up to us and we'll make you acknowledge something.' Yonatan said to his equipment-bearer, 'Come up after me, because Yahweh has given them into the hand of Yisra'el.'

[13]Yonatan went up on his hands and his feet with his equipment-bearer behind him. And they fell before Yonatan, with his equipment-bearer putting them to death behind him. [14]The first blow that Yonatan and his equipment-bearer struck was some twenty men, in some half a furlong of an acre of field. [15]There was trembling in the camp, in the field and in the entire company, while the garrison and the group wreaking devastation also trembled, and the earth shook. It became a supernatural trembling.

[16]Sha'ul's lookouts at Gib'ah-in-Binyamin saw: there, the turmoil was surging. It went hither and thither. [17]Sha'ul said to the company that was with him, 'Take a count, will you, and see who's gone from us.' They took a count and there, Yonatan and his equipment-bearer were not there. [18]Sha'ul said to Ahiyyah, 'Bring up God's chest' (because God's chest was at that time with the Yisra'elites).

[19]But while Sha'ul spoke to the priest, the turmoil that was in the Pelishtites' camp continued to go on and increase, so Sha'ul said to the priest, 'Take away your hand', [20]and Sha'ul and the entire company that was with him had themselves called out and came to the battle. There, one person's sword was against his neighbour, a very great confusion. [21]Some Hebrews had belonged to the Pelishtites in previous days, people who had gone up with them into the camp all round, and they too came to be with the Yisra'el that was with Sha'ul and Yonatan, [22]while all the Yisra'elites hiding in the highland of Ephrayim heard that the Pelishtites had fled, and they too caught up with them in battle. [23a]Yahweh delivered Yisra'el that day.

A taste of honey

[23b]When the battle passed beyond Bet Aven, [24]the Yisra'elites were hard pressed that day. Sha'ul had got the company to swear, 'Cursed is the man who eats a meal before evening, when I've taken redress from my enemies', and the entire company hadn't tasted a meal.
[25]Now the whole country came into the forest and there was honey on the face of the field. [26]So the company came into the forest, and there, honey flowing. But no one put his hand to his mouth, because the company was in awe of the oath.
[27]But Yonatan hadn't heard his father get the company to swear, and he stretched out the end of the cane that was in his hand, dipped it into a honeycomb and brought his hand back to his mouth, and his eyes lit up. [28]Someone from the company avowed, 'Your father actually got the company to swear, "Cursed is the man who eats food today", and the company has got weary.' [29]Yonatan said, 'My father has brought disaster on the country. Please see that my eyes lit up when I tasted this bit of honey. [30]Yes, if only the company had actually eaten of its enemies' spoil that it found today, because now wouldn't the calamity for the Pelishtites have been great.'
[31]They struck the Pelishtites down that day from Mikmas to Ayyalon, but the company got very weary. [32]So the company pounced on the spoil, got flock, herd and calves, and slaughtered them on the ground. The company ate with the blood.
[33]People told Sha'ul: 'There, the company are doing wrong in relation to Yahweh by eating with the blood.' He said, 'You've broken faith. Roll a big stone to me now.' [34]Sha'ul said, 'Spread out among the company and say to them, "Bring up to me each one his ox and each one his sheep and slaughter it here, and you can eat. You are not to do wrong in relation to Yahweh by eating with the blood."' So the entire company brought up, each one, his ox in his possession that night and slaughtered it there. [35]Sha'ul built an altar for Yahweh. It was the first he built as an altar for Yahweh.

The fog of war clarified

[36]Sha'ul said, 'Let's go down after the Pelishtites tonight and plunder among them till morning light, and not let one person remain among them.' They said, 'Do all that's good in your eyes.' But the priest said, 'Let's draw near to God here.' [37]So Sha'ul asked of God, 'Shall I go down after the Pelishtites? Will you give them into Yisra'el's hand?' But he didn't answer him that day. [38]Sha'ul said, 'Come up to here, all you cornerstones of the company. Get to know and see how this wrong has happened today. [39]Because as Yahweh who delivers Yisra'el lives, even if it is through Yonatan my son, he will absolutely be put to death.' From the entire company there was no one answered him.
[40]He said to all Yisra'el, 'You're to be on one side, and I and Yonatan my son will be on the other side.' The company said to Sha'ul, 'Do what is good in your eyes.' [41]Sha'ul said to Yahweh the God of Yisra'el, 'Grant the truth.' Yonatan and Sha'ul were taken and the company came out. [42]Sha'ul said, 'Make it fall between me and Yonatan my son.' Yonatan was taken.
[43]Sha'ul said to Yonatan, 'Do tell me what you've done.' Yonatan told him: 'I just took a taste, with the end of the cane that was in my hand, of a bit of honey. Here I am. I will die.' [44]Sha'ul said, 'May God do thus and may he do more [to me], because you absolutely must die, Yonatan.' [45]But the company said to Sha'ul, 'Is Yonatan to die when he brought about this great deliverance in Yisra'el? Far be it, as Yahweh lives, if a hair of his head is to fall to the ground, because he has acted this day with God.' So the company redeemed Yonatan and he didn't die. [46]But Sha'ul gave up from following the Pelishtites, and the Pelishtites went to their place.

The successful king

[47]When Sha'ul had taken the kingship over Yisra'el, he did battle all round against all his enemies, against Mo'ab, against the Ammonites, against Edom, against the kings of Tsobah and against the Pelishtites. Anyone who would turn his face, he treated as faithless. [48]He acted forcefully, struck down Amaleq and rescued Yisra'el from the hand of its despoiler.
[49]Sha'ul's sons were Yonatan, Yishvi and Malki-shua. The name of his two daughters – the name of the firstborn, Merab, the name of the younger, Mikal. [50]The name of Sha'ul's wife: Ahino'am bat Ahima'ats. The name of his army officer: Abiner ben Ner, Sha'ul's uncle. [51]Both Qish, Sha'ul's father, and Ner, Abner's father, was Abi'el's son.
[52]There was fierce battling against the Pelishtites all Sha'ul's time, but Sha'ul would see anyone who was a strong man or any forceful individual and get him to join him.
15 Shemu'el said to Sha'ul, 'It was me that Yahweh sent to anoint you as king over his people, over Yisra'el. So listen now to the voice (the words) of Yahweh. [2]Yahweh of Armies has said this: "I am attending to what Amaleq did to Yisra'el when he set upon them on the way, when they were going up from Misrayim. [3]Now go and strike down Amaleq and devote everything that it has. You will not spare it. Put to death both man and woman, both child and baby, both ox and sheep, both camel and donkey."'
[4]Sha'ul got the company to listen, and numbered them at Tela'im, 200,000 men on foot and 10,000 men from Judah. [5]Sha'ul came as far as the town of Amaleq and lay in wait in the wadi. [6]Sha'ul said to the Qenites, 'Go, move away, go down from among the Amaleqites, so I don't gather you up with them, given that you acted in commitment with all the Yisra'elites when they went up from Misrayim.' So the Qenites departed from among Amaleq.

The king who wasn't ruthless enough

[7]Sha'ul struck down Amaleq from Havilah until you come to Shur, which is east of Misrayim. [8]He captured Agag king of Amaleq alive, while the entire company he devoted with the mouth of the sword. [9]But Sha'ul and the company spared Agag and the best of the flock, the herd, the second-born and the lambs, everything that was good. They were not willing to devote them. But every object that was despised and emaciated – they devoted it.
[10]Yahweh's word came to Shemu'el: [11]'I relent of having Sha'ul reign as king, because he's turned from following me and hasn't implemented my words.' It enraged Shemu'el and he cried out to Yahweh all night.

[12]Shemu'el started early in the morning to meet Sha'ul. It was told Shemu'el, 'Sha'ul's come to Carmel. Here, he's been
putting up a monument for himself. Then he turned round and passed on, and went down to Gilgal.'
[13]Shemu'el came to Sha'ul, and Sha'ul said to him, 'Blessed are you by Yahweh! I've implemented Yahweh's word.'
[14]Shemu'el said, 'So what's this sound of a flock in my ears, and the sound of a herd that I'm hearing?' [15]Sha'ul said, 'They
brought them from the Amaleqites, because the company spared the best of the flock and the herd to sacrifice for Yahweh your
God. The rest we devoted.'
[16]Shemu'el said to Sha'ul, 'Slow down, and I shall tell you what Yahweh spoke to me last night.' He said to him, 'Speak.'
[17]Shemu'el said, 'Though you were small in your eyes, you're the head of Yisra'el's clans. Yahweh anointed you as king over
Yisra'el [18]and Yahweh sent you on a journey. He said to you, "Go and devote the wrongdoers, Amaleq. Do battle against them
until you've finished them off." [19]Why didn't you listen to Yahweh's voice but pounce on the spoil and do what was bad in
Yahweh's eyes?'

Listening is better than sacrificing

[20]Sha'ul said to Shemu'el, 'I listened to Yahweh's voice! I went on the journey that Yahweh sent me on. I brought Agag king
of Amaleq, but Amaleq I devoted. [21]The company took flock and herd from the spoil, the first of what was to be devoted, to
sacrifice for Yahweh your God at Gilgal.' [22]Shemu'el said,

Are burnt offerings and sacrifices as pleasing to Yahweh
as listening to Yahweh's voice?
Here, listening is better than sacrificing,
heeding than the fat of rams.
[23]Because rebellion: the wrongdoing that comes from divination,
arrogance: the trouble that comes from effigies.
Since you rejected Yahweh's word,
he has rejected you from being king.

[24]Sha'ul said to Shemu'el, 'I did wrong, because I transgressed Yahweh's bidding and your words, because I was afraid of the
company and I listened to their voice. [25]But now, please carry my wrongdoing. Come back with me and I will bow low to
Yahweh.' [26]Shemu'el said to Sha'ul, 'I will not come back with you, because you rejected Yahweh's word and Yahweh has
rejected you from being king over Yisra'el.' [27]And Shemu'el turned round to go.
He took strong hold of the corner of his coat, and it tore, [28]and Shemu'el said to him, 'Yahweh has torn the kingship of Yisra'el
from you today and given it to a neighbour of yours who is better than you. [29]Further, Yisra'el's Enduring One does not speak
falsely and does not relent, because he's not a human being so as to relent.'
[30]He said, 'I did wrong. Now please honour me in the presence of the elders of my people and in the presence of Yisra'el, and
come back with me, and I will bow low to Yahweh your God.' [31]So Shemu'el went back after Sha'ul and Sha'ul bowed low to
Yahweh.
[32]Shemu'el said, 'Bring up to me Agag king of Amaleq.' Agag went to him in chains. Agag said, 'Yes! The bitterness of death
is departing!' [33]But Shemu'el said, 'As your sword made women childless, so your mother will become childless beyond other
women.' And Shemu'el cut Agag down before Yahweh at Gilgal.

Yahweh sees into the heart

[34]Shemu'el went to The Height while Sha'ul went up to his home at Gib'ah-of-Sha'ul. [35]Shemu'el didn't see Sha'ul again until
the day of his death, because Shemu'el took up grieving for Sha'ul when Yahweh had relented that he had made Sha'ul king over
Yisra'el.
16 But Yahweh said to Shemu'el, 'How long are you going to take up grieving for Sha'ul, when I myself have rejected him
from being king over Yisra'el? Fill your horn with oil and go: I shall send you to Yishay [Jesse] the Bet-lehemite because
I've seen a king for myself among his sons.' [2]Shemu'el said, 'How can I go? Sha'ul will hear and kill me.' Yahweh said, 'You're
to take a heifer in your possession and say "It's to sacrifice for Yahweh that I've come", [3]and invite Yishay to the sacrifice. I
myself will let you know what you're to do and you're to anoint for me the one that I say to you.'
[4]Shemu'el did what Yahweh spoke. He came to Bet Lehem, and the town's elders trembled to meet him and said, 'Does your
coming mean things are well?' [5]He said, 'Things are well. It's to sacrifice for Yahweh that I've come. Make yourselves sacred
and come with me to the sacrifice.' He made Yishay and his sons sacred and invited them to the sacrifice.
[6]When they came, he saw Eli'ab and said, 'Surely his anointed is in front of Yahweh!' [7]But Yahweh said to Shemu'el, 'Don't
look at his appearance or at the loftiness to which he stands, because I've rejected him, because it's not what a human being sees,
because a human being sees what appears to the eyes, but Yahweh sees into the mind.' [8]Yishay called Abinadab and had him pass
before Shemu'el, but he said, 'Yahweh has not chosen this one either.' [9]Yishay had Shammah pass, but he said, 'Yahweh has not
chosen this one either.' [10]Yishay had his seven sons pass before Shemu'el, but Shemu'el said to Yishay, 'Yahweh has not chosen
these.'

1 Samuel 16: Sha'ul (Saul) and David

Yahweh's good spirit and Yahweh's bad spirit

[11]Shemu'el said to Yishay, 'Have the boys come to an end?' He said, 'The little one still remains, but there, he's tending the flock.' Shemu'el said to Yishay, 'Send and get him, because we won't sit down till he comes here.' [12]So he sent and brought him. He was tanned, with lovely eyes, good-looking. Yahweh said, 'Get up, anoint him, because this is the one.' [13]Shemu'el got the horn of oil and anointed him among his brothers. Yahweh's spirit thrust itself on to David from that day onwards. And Shemu'el set off and went to The Height.

[14]Now Yahweh's spirit had departed from Sha'ul and a bad spirit from Yahweh had terrified him. [15]Sha'ul's servants said to him, 'Please, here, a bad spirit from God is terrifying you. [16]Please, our lord should say that your servants who are before you should look for someone who knows how to play the guitar. When the bad spirit from God is upon you, he would play and it would be good for you.' [17]Sha'ul said to his servants, 'Look for someone who is good at playing for me, please, and bring him to me.' [18]One of the boys answered, 'Here, I've seen a son of Yishay the Bet-lehemite who knows how to play. He's a forceful strong man, a man of battle, but smart with words and good-looking, and Yahweh is with him.'

[19]So Sha'ul sent envoys to Yishay and said, 'Send me David your son, who's with the flock.' [20]Yishay got a donkey, bread, a skin of wine and a kid-goat from the flock, and sent them by the hand of David his son to Sha'ul. [21]David came to Sha'ul and stood by him. He liked him a lot and he became an equipment-bearer for him. [22]Sha'ul sent to Yishay to say, 'May David please stand before me, because he's found grace in my eyes.' [23]When the spirit from God would come to Sha'ul, David would get the guitar and play by hand, and there would be relief for Sha'ul. It was good for him. The bad spirit would depart from him.

The frightening champion

17 The Pelishtites gathered their camp for battle. They gathered at Sokoh which belongs to Yehudah and camped between Sokoh and Azeqah, at Dammim End, [2]while Sha'ul and the Yisra'elites gathered and camped in Oak Vale and lined up for battle to meet the Pelishtites. [3]The Pelishtites were standing on a mountain on one side and Yisra'el was standing on a mountain on the other side, with the ravine between them.

[4]A representative went out from the Pelishtites' camps, Golyat [Goliath] his name, from Gat, his height three metres and a handbreadth, [5]a copper helmet on his head. He was clothed in a coat of mail (the weight of the coat was 5,000 sheqels of copper), [6]with copper shin guards on his legs, a copper javelin between his shoulders, [7]the wood of his lance like a weavers' rod, the point of his lance 600 sheqels of iron, and a shield-bearer walking before him.

[8]He stood and called to the ranks of Yisra'el: 'Why should you go out and line up for battle? I'm the Pelishtite, aren't I, and you're Sha'ul's servants. Choose yourselves someone who will go down against me. [9]If he succeeds in battling with me and strikes me down, we'll become servants to you. If I'm the one who succeeds over him and strikes him down, you'll become servants to us and serve us.' [10]The Pelishtite said, 'I myself revile Yisra'el's ranks this day. Give me a man and we'll do battle together.'

[11]Sha'ul and all Yisra'el listened to these words of the Pelishtite, and they were scared, very frightened.

The boy gets the chance to see

[12]Now David was the son of an Ephratite individual from Bet Lehem in Yehudah; his name was Yishay. He had eight sons. In the time of Sha'ul the man was old, going on in age among men. [13]Yishay's three eldest sons had gone, gone after Sha'ul to the battle. The names of his three sons who had gone into the battle were Eli'ab the firstborn, his second Abinadab and the third Shammah, [14]while David was the youngest. The three oldest had gone after Sha'ul, [15]while David was going and coming back from being with Sha'ul to shepherd his father's flock in Bet-lehem.

[16]The Pelishtite went up, starting early and doing it in the evening, and took his stand for forty days.

[17]Yishay said to David his son, 'Get a barrel of this roasted grain and ten loaves of this bread, please, and run them to the camp for your brothers. [18]And these ten wedges of cheese, you're to bring to the divisional officer. You're to attend to your brothers, as to whether things are well with them, and get some reassurance from them, [19]while Sha'ul and they and all the Yisra'elites are in Oak Vale doing battle with the Pelishtites.'

[20]David started early in the morning, left the flock to a keeper, picked things up, went as Yishay had ordered him, and came to the encampment when the force was going out to the line and shouting for the battle. [21]Yisra'el and the Pelishtites lined up, line to meet line.

[22]David left the things with him in the hand of the equipment-keeper and ran to the line. He came and asked his brothers whether things were well with them. [23]While he was speaking with them, there, the representative was going up (Golyat the Pelishtite was his name, from Gat) from the Pelishtites' lines. He spoke these same words, and David listened.

You're too young and inexperienced

[24]When all the Yisra'elites saw the man, they fled from before him. They were very frightened. [25]A Yisra'elite said, 'Have you seen this man going up? Because he's going up to revile Yisra'el. The man who strikes him down, the king will give him great wealth and give him his daughter and make his father's household tax-free in Yisra'el.'

[26]So David said to the men standing with him, 'What will be done for the man who strikes down that Pelishtite and removes reviling from Yisra'el? Because who is this foreskinned Pelishtite that he's reviled the lines of the living God?' [27]The company said to him this same thing, 'So it will be done for the man who strikes him down.'

[28]Eli'ab, David's older brother, heard him speaking to the men, and Eli'ab's anger raged at David. He said, 'Why is it that you've come down? And who did you leave that little flock alone in the wilderness with? I myself know your assertiveness and the bad inclination in your mind, that you've come down in order to see the battle.' [29]David said, 'What have I done now? Wasn't that just a word?' [30]He turned from being near him towards another man and said this same thing. The company gave word back to him that was the same as the first.

[31]The words that David spoke were heard and they told Sha'ul, and he got hold of him. [32]David said to Sha'ul, 'No one's heart should fail him. Your servant himself will go and battle with this Pelishtite.' [33]Sha'ul said to David, 'You can't succeed in going to this Pelishtite to battle with him, because you're a boy and he's been a strong man from his boyhood.'

How to recycle your killer instinct

[34]David said to Sha'ul, 'Your servant has been shepherding over the flock for his father. A lion or a bear comes and carries off a sheep from the flock, [35]and I go out after it and strike it down and rescue it from its mouth. It rises up against me and I get strong hold of it by its beard and strike it down and put it to death. [36]Both lion and bear your servant has struck down. This foreskinned Pelishtite will be like one of them, because he's reviled the ranks of the living God.' [37]And David said, 'Yahweh who rescued me from the hand of the lion and from the hand of the bear: he will rescue me from the hand of this Pelishtite.' Sha'ul said to David, 'Go, and Yahweh be with you.'

[38]Sha'ul clothed David in his uniform and put a copper helmet on his head and clothed him in a coat of mail. [39]David wrapped his sword over his uniform and resolved to walk, because he hadn't tried it. But David said to Sha'ul, 'I can't walk in these because I haven't tried them.' So David removed them off him, [40]took his stick in his hand, chose five smooth stones for himself from the wadi, put them in the shepherds' bag which he had, in the pouch, with his sling in his hand, and went up to the Pelishtite.

[41]The Pelishtite kept walking and drawing near to David, with the shield-bearer before him.
[42]The Pelishtite looked out and saw David, and despised him because he was a boy, tanned and lovely in appearance. [43]The Pelishtite said to David, ‘Am I a dog that you’re coming against me with sticks?’ And the Pelishtite slighted David by his gods. [44]The Pelishtite said to David, ‘Come to me, and I’ll give your flesh to the birds of the heavens and to the animals of the wild.’

There is a God in Yisra’el

[45]David said to the Pelishtite, ‘You’re coming against me with sword, with lance and with javelin, but I’m coming against you in the name of Yahweh of Armies the God of Yisra’el’s lines, whom you’ve reviled. [46]This day Yahweh will deliver you into my hand and I shall strike you down and remove your head from you. I shall give the carcases of the Pelishtites’ camp this day to the birds of the heavens and to the creatures of the earth. All the earth will acknowledge that Yisra’el has a God, [47]and this entire congregation will acknowledge that it is not by sword or by lance that Yahweh delivers, because the battle belongs to Yahweh and he will give you people into our hand.’
[48]When the Pelishtite got up and walked and drew near to meet David, David hurried and ran to the line to meet the Pelishtite. [49]David put his hand into the bag, got a stone from there, slung it and struck the Pelishtite on his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead. He fell on his face to the ground. [50]So David was stronger than the Pelishtite with sling and with stone. He struck the Pelishtite down and put him to death. There was no sword in David’s hand, [51]so David ran, stood over the Pelishtite, got his sword, pulled it from its sheath and put him to death. He cut off his head with it.
The Pelishtites saw that their strong man was dead, and they fled. [52]The Yisra’elites and Yehudahites got up, shouted, and pursued after the Pelishtites until you come to the ravine and to the gateways of Eqron. The Pelishtites who were run through fell on the Sha’arim road as far as Gat and as far as Eqron. [53]The Yisra’elites came back from chasing after the Pelishtites and despoiled their camp. [54]David got the Pelishtite’s head and brought it to Yerushalaim [Jerusalem]. His equipment he put in his own tent.

Sha’ul has struck down his thousands, David his ten thousands

[55]When Sha’ul saw David going out to meet the Pelishtite, he said to Abner, the army officer, ‘The boy, whose son is he, Abner?’ Abner said, ‘On your life, Your Majesty, if I know.’ [56]The king said, ‘You ask whose son the kid is.’ [57]When David came back from striking down the Pelishtite, Abner got him and brought him before Sha’ul, with the Pelishtite’s head in his hand. [58]Sha’ul said to him, ‘Whose son are you, my boy?’ David said, ‘The son of your servant Yishay the Bet Lehemite.’
18 When he’d finished speaking to Sha’ul, the person of Yehonatan bound itself to David’s person. Yehonatan became loyal to him as a person like himself. [2]Sha’ul took him that day and didn’t let him go back to his father’s household. [3]Yehonatan and David solemnized a pact because he was loyal to him as a person like himself. [4]Yehonatan took off the coat that he had on and gave it to David, with his uniform, and along with his sword, with his bow and with his belt.
[5]David went out wherever Sha’ul would send him; as he was successful, Sha’ul set him over the men of battle. It was good in the eyes of the entire company, and also in the eyes of Sha’ul’s servants.
[6]But when they had come home, when David got back from striking down the Pelishtite, the women came out from all the towns in Yisra’el for singing and dances to meet King Sha’ul, with tambourines, with celebration and with triangles. [7]The women who were having fun chanted,

Sha’ul has struck down his thousands,
David his ten thousands.

[8]And it really enraged Sha’ul. This thing was bad in his eyes. He said, ‘They’ve given David ten thousands and given me thousands. Only the kingship will yet be his.’ [9]Sha’ul was eyeing David from that day on.

Daughters are just political pawns

[10]Next day a bad spirit from God thrust itself on Sha’ul and he prophesied inside the house while David was playing by hand, as he did each day. There was a lance in Sha’ul’s hand [11]and Sha’ul threw the lance. He said ‘I’ll pin David to the wall’; but David turned from before him, twice. [12]Sha’ul was afraid before David because Yahweh was with him and had departed from Sha’ul, [13]and Sha’ul moved him away from being with him and made him a divisional officer, so he went out and came in before the company. [14]David was successful on all his journeys; Yahweh was with him. [15]Sha’ul saw that he was very successful, and he was in dread before him, [16]but all Yisra’el and Yehudah loved David, because he was going out and coming in before them.
[17]Sha’ul said to David, ‘Here’s my oldest daughter Merab. I’ll give her to you as wife. Only be a forceful man for me and engage in Yahweh’s battles’ (Sha’ul had said, ‘My hand must not be against him. The Pelishtites’ hand is to be against him’). [18]David said to Sha’ul, ‘Who am I and what is my life, my father’s kin-group in Yisra’el, that I should become the king’s son-in-law?’
[19]Then at the time for giving Merab, Sha’ul’s daughter, to David, she was given as wife to Adri’el the Meholatite. [20]But Mikal, Sha’ul’s daughter, loved David, and they told Sha’ul. The thing was all right in his eyes. [21]Sha’ul said, ‘I’ll give her to him and she’ll become a snare to him, so the Pelishtites’ hand may be against him.’ So Sha’ul said to David, ‘Through number two you’re to become my son-in-law, right now.’

Twice as many deaths as Sha'ul asks for

[22]Sha'ul ordered his servants, 'Speak to David quietly: "Here, the king delights in you and all his servants love you. So now, become the king's son-in-law."' [23]The king's servants spoke these words in David's ears. David said, 'Is it a slight thing in your eyes, becoming the king's son-in-law, when I am a destitute, slight person?' [24]Sha'ul's servants told him, 'These very words David spoke.'

[25]Sha'ul said, 'Say this to David: "The king will have no delight in a marriage gift except in a hundred Pelishtite foreskins, to have redress on the king's enemies"' (Sha'ul thought to have David fall by the hand of the Pelishtites). [26]His servants told these things to David, and the thing was all right in David's eyes, for becoming the king's son-in-law. The days were not complete [27]but David got up and went, he and his men, and struck down 200 of the Pelishtites. David brought their foreskins and they fulfilled the number for the king so that he might become the king's son-in-law. So Sha'ul gave him Mikal his daughter as wife.

[28]Sha'ul saw and acknowledged that Yahweh was with David, and Mikal Sha'ul's daughter loved him, [29]and Sha'ul grew more afraid of David. Sha'ul became hostile to David all the time.

[30]The Pelishtites' officers went out, and as many times as they went out, David was more successful than all Sha'ul's servants. His name was highly esteemed.

19 Sha'ul spoke to Yonatan his son and to all his servants about bringing about David's death, but Yehonatan Sha'ul's son delighted in David very much, [2]and Yehonatan told David: 'Sha'ul my father is seeking to bring about your death, so now, please keep watch in the morning, stay in a secret place and hide. [3]I myself will go out and stand at my father's hand in the fields where you are, and I'll speak to my father about you. I'll see what, and tell you.'

A bad spirit from Yahweh

[4]Yehonatan spoke good things of David to Sha'ul his father. He said to him, 'The king shouldn't do wrong to his servant, to David, because he hasn't done wrong to you, and because his actions have been very good for you. [5]He put his life in the palm of his hand and struck down the Pelishtite, and Yahweh brought about a great deliverance for all Yisra'el. You saw and you rejoiced. Why should you do wrong, shedding the blood of a person who is free of guilt, by bringing about David's death for nothing?' [6]Sha'ul listened to Yehonatan's voice, and Sha'ul swore, 'As Yahweh lives, if he is put to death . . .'

[7]So Yehonatan called to David and Yehonatan told him all these things, and Yehonatan brought David to Sha'ul and he was before him as in previous days. [8]Again there was a battle and David went out to battle with the Pelishtites and struck them down in a great rout, and they fled from before him.

[9]But a bad spirit from Yahweh came on Sha'ul. He was sitting in his house with his lance in his hand, and David was playing by hand, [10]and Sha'ul sought to pin David to the wall, but he slipped away from before Sha'ul, and he pinned the lance into the wall. David fled and escaped that night. [11]Sha'ul sent envoys to David's house to keep watch on him and put him to death in the morning, but Mikal his wife told David, 'If you don't escape with your life tonight, you'll be put to death tomorrow.'

Is Sha'ul among the prophets, too?

[12]So Mikal let David down through the window and he went and escaped and took flight. [13]Mikal got the effigies and put them in the bed, and put a goat's hair quilt at its head and covered it with clothing. [14]Sha'ul sent envoys to get David, but she said, 'He's ill.' [15]So Sha'ul sent the envoys to see David, saying 'Bring him up to me in the bed, to put him to death.' [16]The envoys came and there, the effigies in the bed and the goat's hair quilt at its head. [17]Sha'ul said to Mikal, 'Why did you beguile me like that and help my enemy get away so he escaped?' Mikal said to Sha'ul, 'He himself said to me, "Help me get away. Why should I put you to death?"'

[18]When David took flight and escaped, he came to Shemu'el at The Height and told him all that Sha'ul had done to him. He went, he and Shemu'el, and they stayed in the cabins. [19]It was told Sha'ul, 'There, David's in the cabins at The Height.' [20]Sha'ul sent envoys to get David. He saw a group of prophets prophesying, and Shemu'el standing presiding over them. God's spirit came on Sha'ul's envoys and they too prophesied. [21]People told Sha'ul, so he sent more envoys, but they prophesied, too. Sha'ul again sent, the third envoys, and they prophesied, too.

[22]So he also went to The Height. He came as far as the great cistern which is at Seku and asked, 'Where are Shemu'el and David?' Someone said, 'There, in the cabins at The Height.' [23]He went there, to the cabins at The Height, and God's spirit came on him, too. He walked on and prophesied until he came to the cabins at The Height. [24]He too stripped off his clothes, and he too prophesied before Shemu'el. He fell down naked all that day and all night. That's why they say, 'Is Sha'ul among the prophets, too?'

A test of Sha'ul's attitude

20 David took flight from the cabins at The Height and came and said before Yehonatan, 'What have I done, what is my waywardness, what is my wrongdoing before your father, that he is seeking my life?' [2]He said to him, 'Far be it! You will not die. Here, my father doesn't do anything big or anything small but he has a word in my ear. Why would my father conceal this thing from me? This won't be.' [3]But David also swore, 'Your father does know that I've found grace in your eyes, and he's said, "Yehonatan isn't to know this, so he won't be pained." Actually, as Yahweh lives and as you yourself live, there's really just a step between me and death.' [4]Yehonatan said to David, 'What you yourself say, I will do for you.'

[5]David said to Yehonatan, 'Here, tomorrow is the new month. I'm definitely to sit with the king to eat. You should send me off and I'll hide in the fields until the third evening. [6]If your father does attend to me, you're to say, "David did ask me about running

to Bet-lehem, his town, because there's the annual sacrifice for the entire kin-group there." [7]If he says this: "Good", things are well for your servant, but if it really enrages him, acknowledge that some bad action is certain from him. [8]You're to act in commitment with your servant because you've brought your servant into a pact before Yahweh with you. If there's waywardness in me, put me to death yourself. Why is it that you should bring me back to your father?'
[9]Yehonatan said, 'Far be it from you! Because if I do get to know that some bad action by my father is certain to come on you, wouldn't I tell you about it?' [10]David said to Yehonatan, 'Who will tell me if your father gives you a tough answer?'

Loyalty

[11]Yehonatan said to David, 'Come on, let's go out to the fields.' The two of them went out to the fields, [12]and Yehonatan said to David, 'Yahweh the God of Yisra'el! When I search out my father this very time tomorrow or the third day, and there – things are good for David, I shall then send to you and have a word in your ear, won't I. [13]May Yahweh act thus to Yehonatan and act thus again: when some bad action towards you seems good to my father, I will have a word in your ear and send you off, and you can go to where things will be well. And may Yahweh be with you as he was with my father. [14]While I'm still alive, will you not act in Yahweh's commitment with me, and I will not die. [15]And will you not cut off your commitment from my household, ever, not even when Yahweh has cut off David's enemies, each one, from the face of the ground. [16]Yehonatan has solemnized it with David's household. Yahweh will look for it from the hand of (the enemies of) David.' [17]Yehonatan again got David to swear by his loyalty to him, because he was loyal to him with the loyalty of his person.
[18]Yehonatan said to him, 'Tomorrow is the new month and you'll draw attention, because your seat will draw attention. [19]The third day, go right down and come to the place where you hid on the day you did it before, and stay beside the Ezel Stone. [20]When I myself shoot three arrows by the side of it, directing them for myself to a target, [21]there – I shall send the boy, "Go, find the arrows." If I do say to the boy, "There, the arrows are away from you over here, get them", you're to come, because things are well for you, and there's nothing, as Yahweh lives. [22]But if I say this to the kid, "There, the arrows are away from you over there", go, because Yahweh has sent you off. [23]The word that we have spoken, you and I: here, Yahweh is between you and me permanently.'

Rage and shaming

[24]So David hid in the fields. The new month came and the king sat down to eat for the meal. [25]The king sat on his seat as usual, in the seat by the wall. Yehonatan got up and Abner sat at Sha'ul's side, but David's place drew attention. [26]Sha'ul didn't speak a thing that day because (he said), 'There's been some chance thing so that he's not pure. Yes, he's not pure.'
[27]Then the day after the new month, the second day, David's place drew attention, and Sha'ul said to Yehonatan his son, 'Why didn't ben Yishay come to the meal either yesterday or today?' [28]Yehonatan answered Sha'ul, 'David did ask me about going to Bet Lehem. [29]He said, "Please send me off, because we have a kin-group sacrifice in the town and my brother has given me an order. So now, if I've found grace in your eyes, please, I'll escape and see my brothers." That's why he hasn't come to the king's table.'
[30]But Sha'ul's anger raged at Yehonatan. He said to him, 'Son of a perverse, rebellious woman! I know that you're choosing ben Yishay, aren't you, to your shame and to the shame of your mother's nakedness? [31]Because all the days that ben Yishay is alive on the earth, you and your kingship won't be established. So now, send and get him to me, because he deserves death.'
[32] Yehonatan answered Sha'ul his father, 'Why is he to be put to death, what has he done?' [33]And Sha'ul threw the lance at him to strike him down. So Yehonatan acknowledged that it was determined by his father to put David to death. [34]Yehonatan got up from the table in an angry rage and didn't eat a meal on the second day of the new month because he felt pain for David because his father had shamed him.

The play with the arrows

[35]In the morning Yehonatan went out to the fields for the meeting with David, a young boy with him. [36]He said to his boy, 'Run, please find the arrows that I'm shooting.' When the boy ran, and he shot an arrow so that it passed him, [37]the boy came to the location of the arrow that Yehonatan had shot, and Yehonatan called after the boy, 'Isn't the arrow away from you, over there?' [38]Yehonatan called after the boy, 'Hurry, be quick, don't stand there!' So Yehonatan's boy gathered the arrows and came to his lord. [39]The boy didn't know anything. Only Yehonatan and David knew about the thing. [40]Yehonatan gave the equipment to the boy that he had and said to him, 'Go, bring it to the town.'
[41]When the boy had come and David had got up from towards the south, he fell on his face to the ground and bowed low three times, and they kissed one another and cried with one another, until David did so greatly. [42]Yehonatan said to David, 'Go to where it will be well, because the two of us have sworn in Yahweh's name, "Yahweh be between me and you and between my offspring and your offspring permanently."' So David got up and went, while Yehonatan came to the town.
21 David came to Nob, to Ahimelek the priest. Ahimelek trembled to meet David. He said to him, 'Why are you alone, and there's no one with you?' [2]David said to Ahimelek the priest, 'When the king gave me an order about a matter, he said to me, "No one is to know anything about the matter on which I'm sending you and about which I gave you order." I've let the boys know about such and such a place. [3]So now, what do you have at hand? Do put five loaves of bread in my hand, or what can be found.'

Re-enter Golyat's sword

[4]The priest answered David, ‘There’s no ordinary bread at hand. Rather, there’s sacred bread, if the boys have only kept themselves from women.’ [5]David answered the priest, ‘No, women have been withheld from us, as in previous days. When I’ve gone out, the boys’ bodies have been sacred, when it was an ordinary journey. How much more today, when it’s sacred, [they are sacred] in body.’ [6]So the priest gave him what was sacred, because there wasn’t any bread there except the presence bread that had been removed from before Yahweh so as to put warm bread, at the time when it’s taken away.

[7]Now there that day, held back before Yahweh, was one of Sha’ul’s servants; his name was Do’eg the Edomite, chief of Sha’ul’s shepherds.

[8]David said to Ahimelek, ‘Isn’t there a lance or a sword at hand here? Because I didn’t take my sword or my equipment in my hand, because the king’s business was pressing.’ [9]The priest said, ‘The sword of Golyat the Pelishtite whom you struck down in Oaks Vale – here, it’s wrapped in a cloth behind the chasuble. If you’re to take it for yourself, take it, because there’s none other apart from it here.’ David said, ‘There’s none like it. Give it to me.’

[10]So David set off and took flight that day from before Sha’ul and came to Akish king of Gat. [11]Akish’s servants said to him, ‘This is David, the king of the country, isn’t it. This is the man they chant about during the dances, isn’t it:

Sha’ul has struck down his thousands,
David his ten thousands.

[12]David took these words to heart and became much afraid before Akish the king of Gat. [13]So he disguised his good sense before their eyes and behaved oddly while in their control. He scratched on the gateway doors and let his saliva go down his beard. [14]Akish said to his servants, ‘Here, you see a man who’s acting crazy. Why do you bring him to me? [15]Am I lacking crazy people, that you bring this one to act crazy for me? Is this man to come into my household?’

The Adullam Cave

22 David went from there and escaped to the Adullam Cave. His brothers and his father’s entire household heard, and they went down to him there. [2]Everyone under pressure, everyone who had a creditor and everyone who was personally bitter collected themselves together to him, and he became their leader. There were some 400 men with him.

[3]David went from there to The WatchTower in Mo’ab and said to the king of Mo’ab, ‘May my father and my mother please come out to be with you until I know what God will do for me.’ [4]So he led them into the presence of the king of Mo’ab and they stayed with him all the time David was at the stronghold. [5]But Gad the prophet said to David, ‘You’re not to stay at the stronghold. Go, take yourself to the region of Yehudah.’ So David went, and came to the Heret Forest.

[6]Sha’ul heard that David and the men who were with him had been discovered. Sha’ul was sitting at Gib’ah under the oak on the height, with his lance in his hand and all his servants standing by him. [7]Sha’ul said to his servants who were standing by him, ‘Listen, please, Binyaminites. Will ben Yishay give fields and vineyards to all of you? Will he make all of you divisional officers or section officers? [8]Because all of you have conspired against me. There’s no one who has a word in my ear when my son solemnizes things with ben Yishay. There’s none of you who’s feeling sick for me and has a word in my ear when my son has set up my servant to lie in ambush for me this very day.’

[9]Do’eg the Edomite (he was standing with Sha’ul’s servants) answered, ‘I saw ben Yishay coming to Nob, to Ahimelek ben Ahitub. [10]He asked of Yahweh for him, and gave him provisions, and gave him the sword of Golyat the Pelishtite.’ [11]The king sent to call for Ahimelek ben Ahitub the priest, and his father’s entire household, the priests who were at Nob. All of them came to the king.

The danger of being identified with David

[12]Sha’ul said, ‘Listen, will you, ben Ahitub.’ He said, ‘Here I am, my lord.’ [13]Sha’ul said to him, ‘Why have you conspired against me, you and ben Yishay, in giving him bread and a sword, and asking of God for him, so he can rise up against me and lie in ambush this very day?’ [14]Ahimelek answered the king, ‘But who among all your servants is as trustworthy as David, the king’s son-in-law, the officer over your bodyguard and honoured in your household? [15]Was it today I started asking of God for him? Far be it from me. The king should not lay anything against his servant, against my father’s entire household, because your servant didn’t know anything small or great about all this.’

[16]But the king said, ‘You are definitely to die, Ahimelek, you and your father’s entire household.’ [17]The king said to the runners standing by him, ‘Turn round and put Yahweh’s priests to death, because their hand is also with David, and because they knew that he was taking flight and they didn’t have a word in my ear.’ The king’s servants were not willing to put out their hand to attack Yahweh’s priests, [18]so the king said to Do’eg, ‘You turn and attack the priests.’ Do’eg the Edomite turned and was the one who attacked the priests and put them to death that day, eighty-five men bearing the linen chasuble. [19]He struck down Nob, the priests’ town, with the mouth of the sword – both man and woman, child and baby, ox, donkey and sheep, with the mouth of the sword.

[20]One son of Ahimelek ben Ahitub escaped; his name was Ebyatar [Abiathar]. He took flight after David. [21]Ebyatar told David that Sha’ul had killed Yahweh’s priests, [22]and David said to Ebyatar, ‘I knew that day when Do’eg the Edomite was there that he would definitely tell Sha’ul. I was responsible for every life in your father’s household. [23]Stay with me. Don’t be afraid, because whoever seeks your life will be someone who seeks my life, because you will be in my charge.’

David on the run

23 They told David: ‘Here, the Pelishtites are battling aginst Qe’ilah, and they’re despoiling the threshing floors.’ [2]David asked o
Yahweh, ‘Shall I go and strike down these Pelishtites?’ Yahweh said to David, ‘Go and strike the Pelishtites down and
deliver Qe’ilah.’ [3]David’s men said to him, ‘Here, we’re afraid here in Yehudah, and how much more when we go to Qe’ilah
against the Pelishtites’ lines.’ [4]David asked of Yahweh yet again, and Yahweh answered him, ‘Set off, go down to Qe’ilah,
because I’m going to give the Pelishtites into your hand.’ [5]So David went with his men to Qe’ilah and did battle against the
Pelishtites, drove off their livestock and struck them down in a great rout. So David delivered the people living in Qe’ilah.
[6]Now when Ebyatar ben Ahimelek had taken flight to David (at Qe’ilah), a chasuble had come down in his hand. [7]It was told
Sha’ul that David had come to Qe’ilah. Sha’ul said, ‘God has transferred him into my hand, because he’s shut himself in by
coming into a town with doors and a bar.’ [8]Sha’ul got the entire company to listen about a battle, about going down to Qe’ilah to
besiege David and his men. [9]David got to know that Sha’ul was devising something bad against him, and he said to Ebyatar the
priest, ‘Bring up the chasuble.’
[10]David said, ‘Yahweh, God of Yisra’el, your servant has heard for certain that Sha’ul is seeking to come to Qe’ilah to
devastate the town because of me. [11]Will the Qe’ilah landowners deliver me into his hand? Will Sha’ul come down as your
servant heard? Yahweh, God of Yisra’el, please tell your servant.’ Yahweh said, ‘He will come down.’ [12]David said, ‘Will the
Qe’ilah landowners deliver me and my men into Sha’ul’s hand?’ Yahweh said, ‘They will deliver.’ [13]So David and his men, some
600 people, set off, got out of Qe’ilah and went about wherever they could go. It was told Sha’ul that David had escaped from
Qe’ilah and he left off from setting out.
[14]David stayed in the wilderness in the strongholds; he stayed in the highland, in the Ziph Wilderness. Sha’ul looked for him all
the time but God didn’t give him into his hand.

Slippery cliff

[15]But David saw that Sha’ul had set out to seek his life when David was in the Ziph Wilderness at The Forest. [16]Yehonatan,
Sha’ul’s son, set off and went to David at The Forest and strengthened his hand in God. [17]He said to him, ‘Don’t be afraid,
because the hand of Sha’ul my father will not find you. You yourself will reign over Yisra’el and I will be second to you. Even
Sha’ul my father acknowledges it’s so.’ [18]The two of them solemnized a pact before Yahweh, and David stayed in The Forest,
while Yehonatan went home.
[19]Ziphites went up to Sha’ul at Gib’ah, saying ‘David’s hiding with us, isn’t he, in the strongholds in The Forest, on Hakilah
Hill, which is south of The Wasteland. [20]So now, with all the longing to come down that you yourself have, Your Majesty, come
down and we’ll deliver him into the king’s hand.’ [21]Sha’ul said, ‘May you be blessed by Yahweh because you’ve spared me.
[22]Go, will you, and establish things further. Get to know and see the place where his foot goes, who has seen him there, because
they’ve said to me, “He acts very shrewdly.” [23]Look and get to know of all the hiding places where he hides, and come back to me
with things established, and I’ll go with you. If he’s in the region, I’ll search for him among all the divisions of Yehudah.’
[24]They set off and went to Ziph before Sha’ul. David and his men were in Ma’on Wilderness in the steppe, to the south of The
Wasteland. [25]Sha’ul and his men went to search, and people told David. He went down to The Cliff and stayed in Ma’on
Wilderness. Sha’ul heard and pursued after David to Ma’on Wilderness. [26]Sha’ul went on one side of the mountain while David
and his men were on the other side of the mountain. David was making haste to get away from before Sha’ul, while Sha’ul and his
men were surrounding David and his men so as to seize them, [27]when an envoy came to Sha’ul saying ‘Hurry, come, because the
Pelishtites have made a raid on the country.’ [28]So Sha’ul went back from pursuing after David and went to meet the Pelishtites.
That’s why they called that place Slippery Cliff.

Sha’ul pays a visit in a cave

[29]David went up from there and stayed in the strongholds at Gedi Spring.
24 When Sha’ul came back from following the Pelishtites, they told him, ‘There, David’s in the Gedi Spring Wilderness.’
[2]Sha’ul got 3,000 picked men from all Yisra’el and went to look for David and his men in the direction of Ibex Rocks. [3]He
came to sheepfolds by the road and a cave there, and Sha’ul came in to relieve himself, while David and his men were sitting in
the innermost parts of the cave.
[4]David’s men said to him, ‘Here, it’s the day that Yahweh said to you, “Here, I’m giving your enemy into your hand and you
can do to him as seems good in your eyes.”’ David got up and cut off the corner of Sha’ul’s coat quietly, [5]but afterwards, David’s
heart struck him because he’d cut the corner off that belonged to Sha’ul. [6]He said to his men. ‘Far be it from me by Yahweh, if I
should do this thing to my lord, to Yahweh’s anointed, in putting out my hand against him, when he’s Yahweh’s anointed!’
[7]David tore his men apart with the words and didn’t let them rise up against Sha’ul.
When Sha’ul set off from the cave and went on his way, [8]David set off afterwards and went out of the cave. He called after
Sha’ul, ‘My lord king!’ Sha’ul looked behind him and David bent his head, face to the ground, and bowed low. [9]David said to
Sha’ul, ‘Why do you listen to people’s words, saying “There, David is seeking something bad for you”? [10]Here, this day your
eyes have seen the fact that Yahweh gave you into my hand today in the cave, and they said to kill you, but I had pity on you. I
said I wouldn’t put out my hand against my lord, because he is Yahweh’s anointed.

A dead dog? A flea?

[11]My father, look and look some more at the corner of your coat in my hand, because when I cut off the corner of your coat, I
didn’t kill you. Acknowledge and see that there’s nothing bad and no rebellion in my hand. I haven’t wronged you, but you’re

hunting down my life so as to take it. [12]May Yahweh decide between me and you! May Yahweh take redress from you, whereas
my hand will not be against you. [13]As the old aphorism says, "It's from faithless people that faithlessness comes." Given that my
hand will not be against you, [14]after whom has the king of Yisra'el gone out? After whom are you pursuing? After a dead dog?
After a single flea? [15]May Yahweh be judge and may he decide between me and you. May he look and settle my argument and
decide for me from your hand.'

[16]When David finished speaking these words to Sha'ul, Sha'ul said, 'Is this your voice, my son David?' Sha'ul lifted up his
voice and wailed. [17]He said to David, 'You're more faithful than me, because you've dealt me good things but I've dealt you bad
things. [18]Today you yourself have told of the good that you did to me, the fact that Yahweh delivered me into your hand and you
didn't kill me. [19]When someone finds his enemy and sends him off on his way with good . . . Yahweh himself will make good to
you with good in return this day for what you've done for me. [20]And now, here, I acknowledge that you will definitely reign as
king and Yisra'el's kingdom will rise up in your hand. [21]So now, swear to me by Yahweh, if you cut off my offspring after me, if
you annihilate my name from my father's household . . .'

[22]David swore to Sha'ul, and Sha'ul went home, while David and his men went up to the stronghold.

The man with the sheep business

25 Shemu'el died, and all Yisra'el collected and lamented for him. They buried him at his home, at The Height.

David set off and went down to the Pa'ran Wilderness. [2]Now a man in Ma'on with his business in Carmel: this man was
very big. He had a flock of 3,000, and 1,000 goats, and he was shearing his flock in Carmel. [3]The man's name was Nabal and his
wife's name was Abigayil; the woman was good in her insight and attractive in her appearance, but the man was tough and bad in
his practices, though he was a Kalebite [Calebite].

[4]David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his flock [5]and David sent ten boys. David said to the boys, 'Go up to
Carmel and come to Nabal and ask of him in my name whether things are well for him. [6]Say this: "Long life! May things be well
for you, may things be well for your household and may things be well for all that is yours! [7]So now, I've heard that you have
people shearing. Your shepherds have now been with us. We haven't let them be put to shame and nothing of theirs has been
counted missing all the time that they were in Carmel. [8]Ask your boys and they'll tell you. So may the boys find grace in your
eyes, because we've come on a good day. Give what your hand finds to your servants, please, and to your son, to David."'

[9]David's boys came and spoke all these very words to Nabal in David's name, and let be. [10]Nabal answered David's servants,
'Who is David, who is ben Yishay? There are many servants breaking away today, each from his lord. [11]Should I take my bread
and my water and the meat I've slaughtered for my shearers and give them to men who are from I don't know where?'

Abigayil gets to work

[12]David's boys turned round for their journey and went back, and came and told him all these very words. [13]David said to his
men, 'Wrap on, each one, his sword.' They wrapped on, each one, his sword, and David also wrapped on his sword. Some 400
men went up after David while 200 stayed by the things.

[14]One of the boys told Abigayil, Nabal's wife, 'Here, David sent envoys from the wilderness to bless our lord, but he screamed
at them, [15]though the men had been very good to us. We weren't shamed and we didn't count anything missing all the time we
were going about with them when we were in the fields, [16]while they were a wall round us both by night and by day all the time
we were with them shepherding the flock. [17]So now, acknowledge and see what you should do, because something bad is certain
for our lord and for his entire household, but he's a scoundrel to speak to.'

[18]Abigayil hurried and got two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five prepared sheep, five measures of roasted grain,
a hundred raisin blocks and two hundred fig blocks, put them on donkeys [19]and said to her boys, 'Pass on before me. Here, I'm
coming after you.' She didn't tell her husband Nabal. [20]While she was riding on the donkey and going down under the cover of
the mountain, there, David and his men were going down to meet her. So she ran into them.

[21]Now David had said, 'It really was something false, that I kept watch on everything that belonged to this man in the
wilderness and nothing of all that belonged to him has been counted missing, and he has given back something bad to me in return
for something good. [22]May God do so to (the enemies of) David and may he do so more if by morning I leave remaining, out of
all who belong to him, one person who pisses against a wall.'

Fool by name and fool by nature

[23]Abigayil saw David, and hurried and got down from on the donkey. She fell on her face before David, and bowed to the
ground. [24]So she fell at his feet and said, 'The waywardness is in me myself, my lord. May your handmaid please speak in your
ears. Listen to your handmaid's words. [25]My lord should please not give his mind to this scoundrel, to Nabal, because he's the
same as his name. "Villain" [*nabal*] is his name and villainy goes with him.

Now I, your handmaid, didn't see my lord's boys whom you sent. [26]But now, my lord, as Yahweh lives, and as you yourself
live, Yahweh who has held you back from coming into bloodshed and finding deliverance for yourself by your own hand! Now
may your enemies and the people who seek what is bad for my lord be like Nabal! [27]And now may this blessing that your
maidservant has brought for my lord be given to the boys who go about after my lord.

[28]Please bear with your handmaid's rebellion, because Yahweh will definitely make for my lord a trustworthy household,
because my lord is engaged in Yahweh's battles, and nothing bad will be found in you through your days. [29]When someone sets
about pursuing you and seeking your life, my lord's life will be bound up in the bundle of the living with Yahweh your God, but

the life of your enemies he will hurl away, in the middle of a sling's hollow. [30]And when Yahweh acts towards my lord in
accordance with everything good that he has spoken concerning you, and charges you to be ruler over Yisra'el, [31]this is not to be a
cause of collapsing or stumbling of mind for my lord – to have shed blood for nothing and for my lord to have found deliverance
for himself. And when Yahweh has been good to my lord, you are to be mindful of your handmaid.'

A marriage of convenience

[32]David said to Abigayil, 'Yahweh the God of Yisra'el be blessed, who sent you this day to meet me. [33]Blessed be your good
judgement and blessed be you yourself, who restrained me this day from coming into bloodshed and finding deliverance for
myself by my hand. [34]Yet, as Yahweh the God of Yisra'el lives, who held me back from dealing badly with you: if you had not
hurried and come to meet me, by morning light there would definitely not have been left to Nabal one person who pisses against a
wall.'
[35]David took from her hand what she brought for him, and he said to her, 'Go home, things will be well. See, I've listened to
your voice and had regard for you.'
[36]Abigayil came to Nabal, and there, he had a banquet in his house, like a royal banquet. Nabal's heart was good in him and he
was very drunk, so she didn't tell him anything small or great until morning light. [37]In the morning, when the wine had left Nabal,
his wife told him these things, and his heart died inside him. He turned to stone. [38]Some ten days later Yahweh struck Nabal and
he died.
[39]David heard that Nabal had died, and said, 'Yahweh be blessed, who has settled the argument over my reviling at the hand of
Nabal, and held back his servant from something bad. Yahweh has made Nabal's bad action come back on his head.' And David
sent and spoke with Abigayil in connection with getting her for himself as a wife. [40]David's servants came to Abigayil at Carmel
and spoke to her: 'David has sent us to you to get you for him as a wife.' [41]She got up and bowed low, face to the ground, and
said, 'Here is your handmaid, a maidservant to wash my lord's servants' feet.' [42]Abigayil hurried and got up, and mounted a
donkey with her five girls behind her, and followed David's envoys. So she became his wife.
[43]As David had got Ahino'am from Yizre'e'l, the two of them also became his wives. [44]Sha'ul had given Mikal his daughter,
David's wife, to Palti ben Layish, who was from Gallim.

Who can lay hands on Yahweh's anointed?

26 The Ziphites came to Sha'ul at Gib'ah, saying 'David's hiding on Hakilah Hill, isn't he, over against The Wasteland.'
[2]Sha'ul set off and went down to the Ziph Wilderness, 300 picked men of Yisra'el with him, to look for David in the Ziph
Wilderness. [3]Sha'ul camped on Hakilah Hill, which is over against The Wasteland, by the road. David was staying in the
wilderness, and he saw that Sha'ul had come after him into the wilderness. [4]David sent men to investigate and got to know as
established fact that Sha'ul had come.
[5]Then David set off and came to the place where Sha'ul had camped. David saw the place where Sha'ul lay down with Abner
ben Ner his army officer, Sha'ul lying down in the encampment and the company camping round him. [6]David avowed to
Ahimelek the Hittite and to Abishay ben Tseruyah, Yo'ab's brother, 'Who'll go down with me to Sha'ul, to the camp?' Abishay
said, 'I'll go down with you.'
[7]David and Abishay came to the company by night, and there, Sha'ul was lying asleep in the encampment, with his lance stuck
in the earth by his head, and Abner and the company lying round him. [8]Abishay said to David, 'God has surrendered your enemy
into your hand today, so now I'll strike him down with the lance, please, with one thrust into the earth. I won't need to do it
twice.'
[9]David said to Abishay, 'You're not to do violence to him, because who has put out his hand against Yahweh's anointed and
been free of guilt?' [10]David said, 'As Yahweh lives, no, Yahweh will strike him, or his day will come and he'll die, or he'll go
down to battle and be swept away. [11]Far be it from me by Yahweh to put out my hand against Yahweh's anointed. But now get
the lance that's at his head and the water jug, please, and let's take ourselves off.'

Sha'ul's protectors' failure

[12]So David got the lance and the water jug from by Sha'ul's head and they took themselves off, with no one seeing and no one
knowing and no one waking up, because all of them were asleep, because a coma from Yahweh had fallen on them.
[13]David crossed over to the other side and stood on top of the mountain at a distance; the space between them was great.
[14]David called to the company and to Abner ben Ner, 'Answer, Abner, won't you!' Abner answered, 'Who are you who've called
to the king?' [15]David said to Abner, 'Aren't you a man? Who is like you in Yisra'el? Why haven't you kept watch over your lord
the king? Because one from the company came to do violence to the king, your lord. [16]This thing that you've done isn't good. As
Yahweh lives, you people deserve death because you haven't kept watch over your lord, over Yahweh's anointed. Look now.
Where are the king's lance and the water jar, which were by his head?'
[17]Sha'ul recognized David's voice and he said 'Is this your voice, my son David?' David said, 'My voice, my lord king', [18]and
he said, 'Why is it that my lord is pursuing after his servant? Because what have I done? What bad action is in my hand? [19]So now
my lord the king should please listen to his servant's words. If it's Yahweh who has incited you against me, may he smell an
offering, but if it's human beings, may they be cursed before Yahweh, because they've driven me away so I can't attach myself to
Yahweh's domain today, saying "Go serve other gods." [20]So now may my blood not fall to the ground at a distance from
Yahweh's presence, because the king of Yisra'el has gone out to look for a flea, as he might hunt a partridge in the mountains.'

I've been idiotic

[21]Sha'ul said, 'I've done wrong. Come back, my son David, because I won't deal badly with you again, on account of the fact that my life has been esteemed in your eyes this day. Here, I've been idiotic and I've made very great mistakes.' [22]David answered, 'Here's the king's lance. One of the boys may come across and get it. [23]Yahweh himself will return a person's faithfulness and his trustworthiness, in that Yahweh gave you over into my hand today and I was not willing to put out my hand against Yahweh's anointed. [24]Here, as your life has been important in my eyes this day, so may my life be important in Yahweh's eyes and may he rescue me from every pressure.' [25]Sha'ul said to David, 'Blessed are you, my son David. May you both do much and also succeed much.'

David went on his way, while Sha'ul went back to his place.

27 David said to himself, 'I shall be swept away now one day by Sha'ul's hand. There's nothing good for me but to make a final escape to the Pelishtites' country. Sha'ul will despair of me, of looking for me any more within Yisra'el's entire border, and I'll escape from his hand.' [2]So David set off and crossed over, he and 600 men who were with him, to Akish ben Ma'ok, king of Gat. [3]David lived with Akish in Gat, he and his men, each with his household, David with his two wives Ahino'am the Yizre'e'lite and Abigayil the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. [4]It was told Sha'ul, 'David has taken flight to Gat', and he didn't look for him any more.

[5]David said to Akish, 'If I've found grace in your eyes, may they give me a place in one of the country towns so I can live there. Why should your servant live in the royal town with you?' [6]So that day Akish gave him Tsiqlag. That's why Tsiqlag has belonged to the kings of Yehudah until this day. [7]The length of time that David lived in the Pelishtites' country was a year and four months.

David's ruthless cunning

[8]David and his men went up and made a raid on the Geshurites, the Gizrites and the Amaleqites, because they were peoples living in the country that extends from Olam as you come to Shur, and as far as the country of Misrayim.

[9]David would strike down the country and not let a man or woman live, but take flock and herd, donkey, camels and clothes, and go back and come to Akish. [10]Akish would say, 'Whom did you raid just now?', and David would say, 'The Negeb of Yehudah' or 'The Negeb of the Yerahme'elites' or 'The Negeb of the Qenites'. [11]David wouldn't let man or woman live for bringing to Gat, saying 'So they don't tell about us, "David did this."' Such was his rule all the time that he lived in the Pelishtites' country. [12]Akish came to trust David, saying 'He's made himself totally stink among his people, among Yisra'el. He'll be a servant for me permanently.'

28 During that time the Pelishtites collected their camp for war so as to battle against Yisra'el. Akish said to David, 'You do know that you're to go out with me in the camp, you and your men.' [2]David said to Akish, 'Therefore, you yourself will know what your servant might do.' Akish said to David, 'Therefore I will make you my bodyguard permanently.'

[3]Now Shemu'el had died, and all Yisra'el had lamented for him and had buried him at The Height, at his town; and Sha'ul had removed the ghosts and the spirits from the country. [4]The Pelishtites collected and came and camped at Shunem; Sha'ul collected all Yisra'el and camped at Gilboa. [5]Sha'ul saw the Pelishtites' camp and was afraid; his heart trembled much. [6]Sha'ul asked of Yahweh but Yahweh didn't answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by prophets.

What do you do when you're desperate?

[7]So Sha'ul said to his servants, 'Look for a woman who is a ghost-mistress for me so I can go to her and enquire through her.' His servants said to him, 'There, a woman who is a ghost-mistress is in Dor Spring.' [8]Sha'ul disguised himself and put on other clothes and went, he and two men with him, and came to the woman at night. He said, 'Please divine through a ghost for me. Bring up for me the one that I shall say to you.'

[9]The woman said to him, 'Here, you yourself know what Sha'ul has done, that he's cut off ghosts and spirits from the country. Why are you laying a trap for my life, to bring about my death?' [10]Sha'ul swore to her by Yahweh: 'As Yahweh lives, if waywardness befalls you through this thing . . .'

[11]So the woman said, 'Who shall I bring up for you?' He said, 'Shemu'el. Bring him up for me.' [12]The woman saw Shemu'el and cried out in a loud voice. The woman said to Sha'ul, 'Why have you beguiled me? You're Sha'ul.' [13]The king said to her, 'Don't be afraid. But what have you seen?' The woman said to Sha'ul, 'It's a divine being I've seen coming up from the earth.' [14]He said to her, 'What's he look like?' She said, 'An old man is coming up. He's wearing a coat.' Sha'ul knew that it was Shemu'el. He bent his head, face to the ground, and bowed low.

[15]Shemu'el said to Sha'ul, 'Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?' Sha'ul said, 'Things are very pressing for me. The Pelishtites are battling with me. God has departed from me. He hasn't answered me any more, either by means of prophets or by dreams. I called to you to enable me to know what I should do.'

Shemu'el still speaks straight

[16]Shemu'el said, 'So why do you ask me when Yahweh has departed from you and become your adversary? [17]Yahweh has done to you as he spoke by means of me. Yahweh has torn the kingship from your hand and given it to your neighbour, to David, [18]when you didn't listen to Yahweh's voice and didn't perform his angry rage on Amaleq. That's why Yahweh has done this thing to you this day. [19]Yahweh will also give Yisra'el with you into the hand of the Pelishtites. Tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. Yahweh will also give the Yisra'elite camp into the hand of the Pelishtites.'

[20]Sha'ul hurried and fell full length on the ground. He was very frightened by Shemu'el's words, while also there was no energy in him because he had not eaten bread all day and all night. [21]The woman came to Sha'ul and saw that he was very fearful. She said to him, 'Here, your maidservant listened to your voice and I put my life in the palm of my hand. I listened to your words which you spoke to me, [22]so now please listen to your maidservant's voice as well. I want to put a bit of bread before you. Eat, and there'll be energy in you when you go on your way.' [23]He refused and said, 'I won't eat', but his servants pressed him, as well as the woman, and he listened to their voice. He got up from the ground and sat on the bed.

[24]The woman had a stall-fed calf in the house. She hurried and slaughtered it, got flour and kneaded it, and baked it into flatbread. [25]She brought it up before Sha'ul and before his servants and they ate. Then they got up, and went that night.

29 The Pelishtites collected their entire camp at Apheq, while Yisra'el was camping at the spring which is in Yizre'e'l [2]and the Pelishtites' lords were passing on by sections and by divisions, with David and his men passing on with Akish at the end.

The Pelishtites' lords are wiser than Akish

[3]The Pelishtites' officers said, 'What are these Hebrews?' Akish said to the Pelishtites' officers, 'This is David, the servant of Sha'ul, king of Yisra'el, isn't it, who's been with me for this time (these years). I haven't found any fault in him from the day he fell away until this day.' [4]The Pelishtites' officers were furious with him. The Pelishtites' officers said to him, 'Send the man back. He should go back to his place, where you appointed him. He shouldn't go down with us in the battle, so he won't become an adversary to us in the battle. How could this man find acceptance with his lord – it was with those men's heads, wasn't it. [5]This is the David of whom they used to chant during the dance, isn't it:

Sha'ul has struck down his thousands,
David his ten thousands.

[6]So Akish called for David and said to him, 'As Yahweh lives, you're upright and your going out and coming in with me in the camp is good in my eyes, because I haven't found anything bad in you from the day you came to me until this day. But in the eyes of the lords you're not good. [7]So now go back, go while things are well, and you won't do anything bad in the eyes of the Pelishtites' lords.' [8]David said to Akish, 'But what have I done and what have you found in your servant from the day when I came to be before you until this day, that I shouldn't come and do battle with the enemies of my lord the king?'

[9]Akish answered David, 'I acknowledge that you are good in my eyes, like God's envoy. Nevertheless the Pelishtites' officers have said, "He will not go up with us in the battle." [10]So now, start early in the morning, you and your lord's servants who have come with you. Start early in the morning and when you have light, go.'

[11]So in the morning David started early, he and his men, to go to return to the Pelishtites' country, while the Pelishtites went up to Yizre'e'l.

The disaster while their back was turned

30 When David and his men came to Tsiqlag, on the third day, the Amaleqites had made a raid on the Negeb and on Tsiqlag. They'd struck down Tsiqlag and burned it in fire [2]and taken captive the women who were in it, from the youngest to the oldest. They hadn't put anyone to death but they'd driven them off and gone on their way.

[3]So David and his men came to the town: there, it was burnt in fire and their wives, their sons and their daughters had been taken captive. [4]David and the company that was with him lifted up their voice and wailed until there was no energy in them to wail. [5]David's two wives had been taken captive, Ahino'am the Yizre'elite and Abigayil the wife of Nabal the Carmelite.

[6]It put great pressure on David, because the company said to pelt him with stones, because the entire company's spirit was bitter, each person over his sons and his daughters. But David summoned up his strength through Yahweh his God. [7]David said to Ebyatar the priest, son of Ahimelek, 'Bring up the chasuble for me, please.' Ebyatar brought up the chasuble to David. [8]David asked of Yahweh, 'Should I pursue after this raiding gang, will I overtake it?' He said to him, 'Pursue, because you will indeed overtake and you will indeed rescue.'

[9]So David went, he and 600 men who were with him, and came as far as Wadi Besor. While the people who were to be left halted, [10]David pursued, he and 400 men; 200 men who were too faint to cross Wadi Besor halted.

The informant

[11]They found a Misrayimite man in the fields and took him to David. They gave him bread and he ate, and they let him drink water, [12]and gave him a piece of a fig block and two raisin blocks. He ate and his spirit came back to him (because he hadn't eaten bread and hadn't drunk water for three days and three nights). [13]David said to him, 'Who do you belong to and where are you from?' He said, 'I'm a Misrayimite boy, the servant of an Amaleqite. My lord abandoned me because I got ill, three days ago, [14]when we had made an incursion against the Negeb of the Keretites and against what belongs to Yehudah and against the Negeb of Kaleb, and we burned Tsiqlag in fire.'

[15]David said to him, 'Will you take me down to this raiding gang?' He said, 'Swear to me by God, if you put me to death or if you deliver me into my lord's hand . . . And I will take you down to this gang.' [16]So he took them down and there they were, left to themselves on the face of the ground, eating and drinking and feasting on all the vast spoil that they had taken from the Pelishtites' country and from the region of Yehudah.

[17]David struck them down from dusk until the evening of the next day. Not one of them escaped, except 400 young men who mounted camels and fled. [18]David rescued everything that Amaleq had taken. And David rescued his two wives. [19]Nothing was

missing to them, both the young and the old, sons and daughters, and from the spoil and all that they had taken for themselves.
David got everything back. [20]David took the entire flock, while they drove the herd before that livestock. They said, ‘This is
David’s spoil.’

All should share

[21]David came to the 200 men who were too faint to follow David, so that they had let them stay at Wadi Besor. They went out
to meet David and to meet the company that was with him. David went up with the company and he asked them whether things
were well. [22]Every bad man and scoundrel of the men who had gone with David answered, ‘Since they didn’t go with me, we
shouldn’t give them any of the spoil that we rescued, except an individual his wife and his children, so they can drive them off and
go.’
[23]David said, ‘You will not do so, my brothers, with what Yahweh has given us. He has kept us and given over the raiding gang
that came against us, into our hand. [24]Who would listen to you regarding this thing? Because as will be the share of the person
who went down into the battle, so will be the share of the person who stayed with the things. They will share it out together.’
[25]From that day onwards he made it a decree and a rule for Yisra’el, until this day.
[26]David came to Tsiqlag and sent off some of the spoil to the elders of Yehudah, to his friends, saying ‘Here’s your blessing
from the spoil of Yahweh’s enemies’, [27]to the ones in Bet-el, to the ones in the Negeb Heights, to the ones in Yattir, [28]to the ones
in Aro’er, to the ones in Siphmot, to the ones in Eshtemoa, [29]to the ones in Rakal, to the ones in the towns of the Yerahme’elites,
to the ones in the towns of the Qenites, [30]to the ones in Hormah, to the ones in Ashan Cistern, to the ones in Atak [31]and to the
ones in Hebron, to all the places where David had gone about, he and his men.

A last act of loyalty to Sha’ul

31 When the Pelishtites battled against Yisra’el, the Yisra’elites fled from before the Pelishtites and fell, run through, on Mount
Gilboa. [2]The Pelishtites caught up with Sha’ul and with his sons, and the Pelishtites struck down Yehonatan, Abinadab and
Malki-shua, Sha’ul’s sons.
[3]The battle was hard against Sha’ul, and the archers (the bowmen) found him; he was run through by the archers. [4]Sha’ul said
to his equipment-bearer, ‘Draw your sword and thrust me through with it, so these foreskinned men don’t come and thrust me
through and act abusively to me.’ But his equipment-bearer wasn’t willing because he was very fearful, so Sha’ul took the sword
and fell on it. [5]His equipment-bearer saw that Sha’ul was dead and he too fell on his sword and died with him. [6]So Sha’ul died,
with his three sons, and his equipment-bearer, as well as all his men, all together on that day.
[7]The Yisra’elites who were across the vale and who were across the Yarden saw that the Yisra’elites had fled and that Sha’ul
and his sons were dead, and they abandoned their towns and fled (the Pelishtites came and lived in them).
[8]Next day the Pelishtites came to strip the people who were run through. They found Sha’ul and his three sons fallen on Mount
Gilboa, [9]cut off his head and stripped off his equipment. They sent off through the country of the Pelishtites all round to proclaim
the news to the house of their idols and to the people. [10]They put his equipment in the house of the Ashtars, and his body they
fastened to the wall of Bet Shan. [11]But the people living in Yabesh-in-Gil’ad heard about it, about what the Pelishtites had done to
Sha’ul, [12]and they set off, every forceful man. They went all night and got Sha’ul’s body and his sons’ bodies from the walls of
Bet-shan. They came to Yabesh and burned them there, [13]then got their bones and buried them under the tamarisk at Yabesh, and
fasted for seven days.

2 Samuel

The story in 2 Samuel is a tragedy. In a broad sense a tragedy is any terrible event, but we can also use the word to describe a certain kind of story, one that relates how someone important and successful experiences the collapse of everything that made him or her important and successful. While this collapse may come about through bad luck, it may come about through bad decisions whose terrible consequences could hardly have been foreseen, yet which with hindsight seem inevitable. The tragedy in 2 Samuel is the tragedy of David.

Ironically, the background to David's tragedy is another one, that of Saul. Given the circumstances of Saul's becoming king, it might not seem surprising that his reign ends unhappily. David plays a key role in his downfall, without intending to do so – indeed, David seeks to honour Saul as the king anointed by Yahweh. But Saul's story unravels and he dies in battle, along with Jonathan, his son and David's best friend. Their death opens up the way for David to succeed Saul. He has already been designated by God for this position, but the process whereby he gets there is a human one.

Naturally enough, the people of Judah, David's own clan, are ready to recognize him, but the people of the northern clans are aware of other options from within their own number – specifically, someone from Saul's household might seem a natural choice. But the possible candidates and the party supporting them gradually disappear, so that the northern clans drift into giving their own recognition to David.

David then makes an astute move in conquering Jerusalem. Although it sits in the middle of areas assigned to the Israelite clans, the town is still occupied by the Yebusites. David conquers it and makes it his capital. Its position and its history mean that no clan identifies with it, so it has the potential to be viewed as neutral territory, as David's town. Yahweh later declares that he chose it, but in 2 Samuel, it's David who takes the initiative in choosing it.

The dynamics of this process recur in the decision to build a permanent sanctuary for worship of Yahweh in Jerusalem. Again it is David's idea. Yahweh is not enthusiastic about it, because he doesn't want to be stuck in a fixed place, but he yields to it. He goes on to make a commitment to David that removes some of the ambiguity of his earlier attitude to the idea of having kings. He now promises David that his line will permanently occupy the throne over Israel. His immediate successor will be the king who actually builds the sanctuary in Jerusalem.

In the event, he will be the only successor to reign over the whole of Israel, and after a few centuries Davidic rule over Judah will come to an end. God's promise about David's line thus leads in due course to the hope of a Messiah. The word *Messiah* means *Anointed*, and in the Old Testament it applies to actual kings (and priests). But when there are no kings in the present, it comes to refer to the king whom God must surely set up one day.

David wins more spectacular victories but then everything starts to unravel. The second half of 2 Samuel tells of a catastrophic series of events in David's life, for most of which he is directly or indirectly responsible. They centre on his relationships with people inside and outside his family rather than on political or military events. He has shown himself to be a brilliant leader, but he is a disaster as a human being.

It might seem surprising that he is described as a man after God's heart. The description need only mean that he is the man God chose; it doesn't imply that his heart was in tune with God's heart. But in later pages of the Old Testament he is viewed as a model who contrasts positively with many other kings. For all his wrongdoing and foolishness, at least he stayed faithful to Yahweh and stayed trusting in Yahweh.

The fraud that will come unstuck

1 After Sha'ul's [Saul's] death, and when David had come back from striking down the Amaleqites, David stayed in Tsiqlag
for two days, [2]and on the third day – there, a man coming from the camp, from being with Sha'ul, with his clothes torn and
earth on his head. When he came to David he fell to the ground and bowed low. [3]David said to him, 'Where do you come from?'
He said to him, 'I escaped from Yisra'el's [Israel's] camp.' [4]David said to him, 'What was it that happened? Please tell me.' He
said how the company fled from the battle and also many of the company fell and died and also Sha'ul and Yehonatan [Jonathan]
his son died.

[5]David said to the boy who told him, 'How do you know that Sha'ul is dead, and Yehonatan his son?' [6]The boy who told him
said, 'I just happened to be on Mount Gilboa, and there, Sha'ul was leaning on his lance, and there, chariotry and cavalry caught
up with him. [7]He turned his face behind him and saw me and called to me. I said, "Here I am." [8]He said to me, "Who are you?" I
said to him, "I'm an Amaleqite." [9]He said to me, "Stand over me, please, and put me to death, because doom has taken hold of
me, when my life is still entirely in me." [10]So I stood over him and put him to death because I acknowledged that he would not
live after he had fallen. I took the diadem that was on his head and a bracelet that was on his arm and brought them to my lord,
here.'

[11]David took strong hold of his clothes and tore them, he and all the men who were with him as well. [12]They lamented and
wailed and fasted until evening for Sha'ul, for Yehonatan his son, for Yahweh's company and for the household of Yisra'el,
because they had fallen by the sword.

How are the mighty fallen

[13]David said to the boy who told him, 'Where are you from?' He said, 'I'm the son of a resident, an Amaleqite.' [14]David said to
him, 'How were you not afraid to put out your hand to do violence to Yahweh's anointed?' [15]David called for one of the boys and
said, 'Come up, attack him!' He struck him down and he died. [16]David said to him, 'Your blood is on your own head, because
your own mouth avowed against you, "I put Yahweh's anointed to death."'

[17]David chanted this elegy over Sha'ul and over Yehonatan his son, [18]and he said to teach the Yehudahites 'The Bow' (there,

it's written on the Document of the Upright One):

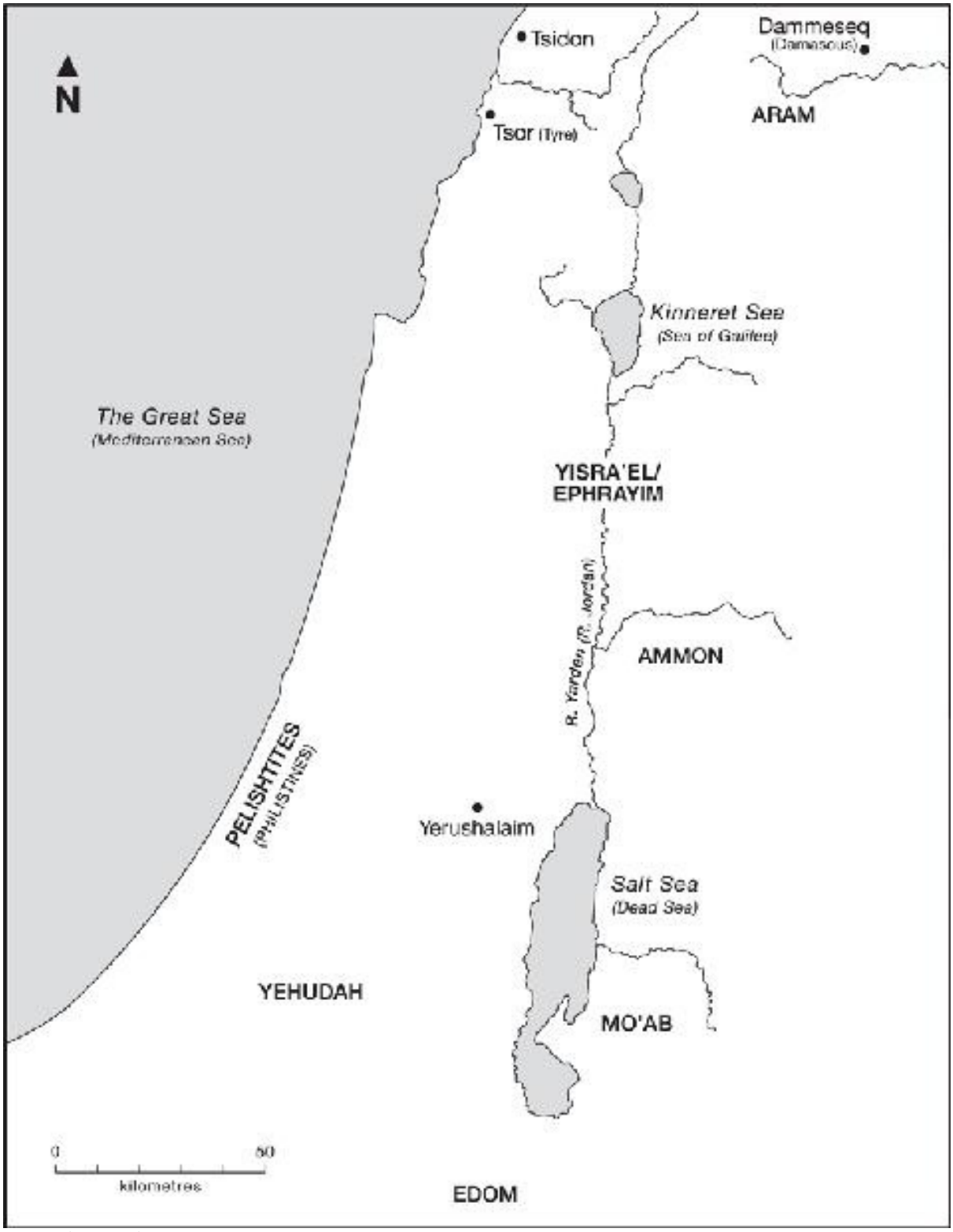
[19]The gazelle, Yisra'el, is run through on your heights:
how have the strong men fallen.
[20]Don't tell it in Gat,
don't announce the news in Ashqelon's streets,
Lest the Pelishtites' [Philistines'] daughters celebrate,
lest the daughters of the foreskinned exult.
[21]Mountains of Gilboa, may there be no dew,
no rain on you or fields of contributions,
Because there the strong men's shield was fouled,
the shield of Sha'ul, no more rubbed with oil.
[22]From the blood of the slain,
from the fat of strong men,
The bow of Yehonatan did not turn back,
the sword of Sha'ul did not go back empty.
[23]Sha'ul and Yehonatan, loved and delighted in,
in their life and in their death they were not parted.
They were swifter than eagles,
they were stronger than lions.
[24]Daughters of Yisra'el,
wail over Sha'ul,
Who clothed you in scarlet and finery,
who put gold ornaments on your apparel.
[25]How have the strong men fallen
in the middle of the battle.
Yehonatan, run through on your heights,
[26]it's depressing for me because of you.
My brother Yehonatan,
you were very lovely to me.
Your loyalty was extraordinary to me,
more than the loyalty of women.
[27]How have the strong men fallen
and the articles of battle perished!

Two kings

2 After this, David asked of Yahweh, 'Should I go up into one of the towns of Judah?' Yahweh said to him, 'Go up.' David said, 'Where should I go up?' He said, 'To Hebron'. [2]So David went up there, he and also his two wives Ahino'am the Yizre'e'lite and Abigayil the wife of Nabal the Carmelite, [3]and David took up his men who were with him, each man and his household, and they lived in the Hebron towns. [4]The Yehudahites [Judahites] came and anointed David as king there over the household of Yehudah.

They told David, 'The people who buried Sha'ul were the people of Yabesh-in-Gil'ad.' [5]So David sent envoys to the people of Yabesh-in-Gil'ad and said to them, 'Blessed are you by Yahweh because you acted in this commitment with your lord, with Sha'ul, and buried him. [6]So now may Yahweh act in commitment and truthfulness with you, and I myself will also do this good thing with you, because you did this thing. [7]So now, may your hands be strong, be forceful men, because your lord Sha'ul is dead, and further the household of Yehudah have anointed me as king over them.'

[8]Now Abner ben Ner, army officer for Sha'ul, had got Shameful-man son of Sha'ul [Ish-boshet ben Sha'ul], got him to go across to Mahanayim, [9]and made him king for Gil'ad, for the Ashurites, for Yizre'e'l, for Ephrayim and for Binyamin [Benjamin] – for Yisra'el, all of it. [10]Shameful-man son of Sha'ul was a man of forty years when he became king over Yisra'el and he reigned for two years. However, the household of Yehudah was following David. [11]The length of the time that David was king in Hebron over the household of Yehudah was seven years and six months.



2 Samuel 1: David

The boys fight it out

[12]Abner ben Ner went out, he and the servants of Shameful-man son of Sha'ul, from Mahanayim to Gib'on, [13]when Yo'ab ben Tseruyah and David's servants went out and met them at the Gib'on pool, together. One group sat at the pool on one side, the other group at the pool on the other side. [14]Abner said to Yo'ab, 'The boys should get up, shouldn't they, and make fun before us!' Yo'ab said, 'They should get up!' [15]They got up and went across by number, twelve for Binyamin and for Shameful-man son of Sha'ul, and twelve of David's servants. [16]Each one took strong hold of his neighbour's head, with his sword into his neighbour's side; thus they fell together. So they called that place Helqat Hatstsurim ['Blades Share'], which is in Gib'on.

[17]The battle was very tough that day, and Abner and the Yisra'elites took a beating before David's servants. [18]The three sons of Tseruyah were there, Yo'ab, Abishay and Asah'el. Now Asah'el was quick on his feet, like one of the gazelles that are in the wild. [19]Asah'el pursued after Abner, and didn't turn aside as he went, to the right or to the left, from following Abner.
[20]Abner turned his face behind him and said, 'Is it you, Asah'el?' He said, 'It's me.' [21]Abner said to him. 'Turn yourself to your right or to your left and take hold of one of the boys for yourself and get his strip for yourself.' But Asah'el wasn't willing to turn aside from following him. [22]Abner once more said to Asah'el, 'Turn yourself aside from following me! Why should I strike you down to the ground? How could I lift up my face to Yo'ab your brother?' [23]But he refused to turn aside, and Abner struck him down with the end of his lance, in his abdomen. The lance came out from behind and he fell there and died where he was. Everyone who came to the place where Asah'el had fallen and died, halted.

The struggle for power

[24]Yo'ab and Abishay pursued after Abner as the sun went down and they came to Ammah Hill, which is east of Giah on the Gib'on Wilderness road. [25]The Binyaminites collected behind Abner and became one company, and they stood on the top of a hill. [26]Abner called to Yo'ab, 'Is the sword to devour permanently? Do you not acknowledge that it will be bitter at the end? For how long will you not say to the company to turn back from following their brothers?' [27]Yo'ab said, 'As God lives, if you hadn't spoken, it would rather be in the morning that the company would then give up, each person, from following his brother.' [28]So Yo'ab blew on the horn, and the entire company halted. They didn't pursue after Yisra'el any longer and didn't do battle any more. [29]When Abner and his men had gone through the steppe all that night, they crossed the Yarden [Jordan], went all through the gorge and came to Mahanayim.
[30]When Yo'ab had gone back from following Abner, he collected his entire company, and from David's servants nineteen men were counted missing, with Asah'el, [31]while David's servants had struck down from Binyamin and among Abner's men 360; they had died. [32]They carried Asah'el and buried him in his father's grave, which is in Bet Lehem. Then Yo'ab and his men went all night, and it got light for them in Hebron.
3 The battle between Sha'ul's household and David's household was long-drawn-out, though David was growing stronger and Sha'ul's household was growing weaker. [2]Sons were born to David in Hebron. His firstborn was Amnon, by Ahino'am the Yizre'e'lite. [3]His second was Kil'ab, by Abigayil, the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. The third was Abshalom, the son of Ma'akah bat Talmay, king of Geshur. [4]The fourth was Adoniyyah, the son of Haggit. The fifth was Shephatyah, the son of Abital. [5]The sixth was Yitre'am, by Eglah, David's wife. These were born to David in Hebron.

Abner's power play?

[6]As the battle was going on between Sha'ul's household and David's household, Abner was asserting his strength in Sha'ul's household. [7]Now Sha'ul had a secondary wife; her name was Ritspah bat Ayyah. [Shameful-man] said to Abner, 'Why have you had sex with my father's wife?' [8]It really enraged Abner at Shameful-man's words. He said, 'Am I a dog's head that belongs to Yehudah? Today I act in commitment with the household of Sha'ul your father, to his brothers and to his friends, and I haven't let you be found in David's hand, and today you attribute waywardness to me with the woman. [9]May God do this to Abner and may he do more to him, because as Yahweh swore to David, so I will do for him, [10]to let the kingship pass over from Sha'ul's household and establish David's throne over Yisra'el and over Yehudah, from Dan as far as Be'er Sheba.' [11]He couldn't say back anything further to Abner, for fear of him.
[12]Abner sent envoys to David, in place of himself, saying 'Whose is the country? You should solemnize your pact with me, and here, my hand will be with you to get all Yisra'el to come round to you.' [13]He said, 'Good, I myself will solemnize a pact with you. I'm going to ask only one thing from you: you will not see my face unless beforehand you bring Mikal, Sha'ul's daughter, when you come to see my face.' [14]And David sent envoys to Shameful-man son of Sha'ul, saying 'Give over my wife Mikal whom I betrothed to myself for a hundred Pelishtite foreskins.' [15]Shameful-man sent and got her from being with the husband, from being with Palti'el ben Layish. [16]Her husband went with her, wailing as he followed her as far as Bahurim, but Abner said to him, 'Go, go back', and he went back.

Abner miscalculates

[17]Abner had word with Yisra'el's elders: 'Even in previous days, you were seeking David as king over you. [18]So now, act, because Yahweh has said of David, "By the hand of David my servant I will deliver my people Yisra'el from the hand of the Pelishtites and from the hand of all their enemies."' [19]Abner both spoke in Binyamin's ear, and Abner also went to speak in David's ear in Hebron of all that was good in the eyes of Yisra'el and in the eyes of the entire household of Binyamin.
[20]Abner came to David at Hebron, twenty men with him, and David made a banquet for Abner and for the men who were with him. [21]Abner said to David, 'I'll set off and go and collect all Yisra'el for my lord the king so they can solemnize a pact with you and you can reign over all that your appetite longs for.' David sent Abner off and he went, with things being well.
[22]But there, David's servants and Yo'ab came from a raiding gang, and brought much spoil with them. Abner was not with David in Hebron because David had sent him off and he had gone, with things being well. [23]When Yo'ab and the entire army that was with him came, people told Yo'ab, 'Abner ben Ner came to the king, and he sent him off; he went with things being well.'
[24]Yo'ab came to the king and said, 'What have you done? Here was Abner coming to you. Why did you send him off? He's totally gone. [25]You know Abner ben Ner, that he would have come to deceive you and to know your coming and your going and to know everything that you're doing.'

The elimination of Abner

[26]Yo'ab went out from being with David and sent envoys after Abner, and they brought him back from the Sirah cistern. David didn't know. [27]So Abner came back to Hebron, Yo'ab took him aside inside the gateway to speak with him in private, but struck him down there, in the abdomen. He died for the blood of Asah'el his brother.
[28]David heard afterwards and said, 'I and my kingdom are free of guilt before Yahweh permanently for the shedding of the blood of Abner ben Ner. [29]May it whirl on the head of Yo'ab and on his father's entire household. May there not be cut off from Yo'ab's household someone with a discharge or someone with scaliness, or a man who takes strong hold of the spindle or falls by the sword or lacks bread.' [30]Yo'ab and Abishay his brother had killed Abner because of the fact that he had put Asah'el their brother to death at Gib'on in the battle.
[31]David said to Yo'ab and to the entire company that was with him, 'Tear your clothes and wrap on sack and lament before Abner', while King David was going behind the bier. [32]So they buried Abner at Hebron. The king lifted up his voice and wailed at Abner's grave. The entire company wailed. [33]The king chanted for Abner:

Should Abner have been dying
the death of a villain?
[34]Your hands were not tied up,
your feet were not in chains.
They were brought together like someone falling –
before evil men you fell.

So the entire company continued to wail over him.

The disabled son

[35]The entire company came to get David to eat bread while it was still day, but David swore, 'May God do this to me and may he do more if I taste bread or anything before sunset.' [36]When the entire company recognized, it was good in their eyes, as everything that the king did was good in the eyes of the entire company. [37]The entire company and all Yisra'el acknowledged that day that putting Abner ben Ner to death did not come from the king.
[38]The king said to his servants, 'You acknowledge, do you not, that a leader and a great man has fallen this day in Yisra'el. [39]And I myself am raw today, though anointed king, whereas these men, the sons of Tseruyah, are tougher than me. May Yahweh make good to the person who does what is bad in accordance with the bad thing that he did.'
4 Ben Sha'ul heard that Abner had died at Hebron, and his hands went slack, while all Yisra'el was fearful. [2]Now ben Sha'ul had two men who were officers over raiding gangs. The name of one was Ba'anah and the name of the second was Rekab, sons of Rimmon the Be'erotite, of the Binyaminites because Be'erot was also counted with Binyamin. [3]The Be'erotites had taken flight to Gittayim, and they have been residents there until this day.
[4]Now Yehonatan son of Sha'ul had a son who was injured in both feet. He was a boy of five years when the report about Sha'ul and Yehonatan came from Yizre'e'l. His nurse had carried him and fled, and as she was making haste to flee, he fell, so he limped. His name was Mephiboshet ['From-Shame's-Mouth'].

The elimination of Sha'ul's other son

[5]So the sons of Rimmon the Be'erotite, Rekab and Ba'anah, went and at the very heat of the day came to Shameful-man's house. He was taking a midday lie-down. [6]So there, they came inside the house like people getting wheat and struck him down in the abdomen. Then Rekab and Ba'anah his brother escaped. [7]They had come to the house when he was lying on his bed in his bedroom, struck him down and put him to death, and they removed his head, took his head, went by the Steppe road all night [8]and brought Shameful-man's head to David at Hebron. They said to the king, 'Here is the head of Shameful-man son of Sha'ul, your enemy who sought your life. This day Yahweh has given my lord the king full redress from Sha'ul and his offspring.'
[9]David answered Rekab and Ba'anah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Be'erotite, 'As Yahweh lives, who has redeemed my life from every pressure: [10]when someone told me, "Here, Sha'ul is dead", and in his eyes he was like someone bringing good news, I seized him and killed him in Tsiqlag, one to whom I might have given something for the news. [11]How much more when faithless men have killed a faithful man in his house on his bed! I will seek his blood from your hand and burn you away from the country, won't I.' [12]So David ordered the boys and they killed them, cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them over the pool at Hebron. The head of Shameful-man they took and buried in Abner's grave at Hebron.

David becomes king and Yerushalaim (Jerusalem) becomes his city

5 Then all the Yisra'elite clans came to David at Hebron and said, 'Here, we are your flesh and blood. [2]Further, in previous days, when Sha'ul was king over us, you were the one who took Yisra'el out and brought Yisra'el in. Yahweh said to you, "You're the one who will shepherd my people Yisra'el. You're the one who will be ruler over Yisra'el."'
[3]So all Yisra'el's elders came to the king at Hebron, King David solemnized a pact to them at Hebron before Yahweh, and they anointed David as king over Yisra'el. [4]David was a man of thirty years when he began to reign and he reigned for forty years: [5]in Hebron he reigned over Yehudah for seven years and six months, and in Yerushalaim he reigned for thirty-three years over all Yisra'el and Yehudah.
[6]The king and his men went to Yerushalaim against the Yebusites, the inhabitants of the region. They said to David, 'You

won't come in here. Actually, the blind and the lame could have removed you' (saying, 'David won't come in here'). [7]But David captured the Zion stronghold (i.e. David's Town). [8]David said on that day, 'Anyone striking down the Yebusites (the blind and the lame, treated with hostility by David himself – that's why they say, "A blind or lame person will not come into the house") should take possession of the conduit.'

[9]David lived in the stronghold and named it 'David's Town'. David built it up all round from the Fill to the house. [10]David went on getting bigger and bigger, as Yahweh the God of Armies was with him. [11]Hiram king of Tsor [Tyre] sent envoys to David with cedar wood, crafsmen in wood and craftsmen in stone for walls, and they built a house for David.

For the sake of David's people Yisra'el

[12]David acknowledged that Yahweh had established him as king over Yisra'el and that he had exalted his kingship for the sake of his people Yisra'el. [13]David took more secondary wives and wives from Yerushalaim after he came from Hebron, and more sons and daughters were born to David. [14]These are the names of the children born to him in Yerushalaim: Shammua, Shobab, Natan, Shelomoh [Solomon], [15]Yibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Yaphia, [16]Elishama, Elyada and Eliphelet.

[17]The Pelishtites heard that they had anointed David as king over Yisra'el, and all the Pelishtites went up to look for David. David heard, and went down to the stronghold. [18]When the Pelishtites came, they ran loose in Repha'ites Vale. [19]David asked of Yahweh, 'Shall I go up against the Pelishtites? Will you give them into my hand?' Yahweh said to David, 'Go up, because I shall definitely give the Pelishtites into your hand', [20]and David came to Ba'al-peratsim. David struck them down there and said, 'Yahweh has broken out on my enemies before me like a breakout of water.' That's why they named that place Ba'al Peratsim ['Master of Breakouts']. [21]They abandoned their idols there, and David and his men carried them off.

[22]The Pelishtites yet again went up and ran loose in Repha'ites Vale. [23]David asked of Yahweh, but he said, 'You will not go up. Make a turn round behind them and come to them from the direction of the weeper trees. [24]When you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the weeper trees, then take action, because Yahweh will have gone out before you to strike down the Pelishtites' camp.' [25]David did so, as Yahweh ordered him, and struck down the Pelishtites from Geba as far as when you come to Gezer.

Little things can have terrible consequences

6 David again gathered every picked man in Yisra'el, 30,000. [2]David set off and went, he and the entire company that was with him, from Ba'alim-in-Yehudah to take up from there God's chest over which the name is called out (the name of Yahweh of Armies who sits above the sphinxes). [3]They transported God's chest on a new wagon and carried it from Abinadab's house, which was on the hill, with Uzza and Ahyo, Abinadab's sons, driving the new wagon. [4]So they carried it from Abinadab's house, which was on the hill, with God's chest, with Ahyo going before the chest, [5]and David and the entire household of Yisra'el made fun before Yahweh with all juniper wood [instruments], with guitars, with mandolins, with tambourines, with rattles and with cymbals.

[6]But they came as far as Nakon's threshing floor, and Uzza reached out to God's chest and grasped it because the cattle had stumbled, [7]and Yahweh's anger raged at Uzzah. God struck him down there because of the blunder. He died there near God's chest.

[8]It really enraged David that Yahweh had broken out at Uzzah (he called that place Perets Uzzah ['Breakout at Uzzah'], until this day). [9]David was afraid of Yahweh that day and said, 'How can Yahweh's chest come to me?' [10]So David was not willing to move Yahweh's chest to him, to David's Town. David got it to turn aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.

[11]Yahweh's chest stayed at the house of Obed Edom the Gittite for three months. Yahweh blessed Obed Edom and his entire household, [12]and it was told King David, 'Yahweh has blessed the household of Obed Edom and all that belongs to him on account of God's chest', so David went and brought up God's chest from Obed Edom's house to David's Town with rejoicing.

How David honoured himself today!

[13]When the people carrying Yahweh's chest had taken six steps he sacrificed a bull and a fatling, [14]with David whirling before Yahweh with all his vigour, and David wrapped round in a linen chasuble, [15]and David and all the household of Yisra'el bringing up Yahweh's chest with a shout and with the sound of a horn. [16]Yahweh's chest was coming into David's Town as Mikal, Sha'ul's daughter, was looking out through the window. She saw King David jumping and whirling before Yahweh, and she despised him inside.

[17]They brought in Yahweh's chest and put it in its place inside the tent that David had spread for it. David offered up burnt offerings and well-being sacrifices before Yahweh. [18]David finished offering up the burnt offering and the well-being sacrifices, blessed the people in the name of Yahweh of Armies, [19]and shared out to the entire people, to the entire Yisra'elite horde, both men and women, to each individual, a round of bread, a date block and a raisin block.

The entire people went each person to his house, [20]and David went back to bless his household. Mikal, Sha'ul's daughter, came out to meet David, but she said, 'How the king of Yisra'el honoured himself today when he exposed himself today before the eyes of his servants' handmaids, as one of the empty-headed people totally exposes himself!'

[21]David said to Mikal, 'It was before Yahweh, who chose me rather than your father and his entire household to charge me to be ruler over Yahweh's people, over Yisra'el. I'll make fun before Yahweh [22]and slight myself yet more than this and be low in my own eyes, but with the handmaids that you speak of, with them I'll find honour.'

[23]To Mikal, Sha'ul's daughter, no child was born till the day of her death.

Yahweh doesn't like settling down

7 When the king had gone to live in his house, when Yahweh had given him a settled position in relation to all his enemies
around, [2]the king said to Natan the prophet, 'Please look: I'm living in a cedar house, but God's chest is living inside a tent.'
[3]Natan said to the king, 'Go do everything that's in your mind, because Yahweh is with you.'
[4]But that night Yahweh's word came to Natan: [5]'Go and say to my servant, to David, "Yahweh has said this: 'Are you to build
me a house to live in? [6]Because I haven't lived in a house from the day that I took the Yisra'elites up from Misrayim [Egypt] till
this day. I've been going about in a tent as a dwelling. [7]Everywhere I went about among all the Yisra'elites, did I speak a word
with one of the Yisra'elite clan leaders whom I ordered to shepherd my people Yisra'el, saying "Why have you not built me a
cedar house?""'
[8]So now you're to say this to my servant, to David, "Yahweh of Armies has said this: 'I myself took you from the pasture, from
following the flock, to be ruler over my people, over Yisra'el, [9]and I've been with you everywhere you've gone. I've cut off all
your enemies from before you and I shall make a big name for you, like the name of the big people who are on the earth. [10]I shall
make a place for my people, for Yisra'el, and plant them. They will dwell in their place and not tremble again. Evil people won't
humble them again as they did previously, [11]from the day that I ordered leaders over my people Yisra'el. I shall give you a settled
position in relation to all your enemies.

A house and a household

Yahweh tells you that Yahweh will make a house(hold) for you. [12]When your days are full and you lie down with your
ancestors, I shall set up your offspring after you, who will come out from inside you, and I shall establish his kingship. [13]He is the
one who will build a house for my name. I shall establish his royal throne permanently. [14]I myself will become a father to him and
he will become a son to me. When he goes wrong, I shall reprove him with a club in the hand of human beings, with the blows of
human hands, [15]but my commitment will not depart from him as I removed it from Sha'ul, whom I removed from before you.
[16]Your household and your kingship will be trustworthy permanently before you. Your throne will be established permanently.'"'
[17]In accordance with all these words and in accordance with this entire vision, so Natan spoke to David.
[18]King David came and sat before Yahweh, and said, 'Who am I, Lord Yahweh, and who are my household, that you have
brought me as far as this? [19]Moreover, this has been small in your eyes, Lord Yahweh. You've spoken further about your
servant's household for the distant future. This is instruction about a human being, Lord Yahweh: [20]what more can David speak to
you? You yourself have acknowledged your servant, Lord Yahweh. [21]On account of your word and in accordance with your mind
you're doing this entire big thing, making it known to your servant.

No God like Yahweh, no people like Yisra'el

[22]Thus you are great, Lord Yahweh, because there is no one like you, no God except you, in all that we have heard with our
ears. [23]And who is like your people, like Yisra'el, a nation on the earth that God went to redeem for himself as a people, to make
for himself a name, and to do big and awe-inspiring things (for you all) for your country before your people whom you redeemed
for yourself from Misrayim (nations and their gods). [24]You established your people Yisra'el for yourself as a people permanently,
and you Yahweh became God for them.
[25]Now, Yahweh God, the word that you have spoken about your servant and about his household – establish it permanently and
do as you have spoken. [26]May your name be great permanently: "Yahweh of Armies is God over Yisra'el". May your servant
David's household be established before you. [27]Because you, Yahweh of Armies, God of Yisra'el, have opened your servant's
ear, saying "I will build a household for you." That's why your servant has found his courage to make this plea to you.
[28]Now, Lord Yahweh, you are God, and your words are truthful. You have spoken this good thing to your servant. [29]Now
resolve to bless your servant's household so it will be before you permanently, because you, Lord Yahweh, have spoken. May
your servant's household be blessed permanently through your blessing.'

David's victories

8 Subsequently, David struck down the Pelishtites and made them bow down. David took the reins of control from the hand of
the Pelishtites. [2]He also struck down the Mo'abites. He measured them with a length of cord, making them lie down on the
ground. He measured two lengths for putting them to death and one full length for letting them live. The Mo'abites became
servants to David, bringing offerings. [3]David struck down Hadad'ezer ben Rehob king of Tsobah, when he was going to put back
his monument at the River Euphrates. [4]David captured from him 1,700 cavalry and 20,000 men on foot. David hamstrung all the
chariotry but of them left a hundred chariotry.
[5]Aramites from Dammeseq [Damascus] came to help Hadad'ezer king of Tsobah, and David struck down 22,000 men in Aram.
[6]David put outposts in Aram of Dammeseq and the Aramites became servants to David, bringing offerings. Yahweh delivered
David in every place where he went. [7]David took the gold quivers that Hadad'ezer's servants had and brought them to
Yerushalaim, [8]and from Betah and from Berotay, Hadad'ezer's towns, King David took very much copper.
[9]To'i king of Hamat heard that David had struck down Hadad'ezer's entire force, [10]and To'i sent Yoram his son to King David
to ask him about whether things were well and to bless him, because he had battled against Hadad'ezer and had struck him down,
on account of the fact that Hadad'ezer had been involved in battles with To'i. In his hand were objects of silver, objects of gold
and objects of copper. [11]King David also made them sacred for Yahweh, with the silver and the gold that he made sacred from all

the nations that he had subjugated: [12]from Edom, from Mo'ab, from the Ammonites, from the Pelishtites, from Amaleq and from the spoil of Hadad'ezer ben Rebob king of Tsobah.

David's best time

[13]David made a name when he came back from striking down the Aramites in Salt Ravine, 18,000. [14]He put outposts in Edom. When he put outposts in all Edom, all Edom became servants to David. Yahweh delivered David wherever he went. [15]David reigned over all Yisra'el and David exercised authority in faithfulness for all his people.

[16]Yo'ab ben Tseruyah was over the army.
Yehoshaphat ben Ahilud was recorder.
[17]Tsadoq [Zadok] ben Ahitub and Abimelek ben Ebyatar were priests.
Tserayah was secretary.
[18]Benayah ben Yehoyada: both the Keretites and the Peletites.
David's sons were priests.

9 David said, 'Is there anyone still left of Sha'ul's household, so I can act in commitment with him for the sake of Yehonatan?' [2]There was a servant belonging to Sha'ul's household; his name was Tsiba. They called for him to David, and the king said to him, 'Are you Tsiba?' He said, 'Your servant'. [3]The king said, 'Is there no one at all still left of Sha'ul's household so that I can act in God's commitment with him?' Tsiba said to the king, 'There's still a son of Yehonatan; he's injured in both feet.' [4]The king said to him, 'Where is he?' Tsiba said to the king, 'There, he's at the house of Makir ben Ammi'el, in Lo Debar.' [5]King David sent and got him from the house of Makir ben Ammi'el, from Lo Debar. [6]Mephiboshet ben Yehonatan, son of Sha'ul, came to David, fell on his face and bowed low. David said, 'Mephiboshet!' He said, 'Here is your servant.' [7]David said to him, 'Don't be afraid, because I'll definitely act in commitment with you for the sake of Yehonatan your father. I'll give back to you all the fields of Sha'ul, your father, and you yourself may eat bread at my table regularly.' [8]He bowed low and said, 'What is your servant, that you have turned your face to a dead dog like me?'

Mephiboshet ('From-Shame's-Mouth')

[9]The king called for Tsiba, Sha'ul's boy, and said to him, 'Everything that belonged to Sha'ul and to his entire household I am giving to your lord's son. [10]You are to serve the land for him, you, your sons and your servants, and bring it so it may be bread for your lord's son, so he may eat it. But Mephiboshet, your lord's son, himself is to eat bread continually at my table' (Tsiba had fifteen sons and twenty servants). [11]Tsiba said to the king, 'In accordance with all that my lord the king orders his servant, so your servant will act, "with Mephiboshet eating at my table like one of the king's sons".'
[12]Mephiboshet had a young son; his name was Mika. Everyone who lived in Tsiba's household – they were servants of Mephiboshet, [13]though Mephiboshet lived in Yerushalaim, because he was eating at the king's table regularly. He was lame in both feet.

10 Subsequently, the king of the Ammonites died, and Hanun his son began to reign in place of him. [2]David said, 'I will act in commitment with Hanun ben Nahash, as his father acted in commitment with me.' So David sent by the hand of his servants to console him over his father. David's servants came to the Ammonites' country, [3]but the Ammonites' officials said to Hanun their lord, 'Is David honouring your father, in your eyes, because he sent you people offering consolation? It's for the sake of searching out the town and investigating it so as to overthrow it that David sent his servants to you, isn't it.'
[4]So Hanun got David's servants, clipped off half their beard and cut their clothes in half up to their behinds, and sent them off. [5]People told David and he sent to meet them, because the men were very ashamed. The king said, 'Stay in Yeriho [Jericho] until your beard grows, then you can come back.'
[6]The Ammonites saw that they stank with David, and the Ammonites sent and hired Aramites from Bet-rehob and Aramites from Tsobah (20,000 men on foot), the king of Ma'akah (1,000 men) and men from Tob (12,000).

Yo'ab's victories

[7]David heard and sent Yo'ab and the entire army, the strong men. [8]The Ammonites went out and lined up for battle at the entrance of the gateway, with the Aramites from Tsobah and Rehob, the men from Tob, and Ma'akah alone in the fields. [9]Yo'ab saw that the face of battle was against him in front and behind. He picked some of all the picked men of Yisra'el and lined them up to meet the Aramites, [10]while he gave the rest of the company into the hand of Abshay his brother and lined them up to meet the Ammonites. [11]He said, 'If the Aramites are too strong for me, you'll be my deliverance, and if the Ammonites are too strong for you, I'll go to deliver you. [12]Be strong, and let's summon up our strength on behalf of our people and on behalf of our God's towns, as Yahweh does what is good in his eyes.'
[13]So Yo'ab went up for the battle against the Aramites, he and his company who were with him, and they fled from before him. [14]When the Ammonites saw that the Aramites had fled, they fled from before Abishay and came into the town. So Yo'ab turned back from fighting the Ammonites, and came to Yerushalaim.
[15]The Aramites saw that they had taken a beating before Yisra'el, and they gathered together. [16]Hadad'ezer sent and got the Aramites who were from across the river to go out, and they came to Helam, with Shobak, Hadad'ezer's army officer, at their head. [17]It was told David, and he gathered all Yisra'el, crossed the Yarden and came to Hela'm, and the Aramites lined up to meet David and did battle with him. [18]The Aramites fled from before Yisra'el. David killed 700 of the Aramite chariotry and 40,000

cavalry, and struck down Shobak, his army officer; he died there. [19]All the kings who were servants of Hadad'ezer saw that they had taken a beating before Yisra'el and they made peace with Yisra'el and served them. The Aramites were afraid to deliver the Ammonites any more.

The view from the roof

11 At the turn of the year, at the time when the kings go out, David sent Yo'ab and his servants with him, and all Yisra'el, and they devastated the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah, while David was staying in Yerushalaim.

[2]During evening time David got up from his bed and walked about on the roof of the king's house, and from on the roof saw a woman bathing. The woman was very good-looking. [3]David sent and enquired about the woman. They said, 'She's Bat-sheba bat Eli'am, the wife of Uriyyah the Hittite, isn't she.' [4]David sent envoys, got her, and she came to him. He slept with her, while she was making herself sacred from her taboo, and she went back to her house.

[5]The woman got pregnant, and she sent and told David, 'I'm pregnant.' [6]David sent to Yo'ab, 'Send Uriyyah the Hittite to me.' Yo'ab sent Uriyyah to David. [7]So Uriyyah came to him, and David asked him about how well things were with Yo'ab and how well things were with the company and how well things were with the battle. [8]Then David said to Uriyyah, 'Go down to your house and bathe your feet.' Uriyyah went out from the king's house, and a present from the king followed him.

[9]But Uriyyah slept at the entrance of the king's house with all his lord's servants. He didn't go down to his house. [10]They told David, 'Uriyyah didn't go down to his house.' David said to Uriyyah, 'Didn't you come from a journey? Why didn't you go down to your house?' [11]Uriyyah said to David, 'The chest and Yisra'el and Yehudah are staying at Sukkot, and my lord Yo'ab and my lord's servants are camped on the face of the fields, and should I myself come to my house to eat and drink and sleep with my wife? By your life, by your very life, if I were to do this thing . . .'

[12]David said to Uriyyah, 'Stay here today, too, and tomorrow I'll send you off.' So Uriyyah stayed in Yerushalaim that day.

One moral mistake can lead to another

Next day [13]David called for him, he ate before him and drank, and he got him drunk. But in the evening he went out to lie in his bed with his lord's servants. He didn't go down to his house. [14]So in the morning David wrote a letter to Yo'ab and sent it by the hand of Uriyyah. [15]He wrote in the letter, 'Place Uriyyah near the front of the fiercest battle, and pull back from after him so he may be struck down and die.' [16]So when Yo'ab was keeping watch on the town, he put Uriyyah in the place where he knew that there were forceful men. [17]The men of the town came out and battled against Yo'ab, and of the company some of David's servants fell. Uriyyah the Hittite also died.

[18]Yo'ab sent and told David all the things about the battle. [19]He ordered the envoy: 'When you finish speaking all the things about the battle to the king, [20]if the king's temper rises and he says to you, "Why did you go up to the town to battle? Didn't you know that they would shoot from on the wall? [21]Who struck down Abimelek ben Yerubbeshet? Wasn't it a woman who threw down an upper millstone on him from on the wall and he died at Tebets? Why did you go up to the wall?" then you are to say, "Your servant Uriyyah the Hittite also died."'

[22]The envoy went, and came and told David all that Yo'ab had sent him with. [23]The envoy said to David, 'The men prevailed against us and came out against us into the fields. Then we were against them as far as the entrance of the gateway. [24]But the archers shot at your servants from on the wall and some of the king's servants died; and your servant Uriyyah the Hittie also died.'

[25]David said to the envoy, 'Say this to Yo'ab: "This thing is not to be bad in your eyes, because the sword devours one way and another way. Make your battle stronger against the town and tear it down." Strengthen him.'

But the thing David had done was bad in Yahweh's eyes

[26]Uriyyah's wife heard that Uriyyah her husband was dead, and she lamented over her master. [27]The grieving passed, and David sent and gathered her to his house. She became a wife for him, and gave birth to a son for him.

But the thing that David did was bad in Yahweh's eyes.

12 So Yahweh sent Natan to David. He came to him and said to him, 'There were two men in a town, one wealthy, one destitute. [2]The wealthy man had a very large flock and herd. [3]The destitute man didn't have anything except one small ewe that he had acquired. He had let it live and it had grown up with him and with his children, all together. It used to eat from his bit, drink from his cup and sleep in his arms. It was like a daughter to him. [4]A traveller came to the wealthy man, but he spared taking something from his flock or from his herd to prepare for the man on a journey who had come to him. He took the destitute man's ewe and prepared it for the man who had come to him.'

[5]David's anger raged right up at the man. He said to Natan, 'As Yahweh lives, the man who did this deserves death. [6]He should make good fourfold for the ewe on account of the fact that he did this thing, and since he didn't spare.'

[7]Natan said to David, 'You're the man. Yahweh the God of Yisra'el has said this: "I myself anointed you as king over Yisra'el. I myself rescued you from Sha'ul's hand. [8]I gave you your lord's household and your lord's wives into your arms. I gave you the household of Yisra'el and Yehudah. If that's little, I would have added to you as much again as these. [9]Why did you despise Yahweh's word by doing what is bad in my eyes? Uriyyah the Hittite you struck down with the sword and his wife you took as your wife. Him you killed, with the sword of the Ammonites. [10]So now the sword won't depart from your household, permanently, because of the fact that you despised me and took Uriyyah the Hittite's wife to be a wife for you."

The man who has learned how to be a prophet

[11]Yahweh has said this: "Here, I'm going to make something bad arise for you from your household. I shall take your wives
before your eyes and give them to your neighbour. He'll sleep with your wives before the eyes of this sun. [12]Because you yourself
acted in secret, but I myself will do this thing before all Yisra'el and before the sun."'
[13]David said to Natan, 'I've acted wrongly against Yahweh.' Natan said to David, 'Yes. Because Yahweh has made your
wrongdoing pass on, you will not die. [14]Nevertheless, because you've totally disdained (the enemies of) Yahweh by this act, yes,
the child born to you will definitely die.' [15]And Natan went home.
Yahweh struck the child to whom Uriyyah's wife gave birth for David, and it became ill. [16]David sought God for the boy.
David made a fast and came and stayed the night and lay on the ground. [17]The elders in his household got up over him to make
him get up from the ground but he wasn't willing, and he didn't eat a meal with them.
[18]On the seventh day the child died. David's servants were afraid to tell him that the child had died, because (they said), 'Here,
when the child was alive, we spoke to him and he didn't listen to our voice. How can we say to him, "The child is dead"? He may
do something bad.' [19]David saw that his servants were whispering to one another and David perceived that the child was dead.
David said to his servants, 'Is the child dead?' They said, 'He's dead.'

Death and new life

[20]David got up from the ground, bathed, put on his oils and changed his clothes. He came to Yahweh's house and bowed low.
Then he came to his house and asked and they presented him with a meal and he ate. [21]His servants said to him, 'What's this thing
that you've done? When the child was alive, you fasted and wailed. Now that the child is dead, you've got up and eaten a meal.'
[22]He said, 'While the child was still alive, I fasted and wailed because I said, "Who knows? Yahweh may be gracious to me. The
child may live." [23]But now he's dead, why on earth should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I'm going to him, but he won't
come back to me.'
[24]David consoled Bat-sheba his wife and had sex with her. He slept with her and she gave birth to a son, and named him
Shelomoh [Solomon]. Because Yahweh loved him, [25]he sent by means of Natan the prophet and named him 'Beloved-by-Yah',
on account of Yahweh.
[26]Yo'ab battled against Rabbah of the Ammonites and captured the royal town. [27]Yo'ab sent envoys to David and said, 'I've
battled against Rabbah – yes, captured the water town. [28]So now, gather the rest of the company and camp against the town and
capture it, so that I myself don't capture the town and my name is called out over it.'
[29]So David gathered the entire company and went to Rabbah, battled against it and captured it. [30]He got their king's crown
from on his head (its weight was a talent of gold, with precious stones) and it came on to David's head, while he took out very
much spoil from the town. [31]The people that was in it he took out and put them to saws, iron harrows and iron axes, or transferred
them to brickworking. So he would do to all the Ammonites' towns. Then David and the entire company went back to
Yerushalaim.

Amnon's plot

13 Subsequently: Abshalom, David's son, had an attractive sister; her name was Tamar. Amnon, David's son, was in love with
her. [2]It was pressing for Amnon, so that he became ill on account of Tamar his sister, because she was a young girl but it was
unimaginable in Amnon's eyes to do anything about her.
[3]Now Amnon had a friend; his name was Yonadab ben Shim'ah, David's brother. Yonadab was a very smart man. [4]He said to
him, 'Prince, why are you down like this, morning by morning? Won't you tell me?' Amnon said to him, 'Tamar, my brother
Abshalom's sister – I'm in love with her.' [5]Yonadab said to him, 'Lie on your bed and act ill. Your father will come to see you
and you're to say to him, "May Tamar my sister please come and give me bread to eat. May she prepare the food before my eyes
in order that I may see and eat from her hand."'
[6]So Amnon lay down and acted ill, the king came to see him, and Amnon said to the king, 'May Tamar my sister come and
make a couple of pancakes before my eyes, so I may eat from her hand.' [7]So David sent to Tamar his daughter, saying 'Please go
to Amnon your brother's house and make him some food.' [8]Tamar went to Amnon her brother's house; he was lying down. She
got dough and kneaded it and made pancakes before his eyes, and cooked the pancakes.
[9]She got the pan and poured them out before him, but he refused to eat. Amnon said, 'Get everyone to go out from me', and
everyone went out from him. [10]Amnon said to Tamar, 'Bring the food into the room so I can eat from your hand.' Tamar got the
pancakes that she'd made, brought them to Amnon her brother in the room [11]and brought them up to him to eat, but he took strong
hold of her and said to her, 'Come to bed with me, sister.'

The rape of a sister

[12]She said to him, 'Don't, brother. Don't humble me, because such a thing is not done in Yisra'el. Don't do this villainous
thing. [13]I, where would I take my reviling? And you, you'll be just one of the villains in Yisra'el. So now, please speak to the
king, because he wouldn't withhold me from you.' [14]But he wasn't willing to listen to her voice. He took hold of her and humbled
her and bedded her.
[15]Amnon then felt a very great hostility for her, in that the hostility that he felt for her was greater than the love he had felt for
her. Amnon said to her, 'Get up, go.' [16]She said to him, 'No, because this bad act is greater than the other that you did with me,
sending me away.' But he wasn't willing to listen to her. [17]He called the boy who ministered to him and said 'Please send this
woman off, away from my presence, outside, and bolt the door after her.'

[18]She had a long-sleeved gown on, because the young princesses used to dress in such robes. His minister took her outside and bolted the door after her. [19]Tamar put earth on her head, tore the long-sleeved gown that she had on, put her hand on her head and went her way, crying out as she went.
[20]Abshalom her brother said to her, 'Sister, was it Aminon your brother who was with you? Now, sister, quieten down. He's your brother. Don't set your mind on this thing.' Tamar stayed, a desolate woman, in Abshalom her brother's house. [21]When King David heard about all these things, it really enraged him. [22]Abshalom didn't speak with Amnon anything bad or good, because Abshalom was hostile to Amnon because of the fact that he had humbled Tamar his sister.

The strife between brothers

[23]Two full years later, Abshalom's shearers were at Ba'al Hatsor, which is near Ephrayim, and Abshalom invited all the princes. [24]Abshalom came to the king and said, 'Please, here are your servant's shearers. Will the king and his servants please go with your servant?' [25]The king said to Abshalom, 'No, son, we won't all of us go, we won't be a burden to you.' He pressed him, but he wasn't willing to go, but he gave them his blessing. [26]So Abshalom said, 'But won't Amnon my brother please go with us?' The king said to him, 'Why should he go with you?' [27]But Abshalom pressed him, and he sent with him Amnon and all the princes.
[28]Abshalom ordered his boys, 'Watch when Amnon's heart is good because of the wine, will you, and I'll say to you, "Strike Amnon down": put him to death, don't be afraid. I myself am the one who's given you the order, am I not. Be strong. Be forceful men.' [29]Abshalom's boys did to Amnon as Abshalom ordered, and all the princes got up, each one on his mule, and fled.
[30]While they were on the way, the report came to David: 'Abshalom has struck down all the princes – not one of them was left!' [31]David got up and tore his clothes and lay on the ground. All his servants stood, their clothes torn. [32]But Yonadab ben Shim'ah, David's brother, avowed, 'My lord should not say that all the young princes are dead, because Amnon alone is dead, because it's been determined at Abshalom's bidding since the day Amnon humbled Tamar his sister. [33]So now my lord the king should not take the thing to heart, saying "All the princes are dead", because Amnon alone is dead.'

The woman from Teqoa

[34]Abshalom took flight, and the lookout boy lifted up his eyes and looked: there, a large company going from the road behind him, from the side of the mountain. [35]Yonadab said to the king, 'There, the princes have come. In accordance with your servant's word, so it has happened.' [36]As he finished speaking, there, the princes came; they lifted up their voice and wailed. The king and all his servants also uttered a very great wail. [37]When Abshalom took flight and went to Talmay ben Ammihud king of Geshur, he took up grieving over his son all the time.
[38]When Abshalom had taken flight and gone to Geshur, he was there for three years, [39]then going out to Abshalom consumed King David, because he had found consolation over Amnon, that he was dead.
14 Yo'ab ben Tseruyah knew that the king's mind was on Abshalom, [2]and Yo'ab sent to Teqoa and got a smart woman from there. He said to her, 'Please act as someone grieving and dress in grieving clothes. Don't put on oils; be like a woman who's been grieving for a long time over someone who has died. [3]You're to come to the king and speak to him in this way.' Yo'ab put the words into her mouth, [4]and the Teqo'ite woman said them to the king. She fell on her face to the ground, bowed low, and said, 'Deliver, Your Majesty!'
[5]The king said to her, 'What do you need?' She said, 'Well, I'm a woman who's a widow; my husband has died. [6]Your maidservant had two sons. The two of them fought in the fields and there was no one to rescue them from each other. One of them struck the other down and put him to death. [7]And here, the entire kin-group has risen up against your maidservant and said, "Give us the one who struck his brother down so we may put him to death for the life of his brother whom he killed. We'll annihilate the heir, too." So they'll quench the ember that remains to me, and not give my husband a name or someone remaining on the face of the ground.' [8]The king said to the woman, 'Go home and I'll give an order concerning you.'

The parable explained

[9]The Teqo'ite woman said to the king, 'On me be the waywardness, my lord king, and on my ancestral household; the king and his throne be free of guilt.' [10]The king said, 'Anyone who speaks to you, bring him to me, and he will never touch you again.' [11]She said, 'The king is, please, to be mindful of Yahweh your God so that the restorer of blood does not bring more devastation and they do not annihilate my son.' He said, 'As Yahweh lives, if one hair of your son's falls to the ground . . .'
[12]The woman said, 'May your maidservant please speak a word to my lord the king.' He said, 'Speak.' [13]The woman said, 'So why have you thought things up in this way against God's people? By the king's speaking this thing, he is like someone liable to condemnation, in that the king does not let his banished son come back. [14]Because we shall all finally die, like water poured out on the ground that cannot be gathered up. But God does not take up the life of one who thinks of ways so that someone who is banished does not stay banished from him.
[15]So now, in that I have come to speak this word to my lord the king because the people have frightened me, your maidservant said, "I must speak to the king; perhaps the king will act on your handmaid's word, [16]because the king will listen and rescue his handmaid from the fist of someone annihilating me and my son together from God's domain." [17]Your maidservant said, "May the word of my lord the king please be for my relief, because my lord the king is like God's envoy in listening to what is good and what is bad." May Yahweh your God be with you.'

The king won

[18]The king answered the woman, ‘Please don’t hide a thing from me of what I am asking you.’ The woman said, ‘My lord the king may please speak.’ [19]The king said, ‘Is Yo’ab’s hand with you in all this?’ The woman answered, ‘By your own life, my lord the king, if anyone could go to the right or to the left from all that my lord the king spoke, because your servant Yo’ab – he’s the one who gave me orders and who put all these things in your maidservant’s mouth. [20]It was for the sake of changing the face of the thing that your servant Yo’ab did this thing. My lord is smart with the same smartness as God’s envoy in knowing everything that’s in the country.’

[21]The king said to Yo’ab, ‘Here, I’m going to do this thing. Go and get the boy, Abshalom, back.’ [22]Yo’ab fell on his face on the ground and bowed low and blessed the king. Yo’ab said, ‘Today your servant acknowledges that I have found grace in your eyes, my lord king, in that the king has acted on your servant’s word.’

[23]Yo’ab set off and went to Geshur and brought Abshalom to Yerushalaim. [24]But the king said, ‘He’s to go round to his house and not see my face.’ So Abshalom went round to his house and didn’t see the king’s face.

The field set on fire

[25]Compared with Abshalom, there was no one in all Yisra’el as attractive, no one to admire so much. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no defect in him. [26]When he shaved his head (at the end of each year when he would shave – because it was too heavy for him, so he would shave it), he would weigh the hair on his head: 200 sheqels by the royal weight. [27]There were born to Abshalom three sons and one daughter, and her name was Tamar; she became a woman who was attractive in appearance.

[28]Abshalom lived in Yerushalaim for two years but didn’t see the king’s face. [29]Then Abshalom sent to Yo’ab so as to send him to the king, but he wouldn’t come to him. He sent again, a second time, but he wasn’t willing to come. [30]So he said to his servants, ‘Look, Yo’ab’s share is by the side of me and he has barley there. Go and set it on fire.’ Abshalom’s servants set the share on fire.

[31]Yo’ab got up and came to Abshalom at home and said to him, ‘Why did your servants set my share on fire?’ [32]Abshalom said to Yo’ab, ‘Here, I sent to you, saying “Come here”, so I could send you to the king to say “Why did I come from Geshur? It would be good for me if I were still there.” Now, I should see the king’s face, and if there is any waywardness in me, he may put me to death.’ [33]So Yo’ab came to the king and told him, and he called for Abshalom. He came to the king and bowed low to him, with his face to the ground before the king, and the king kissed Abshalom.

Abshalom prepares for a coup

15 Subsequently, Abshalom made ready for himself a chariot and horses, with fifty men running before him. [2]Abshalom would start early and stand by the side of the road to the gateway. When anyone had an argument that was to come to the king for a decision, Abshalom called to him and said, ‘What town are you from?’, and the person said, ‘Your servant is from one of the Yisra’elite clans’, [3]and Abshalom said to him, ‘Look, your words are good and straight, but you have no one from the king to listen.’

[4]Abshalom said, ‘If only someone would make me an authority in the country so that anyone who had an argument for decision could come to me and I would see he was recognized as in the right.’ [5]When someone drew near to bow low to him, he would put out his hand and take strong hold of him and kiss him. [6]Abshalom acted in this manner to all Yisra’el who would come to the king for a decision. So Abshalom stole the heart of the Yisra’elites.

[7]At the end of forty years Abshalom said to the king, ‘I want please to go and make good my pledge that I made to Yahweh in Hebron, [8]because your servant made a pledge when I was living in Geshur in Aram, saying “If Yahweh lets me actually go back to Yerushalaim, I will serve Yahweh.”’ [9]The king said to him, ‘Go; things will be well.’ So he set off and went to Hebron.

[10]But Abshalom sent followers through all Yisra’el’s clans, saying ‘When you hear the sound of the horn, you’re to say, “Abshalom has become king in Hebron!” [11]Two hundred people from Yerushalaim had gone with Abshalom, invited and going in integrity. They didn’t know anything. [12]And Abshalom sent for Ahitophel the Gilonite, David’s counsellor, from his town, from Giloh, when he was offering sacrifices. The conspiracy became powerful, and the company going with Abshalom was growing.

David’s flight

[13]Someone came telling David, ‘The Yisra’elites’ mind has gone after Abshalom.’ [14]David said to all his servants who were with him in Yerushalaim, ‘Get up, let’s take flight, because there’ll be no escape group for us from before Abshalom. Hurry, go, so he doesn’t hurry and catch up with us and hurl something bad upon us and strike the town down with the mouth of the sword.’ [15]The king’s servants said to the king, ‘In accordance with all that my lord the king chooses, here are your servants.’ [16]The king went out with his entire household after him, but the king abandoned ten secondary wives to keep the house.

[17]So the king went out with the entire company after him, and halted at the farthest house, [18]with all his servants passing on his side, and all the Keretites and all the Peletites, and all the Gittites (600 men who had come after him from Gat), passing on before the king. [19]The king said to Ittay the Gittite, ‘Why should you go with us, too? Go back and stay with the king, because you’re a foreigner, and also you’re an exile in relation to your place. [20]You came yesterday. Why should I get you to wander with us today as we go, when I’m going wherever I’m going? Turn back and take your brothers back with you in commitment and truthfulness.’

[21]Ittay answered the king, ‘As Yahweh lives and as my lord the king lives, in the place where my lord the king is, whether for death or for life, there will your servant be.’ [22]David said to Ittay, ‘Go, pass on.’ So Ittay the Gittite passed on, with all his men and all the little ones who were with him.

Turn Ahitophel's advice into stupidity

[23]As the entire region was wailing in a loud voice and the entire company was passing on, and the king was passing over Wadi Qidron, and the entire company was passing on before the wilderness road, [24]and there also Tsadoq and all the Levites with him were carrying the chest of God's pact, they put God's chest down (and Ebyatar went up) until the company had finished passing on from the town.
[25]But the king said to Tsadoq, 'Take God's chest back into the town. If I find grace in Yahweh's eyes, he will let me come back and let me see it and its home. [26]But if he says this: "I don't want you", here I am: he can do with me as it is good in his eyes.' [27]So the king said to Tsadoq the priest, 'Do you see? You go back to the town and things will go well, with Ahima'ats your son and Yehonatan ben Ebyatar (your two sons) with you. [28]See, I'm going to wait in the steppes in the wilderness until word comes from you to tell me.'
[29]So Tsadoq and Ebyatar took God's chest back to Yerushalaim and stayed there, [30]while David was going up the Olives Ascent, wailing as he was going up, with his head covered; he was walking barefoot, while the entire company that was with him covered each one his head. They went up wailing as they were going up. [31]When David was told, 'Ahitophel is among the conspirators with Abshalom', David said, 'Please turn Ahitophel's counsel into idiocy, Yahweh!'

Two loyal friends

[32]David was coming as far as the top where people would bow low to God, and there was Hushay the Arkite to meet him, his coat torn and earth on his head. [33]David said to him, 'If you pass on with me, you'll be a burden to me. [34]But if you go back to the town and say to Abshalom, "I'm your servant, Your Majesty – I used to be your father's servant in the past, but now I'm your servant", you can contravene Ahitophel's counsel for me. [35]Tsadoq and Ebyatar the priests will be with you there, won't they. And every word that you hear from the king's house you can tell Tsadoq and Ebyatar the priests. [36]There, their two sons, Tsadoq's Ahima'ats and Ebyatar's Yehonatan, are with them. You can send to me through them everything that you hear.' [37]So Hushay, David's friend, came to the town as Abshalom was coming to Yerushalaim.
16 When David had passed a little beyond the top, there, Tsiba, a servant of Mephiboshet, met him with a pair of donkeys, saddled. On them were two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred raisin blocks, a hundred of summer fruit and a skin of wine. [2]The king said to Tsiba, 'Why have you got these?' Tsiba said, 'The donkeys are for the king's household to ride, the bread and the summer fruit are for eating by the boys, and the wine is for drinking by people who are weary in the wilderness.' [3]The king said, 'And where is your lord's son?' Tsiba said to the king, 'There, he's staying in Yerushalaim, because he's said, "Today the household of Yisra'el will give me back my father's kingship."' [4]The king said to Tsiba, 'Here, to you belongs everything that belonged to Mephiboshet.' Tsiba said, 'I bow low. May I find grace in your eyes, my lord king.'

Shim'i's slighting

[5]King David came as far as Bahurim and there, someone from the kin-group of Sha'ul's household was going out from there. His name was Shim'i ben Gera. As he went out he was slighting [6]and pelting David and all King David's servants with stones, with the entire company and all the strong men at his right and at his left. [7]Shim'i said this as he slighted him: 'Get out, get out, you man of bloodshed, you scoundrel! [8]Yahweh is giving back to you all the bloodshed in the household of Sha'ul, in whose place you became king. Yahweh has given the kingship into the hand of Abshalom your son, and here you are, in a bad situation, because you're a man of bloodshed.'
[9]Abishay ben Tseruyah said to the king, 'Why should this dead dog slight my lord the king? I shall pass on, please, and remove his head!' [10]But the king said, 'What do you and I have in common, you sons of Tseruyah? He can slight in this way because Yahweh has said to him, "Slight David." Who is to say, "Why have you done that?"?' [11]David said to Abishay and to all his servants, 'Here, my son who came out from inside me, is seeking my life. How much more now a Binyaminite? Let him be. He can slight, because Yahweh has said it to him. [12]Maybe Yahweh will look at the waywardness done to me and Yahweh will give back good to me in place of his slighting this day.'
[13]David and his men went on their way, while Shim'i was going along the side of the mountain alongside him, slighting and pelting him with stones alongside him and throwing earth as he went. [14]The king came with the entire company that was with him, faint, and he refreshed himself there.

Ahitophel's advice

[15]Now Abshalom and the entire company, the Yisra'elite men, came to Yerushalaim, and Ahitophel with him. [16]When Hushay the Arkite, David's friend, came to Abshalom, Hushay said to Abshalom, 'Long live the king, long live the king.' [17]Abshalom said to Hushay, 'Is this your commitment to your friend? Why didn't you go with your friend?' [18]Hushay said to Abshalom, 'No, because the one whom Yahweh has chosen, he and this company and all the Yisra'elite men – I shall be for him. I shall stay with him. [19]Second, whom should I serve? Before his son, shouldn't I. As I served before your father, so I shall be before you.'
[20]Abshalom said to Ahitophel, 'Give your counsel: what shall we do?' [21]Ahitophel said, 'Have sex with your father's secondary wives whom he left to keep the house. All Yisra'el will hear that you have let yourself stink with your father, and the hands of all the people who are with you will be strong.' [22]They spread a tent for Abshalom on the roof and Abshalom had sex with his father's secondary wives before the eyes of all Yisra'el.
[23]At that time the counsel of Ahitophel which he gave was like when one asks of a word from God. So it was with all Ahitophel's counsel both for David and for Abshalom.

17 Ahitophel said to Abshalom, ‘I should please pick 12,000 men and set off and pursue after David tonight [2]so that I come on h
when he’s weary and weak-handed. I’ll make him tremble, and the entire company that’s with him will flee. I’ll strike down
the king alone [3]and bring back the entire company to you. When everyone has come back (it’s the man you’re seeking), the entire
people will be at peace.’ [4]The thing seemed right in the eyes of Abshalom and in the eyes of all Yisra’el’s elders, [5]but Abshalom
said, ‘Call for Hushay the Arkite as well, please, so we can hear what’s in his mouth as well.’ [6]Hushay came to Abshalom and
Abshalom said to him: ‘This very word Ahitophel spoke. Shall we act on his word? If not, you speak.’

Good advice treated as folly

[7]Hushay said to Abshalom, ‘The counsel Ahitophel has given is not good this time.’ [8]Hushay said, ‘You yourself know your
father and his men, that they’re strong men. They’re as fierce-spirited as a bear in the wild that has lost its cubs, and your father is
a man of battle. But he won’t stay the night with the company. [9]There, he will now be hiding in one of the pits or in one of the
places.

And when some of the men fall at the beginning, a person who hears will hear and say, “Defeat has come on the company that
goes after Abshalom!” [10]That man, even if he’s a forceful man whose heart’s like the heart of a lion, will totally melt, because all
Yisra’el knows that your father is a strong man, as are the forceful men who are with him.

[11]Rather I counsel that all Yisra’el from Dan as far as Be’er-sheba (like the sand on the seashore in numbers) gather together to
join you, with you personally going among them. [12]We’ll come against him in one of the places where he may be found and we’ll
light on him as the dew falls on the ground. None will be left of him and of all the men who are with him, not even one. [13]If he
gathers together into a town, all Yisra’el is to bring ropes to that town and we’ll drag it as far as the wadi until not even a pebble is
to be found there.’

[14]Abshalom and all the Yisra’elite men said, ‘The counsel of Hushay the Arkite is better than the counsel of Ahitophel’;
Yahweh had ordered the contravening of Ahitophel’s good counsel so that Yahweh might bring a bad fate on Abshalom.
[15]Hushay said to Tsadoq and to Ebyatar the priests, ‘In this and this way Ahitophel counselled Abshalom and the elders of
Yisra’el, but in this and this way I myself counselled. [16]Now send off quickly and tell David, “Don’t stay the night at the
wilderness crossings. Further, cross right over so that he isn’t swallowed up, the king and the entire company that’s with him.”’

Ahitophel’s suicide

[17]Yehonatan and Ahima’ats were halting at Treader’s Spring, a maid would go and tell them, and they would go and tell King
David, because they couldn’t be seen coming into the town. [18]But a boy saw them and told Abshalom. The two of them went
quickly and came to the house of someone in Bahurim. He had a well in his courtyard and they went down there. [19]The wife got a
length of cloth and spread it over the face of the well, and scattered groats on it, so that nothing would become known.
[20]Abshalom’s servants came to the woman at the house and said, ‘Where are Ahima’ats and Yehonatan?’ The woman said to
them, ‘They crossed over the water brook.’ They searched, but didn’t find them, and went back to Yerushalaim.

[21]After they had gone, they got up from the well and went and told King David. They said to David, ‘Set off and cross the water
quickly, because Ahitophel has given counsel about you in such-and-such a way.’ [22]So David set off, he and the entire company
that was with him, and crossed the Yarden before morning light, until not one was missing who had not crossed the Yarden.

[23]When Ahitophel saw that his counsel was not acted on, he saddled his donkey, set off and went home to his town. He gave
orders concerning his household, and hanged himself. He died and was buried in his father’s grave.

[24]David was coming to Mahanayim when Abshalom crossed the Yarden, he and all the men of Yisra’el with him. [25]Abshalom
had put Amasa over the army in place of Yo’ab. Amasa was the son of a man whose name was Yitra the Yisra’elite, who had had
sex with Abigayil bat Nahash, the sister of Tseruyah, Yo’ab’s mother. [26]Yisra’el and Abshalom camped in the region of Gil’ad.

David agrees to stay behind

[27]When David came to Mahanayim, Shobi ben Nahash from Rabbat of the Ammonites, Makir ben Ammi’el from Lo Debar,
and Barzillay the Gil’adite from Rogelim [28]brought up for David and for the company that was with him bedding, basins, potter’s
containers, wheat, barley, flour, roasted grain, beans, lentils, roasted grain, [29]syrup, curds, a flock, and cheese from the herd to eat,
because (they said), ‘The company’s hungry and faint and thirsty in the wilderness.’

18 David numbered the company that was with him and set over them divisional officers and section officers. [2]David sent off
the company, a third in the hand of Yo’ab, a third in the hand of Abishay ben Tseruyah, Yo’ab’s brother, and a third in the
hand of Ittay the Gittite. The king said to the company, ‘I myself will definitely go out with you as well.’ [3]But the company said,
‘You’re not to go out, because if we do flee, they won’t put their mind to us. If half of us die, they won’t put their mind to us.
Because there are now 10,000 like us. So now, it will be good that you’re available to us from the town to help.’ [4]So the king said
to them, ‘Whatever is good in your eyes I’ll do.’

The king stood at the side of the gateway as the entire company went out by sections and by divisions. [5]The king ordered
Yo’ab, Abishay and Ittay, ‘Gently for me with the boy, with Abshalom.’ The entire company heard the the king ordering all the
officers concerning Abshalom.

[6]The company went out to the fields to meet Yisra’el. The battle took place in the Ephrayim Forest [7]and the Yisra’elite
company took a beating there before David’s servants. It was a great defeat there that day – 20,000 men. [8]The battle took place
there, spread over the face of the entire region. The forest did more devouring of the company than what the sword devoured that
day.

Abshalom meets his death

[9]Abshalom met up with David's servants while Abshalom was riding on a mule. The mule came under the tangle of a big oak
and his head caught hold of the oak. He was given up between the heavens and the earth as the mule that was under him passed
on.
[10]Someone saw and told Yo'ab, 'Here, I've seen Abshalom hanging in an oak!' [11]Yo'ab said to the man who told him, 'Here,
you saw, why didn't you strike him down to the ground there? It would have been on me to give you ten pieces of silver and a
belt.' [12]The man said to Yo'ab, 'If I were weighing on my palms a thousand pieces of silver, I wouldn't put out my hand against
the prince, because in our ears the king ordered you and Abishay and Gittay, "Keep watch, whoever you are, over the boy
Abshalom." [13]If I'd acted falsely against his life, when nothing hides from the king, you yourself would have taken your stand at a
distance.'
[14]Yo'ab said, 'I won't wait for you, therefore.' He took three sticks into his fist and plunged them into Abshalom's heart. While
he was still alive in the heart of the oak, [15]ten boys, Yo'ab's equipment-bearers, came round, struck Abshalom down and put him
to death. [16]Yo'ab blew on the horn, and the company turned back from pursuing after Yisra'el, because Yo'ab held the company
back. [17]They took Abshalom and threw him into a big pit in the forest, and put up a very big heap of stones over it, while all
Yisra'el fled, each person to his tents.
([18]While he was alive Abshalom himself had got and put up for himself the column that's in King's Vale, because (he said), 'I
have no son in order to commemorate my name.' People have named the column 'Abshalom's Monument', until this day.)
[19]When Ahima'ats ben Tsadoq said, 'May I run and bring news to the king that Yahweh has acted with authority for him from
his enemies' hand', [20]Yo'ab said to him, 'You're not to be a man with news this day. You may bring news another day. This day
you're not to bring news, because the king's son is dead.'

The news reaches David

[21]So Yo'ab said to a Kushite [Sudanese], 'Go tell the king what you have seen.' The Sudanese bowed low to Yo'ab and ran.
[22]Ahima'ats ben Tsadoq once again said to Yo'ab, 'Whatever happens, may I myself also please run, after the Kushite?' Yo'ab
said, 'Why is it that you're going to run, son, when there'll be no reward available for you?' [23]'Whatever happens, I'll run.' So he
said to him, 'Run.' Ahima'ats ran by way of the plain, and passed the Kushite.
[24]David was sitting between the two gateways. The lookout at the gateway roof went to the wall. He lifted up his eyes and
looked: there, a man running alone. [25]The lookout called and told the king. The king said, 'If he's alone, there's news on his lips.'
He continued to draw nearer, [26]and the lookout saw another man running. The lookout called to the gateman, 'There, a man
running alone', and the king said, 'He's bringing news, as well.' [27]The lookout said, 'I see the first runner; it's like the running of
Ahima'ats ben Tsadoq.' The king said, 'He's a good man; he comes with good news.'
[28]Ahima'ats called out to the king, 'Things are well', bowed low to the king, on his face to the ground, and said, 'Yahweh your
God be blessed, who delivered up the men who lifted up their hand against my lord the king!' [29]The king said, 'Is it well with the
boy, with Abshalom?' Ahima'ats said, 'I saw a big uproar when the king's servant Yo'ab was sending your servant but I didn't
know what it was.'
[30]The king said, 'Come round; take your stand there.' He came round and halted, [31]and there, the Kushite was coming. The
Kushite said, 'May my lord the king receive the news that Yahweh has acted with authority for you today from the hand of all the
people who rose up against you.' [32]The king said to the Kushite, 'Is it well with the boy, with Abshalom?' The Kushite said, 'May
my lord the king's enemies and all who rise up against you to do something bad be like the boy.'

Inconsiderate grief?

[33]The king shook. He went up to the upper story of the gateway and wailed. As he went he said this: 'My son Abshalom, my
son, my son Abshalom, if only I had died, I in place of you, Abshalom, my son, my son.'
19 It was told Yo'ab, 'Here, the king is wailing and has taken up grieving over Abshalom.' [2]The deliverance that day turned to
grieving for the entire company when the company heard that day, 'The king is in pain over his son.' [3]The company stole in
when they came into the town that day, as a company that has battled steals in ashamed when they've fled in the battle, [4]while the
king covered his face. The king cried out in a loud voice, 'My son, Abshalom, Abshalom, my son, my son'.
[5]Yo'ab came to the king at home and said, 'You've made the faces of all your servants ashamed today, people who saved your
life today and the life of your sons and your daughters, the life of your wives and the life of your secondary wives, [6]by being loyal
to the people who are hostile to you and by being hostile to the people who are loyal to you. Because you've told them today that
officers and servants are nothing to you. Because I know today that, were Abshalom alive and all of us dead today, then it would
be all right in your eyes.
[7]So now, get up, go out, encourage your servants! Because I swear by Yahweh, when you do not come out – if anyone stays the
night with you tonight . . . It will be bad for you, worse than any bad experience that has come upon you from your youth until
now.' [8]So the king got up and sat in the gateway, and when they told the entire company, 'Here, the king is sitting in the
gateway', the entire company came before the king.

Bringing David back

When Yisra'el fled, each person to his tents, [9]the entire people was arguing. among all the Yisra'elite clans: 'It was the king
who rescued us from our enemies' fist, and he was the one who saved us from the hand of the Pelishtites. He has now taken flight

from the country because of Abshalom, [10]but Abshalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. So now, why are you sitting still with regard to bringing the king back?'

[11]King David himself sent to Tsadoq and to Ebyatar, the priests, saying 'Speak to the elders of Yehudah, saying "Why are you last to bring the king back to his house?"' (when the words of all Yisra'el came to the king at his house). [12]'You're my brothers, you're my flesh and blood. Why should you be last to bring the king back? [13]And to Amasa say, "You're my flesh and blood, aren't you. May God do this to me and may he do more if you do not become officer over the army before me all the time, in place of Yo'ab."'

[14]He turned the mind of all the Yehudahites as one individual, and they sent to the king: 'Come back, you and all your servants.' [15]The king went back and came as far as the Yarden, while Yehudah came to Gilgal to go to meet the king, to bring the king across the Yarden. [16]Shim'i ben Gera, the Binyaminite who was from Bahurim, hurried and came down with the Yehudahites to meet King David, [17]and a thousand Binyaminites with him, while Tsiba, a boy from Sha'ul's household, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him, rushed to the Yarden before the king. [18]The crossing took place to get the king's household across and for him to do what was good in his eyes when Shim'i ben Gera fell down before the king as he was crossing the Yarden.

Mercy in victory

[19]He said to the king, 'May my lord not think of waywardness in connection with me. Don't be mindful of how your servant was wayward on the day when my lord the king left Yerushalaim, by the king giving his mind to it. [20]Because your servant acknowledges that I myself did wrong, but here – today I have come, the first of all Yoseph's [Joseph's] household to go down to meet my lord the king.'

[21]Abishay ben Tseruyah answered, 'On account of this, will Shim'i not be put to death, because he slighted Yahweh's anointed?' [22]David said, 'What do you and I have in common, sons of Tseruyah, that you should be an adversary to me today? Is an individual in Yisra'el to be put to death today? Because I know that today I'm king over Yisra'el, don't I.' [23]So the king said to Shim'i, 'You will not die', and the king swore to him. [24]Mephiboshet son of Sha'ul also went down to meet the king. He had not done his feet, he had not done his moustache and he had not washed his clothes from the day the king went until the day when he came with things being well.

[25]When he came to Yerushalaim to meet the king, the king said to him, 'Why didn't you go with me, Mephiboshet?' [26]He said, 'My lord king, my servant beguiled me, because your servant said, "I want to saddle my donkey and ride on it and go with the king, because your servant is lame." [27]But he went about [speaking] against your servant to my lord the king, when my lord the king is like God's envoy.

Do what is good in your eyes. [28]Because there was no one in my father's entire household except people who deserved death before my lord the king, but you put your servant among the people who eat at your table. What right do I have any more to cry out any more to the king?'

[29]The king said to him, 'Why should you speak any more about these things? I say: you and Tsiba are to share out the fields.' [30]But Mephiboshet said to the king, 'He can even take all of it after my lord the king has come home with things being well.'

Barzillay says 'No thank you'

[31]Now Barzillay the Gil'adite had come down from Rogelim and he crossed over the Yarden with the king, to send him off at the Yarden. [32]Barzillay was very old, a man of eighty years; he was the one who had provided for the king during his stay at Mahanayim, because he was a very big man.

[33]The king said to Barzillay, 'You cross over with me, and I'll provide for you with me in Yerushalaim.' [34]But Barzillay said to the king, 'How many will be the full years of my life, that I should go up to Yerushalaim with the king? [35]I'm a man of eighty years today. Do I know the difference between good and bad? Or can your servant taste what he eats and what he drinks or still listen to the sound of men and women singing? So why should your servant still be a burden to my lord the king? [36]Hardly could your servant cross the Yarden with the king. Why should the king deal this thing to me? [37]May your servant go back, and I shall die in my town near the grave of my father and my mother. But here is your servant Kimham. He should cross with my lord the king. Do for him what is good in your eyes.'

[38]The king said, 'Kimham may cross with me, and I myself will do for him what is good in your eyes. Anything that you choose from me I will do for you.'

[39]So the entire company crossed the Yarden. When the king crossed, the king kissed Barzillay and blessed him and he went back to his place, [40]and the king crossed over to Gilgal; Kimhan crossed with him.

Tension between Yisra'el and Yehudah

When the entire Yehudahite company took the king across, and also half of the Yisra'elite company, [41]there, all the Yisra'elites were coming to the king. They said to the king, 'Why did our brothers, the Yehudahites, steal you away and take the king and his household across the Yarden, and all David's men with him?' [42]All the Yehudahites answered the Yisra'elites, 'Because the king is near to us! Why is it that rage came over you at this thing? Have we actually eaten anything of the king's, or has preference been given to us?'

[43]The Yisra'elites answered the Yehudahites, 'We have ten shares in the king, so in David as well we have more than you. So why have you slighted us, so that our word wasn't first in connection with bringing our king back?' But the Yehudahites' word was tougher than the Yisra'elites' word.

20 But a scoundrel happened to be there; his name was Sheba ben Bikri, a Binyaminite. He blew on the horn and said, 'We have share in David, we have no domain in ben Yishay – each man to his tents, Yisra'el!' [2]All the Yisra'elites rose up from following David to follow Sheba ben Bikri, but the Yehudahites attached themselves to their king, from the Yarden to Yerushalaim. [3]David came to his house in Yerushalaim. The king got the ten secondary wives whom he had made stay to keep the house, and put them in a house that was under guard. He provided for them but he didn't have sex with them. They were confined until the day of their death, in living widowhood.

[4]The king said to Amasa, 'Call out the Yehudahites for me in three days, and you yourself, stand here.' [5]Amasa went to call out Yehudah, but he delayed beyond the time that he had set him. [6]David said to Abishay, 'Now Sheba ben Bikri will make things worse for us than Abshalom. You take your lord's servants and pursue after him so he doesn't find fortified towns for himself, and tear out our eye.'

Yo'ab deals with Amasa

[7]Yo'ab's men, the Keretites and the Peletites, and all the strong men, went out after him; they went out from Yerushalaim to pursue after Sheba ben Bikri. [8]When they were near the big stone which is at Gib'on, Amasa himself came before them. Yo'ab was belted in his uniform (his clothing), and over it there was the belt for a sword, fastened on his hips in its sheath. When he went out, it fell down. [9]Yo'ab said to Amasa, 'Are things well with you, brother?', and Yo'ab's right hand took hold of Amasa's beard, to kiss him, [10]but Amasa didn't keep watch for the sword that was in Yoab's hand, and he struck him down with it in his abdomen and made his insides pour out on to the ground. He didn't do it to him a second time. He died.

While Yo'ab and Abishay his brother pursued after Sheba ben Bikri, [11]and one of Yo'ab's boys stood over him and said, 'Whoever delights in Yo'ab and whoever is for David – after Yo'ab!', [12]and Amasa was rolling in blood in the middle of the causeway, the man saw that the entire company halted. So he took Amasa round from the causeway into the fields and threw a garment over him, because everyone who came on him saw and halted. [13]When he had been removed from the causeway, everyone passed on after Yo'ab to pursue after Sheba ben Bikri. [14]He had passed through all the Yisra'elite clans to Meadow (Bet Ma'akah). All the Be'erites congregated and came after him also.

[15]So they came and besieged him in Bet Ma'akah Meadow. They heaped up a ramp against the town and it stood against the rampart. The entire company that was with Yo'ab were seeking to devastate it to make the wall fall.

An intelligent woman saves her town

[16]But a smart woman called from the town, 'Listen, listen! Please say to Yo'ab, "Draw near here so I can speak to you."' [17]He drew near to her. The woman said, 'Are you Yo'ab?' He said, 'I am.' She said to him, 'Listen to your handmaid's words.' He said, 'I'm listening.' [18]She said, 'People did speak previously, saying "They should just ask at Meadow", and thus they finished things. [19]Whereas I'm among the truthful who are committed to peace in Yisra'el, you're seeking to put to death a town that's a mother in Yisra'el. Why would you swallow up Yahweh's domain?'

[20]Yo'ab answered, 'Far be it from me, far be it from me, if I should swallow up or devastate. [21]Things aren't like that. Rather, someone from the highland of Ephrayim, Sheba ben Bikri his name, has raised his hand against the king, against David. Give him alone over, and I'll go from the town.' The woman said to Yo'ab, 'There, his head is going to be thrown over the wall to you.'

[22]The woman came to the entire people with her smart thinking, and they cut off the head of Sheba ben Bikri and threw it to Yo'ab. He blew on the horn and the men dispersed from the town, each one to his tents, while Yo'ab went back to Yerushalaim, to the king.

[23]Yo'ab was over the entire Yisra'elite army. Benayah ben Yehoyada was over the Keretites and over the Peletites. [24]Adoram was over the workforce. Yehoshaphat ben Ahilud was the recorder. [25]Sheva was secretary. Tsadoq and Ebyatar were priests. [26]Ira the Ya'irite was also a priest for David.

Mother love

21 There was a famine in the time of David for three years, year after year. David sought Yahweh's face, and Yahweh said, 'It's in connection with Sha'ul and with the blood-stained household, because he put the Gib'onites to death.' [2]So the king called for the Gib'onites and said to them (the Gib'onites were not among the Yisra'elites but rather among what was left of the Amorites, but the Yisra'elites had sworn to them, and Sha'ul had sought to strike them down in his passion for the Yisra'elites and Yehudah) – [3]David said to the Gib'onites, 'What shall I do for you? How shall I make expiation, so you can bless Yahweh's domain?'

[4]The Gib'onites said to him, 'We have no [rights to] silver or gold with Sha'ul or with his household and we have no [rights to] put a man to death in Yisra'el.' So he said, 'Whatever you're going to say, I'll do for you.' [5]They said to the king, 'The man who finished us off and who thought we could be annihilated so we would not take our stand within Yisra'el's entire border: [6]seven of the men from among his descendants are to be given to us and we will execute them for Yahweh at Gib'ah-of-Sha'ul, Yahweh's chosen one.' The king said, 'I myself will give them.'

[7]The king spared Mephiboshet ben Yehonatan, son of Sha'ul, because of the oath before Yahweh between David and Yehonatan son of Sha'ul. [8]The king got the two sons of Ritspah bat Ayyah to whom she gave birth for Sha'ul, Armoni and Mephiboshet, and the five sons of Mikal daughter of Sha'ul, to whom she gave birth for Adri'el ben Barzillay the Meholatite, [9]and gave them into the hand of the Gib'onites. They executed them on the mountain before Yahweh. The seven of them fell together. These men were put to death during the first days of harvest, during the beginning of barley harvest.

[10]But Ritspah bat Ayyah got sack and spread it on a crag for herself from the beginning of harvest until water poured on them

from the heavens. She didn't let the birds of the heavens settle on them by day or the creatures of the wild by night.

A final resting place

[11]It was told David what Ritspah bat Ayyah, Sha'ul's secondary wife, had done, [12]and David went and got the bones of Sha'ul
and the bones of Yehonatan his son from the Yabesh-in-Gil'ad landowners, who had stolen them from the square in Bet-shan
where the Pelishtites had hung them on the day the Pelishtites struck down Sha'ul at Gilboa. [13]He took up from there the bones of
Sha'ul and the bones of Yehonatan his son, and they gathered the bones of the men who had been executed. [14]They buried the
bones of Sha'ul and Yehonatan his son in the region of Binyamin in a side chamber in the grave of Qish his father. They did all
that the king ordered, and God let himself be entreated for the country subsequently.
[15]There was again a battle by the Pelishtites with Yisra'el. David went down, he and his servants with him, and did battle with
the Pelishtites. David got weary [16]and Ishbi Benob (who was among the descendants of the Healer, and the weight of whose lance
was 300 sheqels, made of copper, and he was belted in new things) thought to strike David down. [17]But Abishay ben Tseruyah
helped him, struck down the Pelishtite and put him to death. Then David's men swore to him, 'You will not go out with us to
battle any more, so that you do not extinguish Yisra'el's lamp.'
[18]Subsequently there was again a battle with the Pelishtites at Gob. Then Sibbekay the Hushatite struck down Saph, who was
among the descendants of the Healer.
[19]There was again a battle with the Pelishtites at Gob, and Elhanan ben-Ya'are Oregim, the Bet Lehemite, struck down Golyat
the Gittite; the wood of his lance was like a weavers' rod.
[20]There was again a battle at Gat. There was a man of stature with six fingers on his hands and six toes on his feet, twenty-four
in number; he also was a descendant of the Healer. [21]He reviled Yisra'el, and Yonatan ben Shim'i, David's brother, struck him
down.
[22]These four had descended from the Healer in Gat. They fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

The God of the storm

22 David spoke the words of this song to Yahweh on the day Yahweh rescued him from the fist of all his enemies and from the
fist of Sha'ul.

[2]Yahweh, my crag,
my stronghold, the one who enables me to survive,
[3]My God, my crag in which I take shelter,
my shield, the horn that delivers me, my turret,
My retreat, my deliverer,
you deliver me from violence.
[4]As one to be praised, I call on Yahweh,
and from my enemies I find deliverance.
[5]Because death's waves overwhelmed me,
Beliyya'al's wadis terrified me,
[6]She'ol's ropes surrounded me,
death's snares met me.
[7]In my pressure I called on Yahweh,
to my God I called.
He listened to my voice from his palace,
my cry for help was in his ears.

[8]And the earth quaked and rocked,
the heavens' foundations shook.
They quaked because it enraged him;
[9]smoke went up in his anger,
Fire from his mouth consumed,
coals burned up from him.
[10]He spread the heavens and came down,
with thundercloud beneath his feet.
[11]He rode on a sphinx and flew,
he appeared on the wings of the wind.
[12]He made darkness round him a bivouac –
a mass of water, clouds of mist.
[13]From the brightness in front of him
fiery coals burned up.
[14]Yahweh thundered from the heavens,
the One on High gave out his voice.
[15]He sent off arrows and scattered them,
lightning, and routed them.
[16]The canyons of the sea appeared,

the worlds' foundations became visible,
Through Yahweh's reprimand,
at the breath of his angry wind.

I have kept Yahweh's ways(?)

[17]He sent from on high, he got me,
he drew me out of much water.
[18]He rescued me from my vigorous enemy,
from people hostile to me, because they stood too firm for me.
[19]They met me on the day of my disaster,
but Yahweh became my support.
[20]He brought me out into a roomy place;
he pulled me out because he delighted in me.
[21]Yahweh dealt to me in accordance with my faithfulness;
in accordance with the purity of my hands he gave back to me.
[22]Because I have kept Yahweh's ways
and not been faithless to my God.
[23]For all his rulings have been before me;
his decrees – I haven't departed from them.
[24]I've been a person of integrity with him,
and I've kept myself from waywardness I might have done.
[25]So Yahweh has given back to me in accordance with my faithfulness,
in accordance with my purity before his eyes.
[26]With the committed person you show commitment,
with the man of integrity you show integrity.
[27]With the pure person you show purity,
but with the crooked you show yourself refractory.
[28]A humble people you deliver,
but you avert your eyes from exalted people.
[29]For you, Yahweh, are my lamp;
it's Yahweh who illumines my darkness.
[30]For with you I can rush at a barricade,
with my God I can scale a wall.
[31]God: his way has integrity,
Yahweh's word is proven.
He is a shield
to all who take shelter with him.
[32]Because who is God apart from Yahweh,
who is a crag apart from our God?

I will confess you among the nations

[33]God is my stronghold, my forcefulness;
he released one who had integrity in his way:
[34]One who fashions my feet like a deer,
enables me to stand on the heights,
[35]Trains my hands for battle
so that my arms could bend a copper bow.
[36]You gave me your shield that delivered;
your avowal made me great.
[37]You widened my step beneath me;
my ankles did not slip.
[38]I pursued my enemies and annihilated them;
I did not turn back until I had finished them off.
[39]I devoured them, hit them, they could not get up;
they fell beneath my feet.
[40]You belted me with forcefulness for battle,
you bent down beneath me the people who rose up against me.
[41]My enemies you made turn tail for me,
the people who were hostile to me – and I wiped them out.
[42]They looked, but there was no deliverer –
to Yahweh, but he did not answer them.
[43]I ground them fine like the earth in the ground,
like the mud in the streets I crushed them, beat them out.

[44]You enabled me to survive from arguments with my people,
you kept me as head of nations,
A people I did not acknowledge serve me;
[45]foreigners cowered before me.
On hearing with the ear, they listened to me;
[46]foreigners wilted,
came quaking out of their strongholds.

[47]Yahweh lives, my crag be blessed,
may God, the crag who delivers me, be exalted,
[48]The God who gives me total redress,
subjects peoples under me,
[49]Who gets me out from my enemies,
exalts me above the people who rise up against me,
rescues me from violent men!

[50]Therefore I wiil confess you, Yahweh, among the nations,
and make music for your name,
[51]A tower bringing deliverance to his king,
acting with commitment to his anointed,
to David and to his offspring permanently.

David's last words

23 These are David's last words.

An utterance of David ben Yishay,
an utterance of the man set up by the One on High,
The anointed of the God of Jacob,
the delight of Yisra'el's melodies.
[2]Yahweh's spirit spoke through me,
his utterance was on my tongue.
[3]The God of Yisra'el said,
the crag of Yisra'el spoke to me:
One who rules over people as a faithful man,
one who rules in awe of God,
[4]Is like the morning light when the sun rises,
a morning with no clouds;
Because of brightness, because of rain,
there's growth from the earth.

[5]My household is established with God, is it not,
because he has made a permanent pact for me,
laid out in every respect and secured.
He will bring to accomplishment, will he not,
all my deliverance and all I delight in.
[6]But scoundrels are like thistles, thrown away, all of them,
because people do not take them in the hand.
[7]The person who touches them
equips himself with iron or the wood of a lance,
and they totally burn up where they lie.

David's strong men

[8]These are the names of the strong men that David had:
The one who sits in the seat, a Tahkemonite, chief of the Three, was Adino the Etsnite, against 800, run through on one occasion.
[9]After him El'azar ben Dodo, son of Ahohi, one of the Three Strong Men with David when they reviled the Pelishtites who had gathered there for battle. The Yisra'elites went up, [10]but he set to and struck down the Pelishtites until his hand got weary. But his hand attached itself to his sword and Yahweh brought about a great deliverance that day. The company came back after him, only to plunder.
[11]After him Shamma ben Agee the Hararite. The Pelishtites had gathered at Lahi and there was a plot in the fields there full of lentils. Whereas the company had fled from before the Pelishtites, [12]he took his stand in the middle of the plot and defended it, and struck down the Pelishtites. Yahweh brought about a great deliverance.
[13]Three of the Thirty Heads went down and came at harvest to David at the Adullam Cave. A force of Pelishtites was camped in Repha'ites Vale. [14]David was then in the stronghold and an outpost of Pelishtites was then at Bet Lehem. [15]David had a longing

and said, ‘If only someone could give me a drink of water from the Bet-lehem cistern that’s at the gateway!’ [16]The Three Strong Men broke through the Pelishtites’ camp, drew water from the Bet-lehem cistern that’s at the gateway, carried it and brought it to David. But he was unwilling to drink it. He poured it out for Yahweh [17]and said, ‘Far be it from me by Yahweh that I should do this. Should the blood of the men who went at the cost of their lives . . .?’ So he was unwilling to drink it. These are things that the Three Strong Men did.

The Three, the Thirty, the Thirty-Seven

[18]Abishay, the brother of Yo’ab ben Tseruyah, was head of a Three. He was wielding his lance against 300, run through. He had a name among the Three. [19]Of the Three, he was the most honoured, wasn’t he. He became officer for them, but he didn’t come to the [other] Three.
[20]Benayahu ben Yehoyada was a forceful man, prolific in deeds, from Qabtse’el. He struck down the two of Ari’el of Mo’ab. It was he who went down and struck down a lion inside a cistern on a snowy day, [21]and it was he who struck down a Misrayimite man, an impressive man. In the Misrayimite’s hand there was a lance, but he went down to him with a club, seized the lance out of the Misrayimite’s hand and killed him with his lance. [22]These things Benayahu ben Yehoyada did, and he had a name among the Three Strong Men. [23]Of the Thirty, he was most honoured, but he did not come to the Three. David put him in charge of his guard.
[24]Among the Thirty:

Asah-el, Yo’ab’s brother	Azmavet the Barhumite
Elhanan ben Dodo (Bet Lehem)	[32]Elyahba the Sha’albonite
[25]Shammah the Harodite	The sons of Yashen, Yehonatan
Eliqa the Harodite	[33]Shammah the Hararite
[26]Helets the Paltite	Ahi’am ben Sharar the Ararite
Ira ben Iqqesh the Teqo’ite	[34]Eliphelet ben Ahasbay, son of the Ma’akatite
[27]Abi’ezer the Anatotite	Eli’am ben Ahitophel the Gilonite
Mebunnay the Hushatite	[35]Hetsray the Carmelite
[28]Tsalmon the Ahohite	Pa’aray the Arbite
Mahray the Netophatite	[36]Yig’al ben Natan from Tsobah
[29]Heleb ben Ba’anah the Netophatite	Bani the Gadite
Ittay ben Ribay from Gib’ah-of-the-Binyaminites	[37]Tseleq the Ammonite
[30]Benayahu, a Pir’atonite	Nahray the Be’erotite, equipment-bearer for Yo’ab ben Tseruyah
Hidday from the Ga’ash Wadis	[38]Ira the Yitrite Gareb the Yitrite
[31]Abi-albon the Arbatite	[39]Uriyyah the Hittite

Thirty-seven in all.

When counting was wrong

24 Yahweh’s anger raged against Yisra’el again and he incited David against them, saying ‘Go count Yisra’el and Yehudah.’
[2]So the king said to Yo’ab, the officer over the force that was with him, ‘Go round all the Yisra’elite clans from Dan as far as Be’er Sheba, please, and number the company, so I may know the company’s count.’
[3]Yo’ab said to the king, ‘May Yahweh your God add to the company a hundred times over compared with what they are, while the eyes of my lord the king are watching, but why does my lord the king want this thing?’ [4]But the king’s word was strong toward Yo’ab and over the force’s officers, so Yo’ab and the force’s officers went out from the king’s presence to number the company, Yisra’el.
[5]They crossed the Yarden and camped in Aro’er, to the south of the town, which is in the middle of Wadi Gad, and on to Ya’zer. [6]They came to Gil’ad and to the region of Tahtim Hodshi and came to Dan Ya’an and round to Tsidon. [7]They came to the fortress of Tsor and all the towns of the Hivvites and the Kena’anites [Canaanites] and went on to the Negeb of Yehudah (Be’er Sheba). [8]They went about the entire country and at the end of nine months and twenty days came to Yerushalaim. [9]Yo’ab gave the king the number for the registration of the company: Yisra’el came to 800,000 forceful men drawing the sword, and the men of Yehudah came to 500,000.
[10]David’s mind struck him down after he had counted the company, and David said to Yahweh, ‘I have acted very wrongly in what I’ve done. But now, Yahweh, please make your servant’s waywardness pass on, because I’ve been very idiotic.’

I would rather fall into God’s hands than into human hands

[11]David got up in the morning when Yahweh’s word came to Gad the prophet, David’s seer: [12]‘Go and speak to David, “Yahweh has said this: ‘I’m holding out three things over you. Choose one of them for yourself and I shall do it to you.’”’ [13]Gad came to David and told him. He said to him, ‘Are seven years of famine to come to you in the country, or are you to have three

months of flight before your attackers as he pursues you, or are there to be three days of epidemic in your country? Now acknowledge it and see what word I'm to take back to the one who sent me.' [14]David said to God, 'It's very pressurizing for me. We will fall into Yahweh's hands, please, because his compassion is great. I will not fall into a human hand.'

[15]So Yahweh put an epidemic on Yisra'el from the morning until the set time, and there died of the company, from Dan as far as Be'er Sheba, 70,000 individuals. [16]The envoy put out his hand to Yerushalaim to devastate it, but Yahweh relented of the bad thing and said to the envoy devastating the company, 'So much! Now slacken your hand!'

Yahweh's envoy was by the threshing floor of Aravnah the Yebusite. [17]David said to Yahweh when he saw the envoy who was striking the company down: 'Here, I'm the one who did wrong. I'm the one who went astray. These people are the flock; what did they do? Your hand should please be against me and against my father's household.'

I won't offer worship that costs me nothing

[18]Gad came to David that day and said to him, 'Go up, set up an altar for Yahweh at the threshing floor of Aravnah the Yebusite.' [19]David went up in accordance with Gad's word, as Yahweh ordered.

[20]Aravnah looked out and saw the king and his servants crossing to him. Aravnah went out and bowed low to the king, his face to the ground. [21]Aravnah said, 'Why has my lord the king come to his servant?' David said, 'To acquire the threshing floor from you, to build an altar for Yahweh, so the epidemic may hold back from the company.' [22]Aravnah said to David, 'My lord the king may take it and offer up what is good in his eyes. See, the cattle as the burnt offering and the threshing boards and the cattle's equipment as wood. [23]Aravnah gives everything to the king, Your Majesty.' Aravnah said to the king, 'May Yahweh your God accept you.'

[24]The king said to Aravnah, 'No, because I will definitely acquire them from you for a price. I will not offer up for Yahweh my God burnt offerings that cost nothing.' So David acquired the threshing-floor and the cattle for fifty silver sheqels. [25]David built an altar there for Yahweh and offered up burnt offerings and well-being sacrifices, and Yahweh let himself be entreated for the country. The epidemic held back from against Yisra'el.

1 Kings

The first book of Kings continues the story from 2 Samuel – indeed, one might have expected the opening chapters to be part of 2 Samuel, because they relate the closing scenes of David's life.

Almost half of 1 Kings then tells the story of the reign of Solomon, the last of the three kings who ruled Israel as a whole. A series of motifs from the stories of Saul and David recur in his story. One is the involvement of God's choice and of human process. In Saul's story, God's choice was the dominant factor, even though it was a choice God never wanted to make (because it wasn't God's idea to have kings). David's story interweaves the fact of God's choosing with a human process whereby much of Israel expects someone from Saul's family to succeed him, an expectation that complicates the process of David's succession. In Solomon's story, the conflictual human process is the dominant factor.

Conflict is more broadly the second motif. Saul's story is dominated by the need to get victory over the Philistines. David is the person who actually achieves this victory, and also deals with peoples such as the Ammonites and Moabites. Solomon thus inherits a kingdom whose international position is stable; it is indeed the dominant force in the region.

The nature of the kings' achievements thus varies. Saul begins with a great deliverance of Jabesh Gilead but achieves little else. David takes Jerusalem and builds on his military victories by making it the nation's capital, and he makes plans for a temple for Yahweh there. Solomon builds this temple and builds up the town in other spectacular ways.

The fourth motif is the trajectory of the kings' reigns. In each case the story unfolds in a way that emphasizes early achievements but then portrays an unravelling. Each king is undone by the pressures and temptations of his position and/or by his personal weaknesses. Whereas for Saul, making his own decisions was his downfall and for David his problem was a wandering eye and a general incompetence in relationships, for Solomon it was the diplomatic marriages that imperilled Israel's faithfulness to Yahweh. Solomon's story thus emphasizes his facilitating of the worship of other deities, which results from the diplomatic move of taking a number of wives from other peoples in order to cement relations with them. But the account of his building achievements also hints at his oppression of the ordinary people who have to pay much of the price for this work, and Solomon fulfils Samuel's warnings about the cost of having kings.

The hints become more explicit statements on the lips of his people after he dies. They want the next king to be less oppressive, but he declines, and this leads to the defection of ten of the Israelite clans and their setting up an alternative state. Because it in fact comprises the bulk of the clans, it retains the name 'Israel'. The state with the Davidic king, centred on Jerusalem, is merely 'Judah'.

The rest of 1 Kings interweaves the stories of Israel and Judah, which often involve conflict between the two states. The first king of Israel sets up an alternative worship structure with sanctuaries at the two ends of the kingdom. It also involves forms of worship that use images of God, flouting the basic principle that Yahweh cannot be imaged. The worship thus follows a regular human instinct to make images of the deity, an instinct that features in the traditional worship of Canaan from which the people of Yahweh were supposed to distance themselves. A dominant theme in the interwoven story of Israel and Judah is then how faithful the two peoples are in their worship of Yahweh: whether they worship Yahweh in inappropriate ways or worship other deities. In general, the worship of Israel is more problematic than that of Judah.

The problematic nature of this worship is important background to the emergence of prophets who confront the nation rather than supporting it (as the prophets did in David's day). These prophets are also involved as Yahweh's agents in initiating coups in Israel.

David in his dotage

1 Now King David was old, advanced in years. They covered him with clothes but he couldn't get warm, [2]so his servants said to him, 'They should look for a young girl for my lord the king so she can stand before the king and be his caregiver. She can lie in your arms, and my lord the king will get warm.' [3]So they looked for an attractive girl in the entire territory of Yisra'el [Israel], and found Abishag the Shunammite and brought her to the king. [4]The girl was very attractive. She became the king's caregiver and she ministered to him, but the king didn't have sex with her.

[5]Now Adoniyyah ben Haggit was elevating himself, saying 'I shall be king', and he prepared himself chariotry and cavalry and fifty men running ahead of him. [6]His father had not pained him in all his years by saying 'Why have you acted like this?' Further, he was very good-looking, and [his mother] had given birth to him after Abshalom. [7]He had words with Yo'ab ben Tseruyah and with Ebyatar [Abiathar] the priest, and they supported Adoniyyah, [8]but Tsadoq [Zadok] the priest, Benayahu ben Yehoyada, Natan the prophet, Shim'i, Re'i and David's strong men were not with Adoniyyah.

[9]Adoniyyah sacrificed sheep and cattle and fatlings at Zohelet Stone beside Treader Spring, and called all his brothers, the king's sons, and all the Yehudahites [Judahites], the king's servants, [10]but Natan the prophet, Benayahu, the strong men and Shelomoh [Solomon] his brother he didn't call.

[11]Natan said to Bat-sheba, Shelomoh's mother, 'You've heard, haven't you, that Adoniyyah ben Haggit has become king, whereas our lord David has not acknowledged it? [12]So now go (may I please give you counsel) and save your life and the life of your son Shelomoh. [13]Go, come to King David and say to him, "My lord the king, you yourself swore to your handmaid, didn't you, 'Your son Shelomoh – he will become king after me, it's he who will sit on my throne.' So why has Adoniyyah become king?" [14]There, while you're still speaking there with the king, I myself will come after you and fill out your words.'

How to manipulate the old man in order to get things done

[15]So Bat-sheba came to the king in his room. The king was very old and Abishag the Shunammite was ministering to the king.

[16]Bat-sheba bent her head and bowed low to the king. The king said, 'What's on your mind?' [17]She said to him, 'My lord, you yourself swore by Yahweh your God to your handmaid, "Shelomoh your son – he will become king after me; it's he who will sit on my throne." [18]But now, here, Adoniyyah has become king, though my lord the king did not now acknowledge it. [19]He has sacrificed oxen and firstlings and sheep in large number and called all the king's sons and Ebyatar the priest and Yo'ab the army officer, but Shelomoh your servant he didn't call. [20]So you, my lord king – the eyes of all Yisra'el are on you to tell them who is to sit on my lord king's throne after him. [21]Or when my lord king lies down with his ancestors, I and my son Shelomoh will be [treated as] wrongdoers.'

[22]And there, she was still speaking with the king, and Natan the prophet came. [23]They told the king, 'Here's Natan the prophet.' He came before the king and bowed low on his face to the ground to the king. [24]Natan said, 'My lord king, you yourself have said, "Adoniyyah will reign after me, he'll sit on my throne!" [25]Because he went down today and sacrificed oxen and fatlings and sheep in large number and called all the king's sons and the army officers and Ebyatar the priest. There they are, eating and drinking before him. They've said, "Long live King Adoniyyah." [26]But me, myself your servant, and Tsadoq the priest, and Benayahu ben Yehoyada, and Shelomoh your servant, he didn't call. [27]Did this thing come from my lord king and had you not made known to your servant who was to sit on my lord king's throne after him?'

Shelomoh enthroned

[28]King David answered, 'Call Bat-sheba to me!' She came before the king and stood before the king. [29]The king swore, 'As Yahweh lives, who redeemed my life from every pressure, [30]indeed as I swore to you by Yahweh the God of Yisra'el that Shelomoh your son would reign after me, and he would sit on my throne in place of me, so I will do this day.' [31]Bat-sheba bent her head, face to the ground, and bowed low to the king, and said, 'Long live my lord King David!'

[32]King David said, 'Call to me Tsadoq the priest and Natan the prophet and Benayahu ben Yehoyada.' They came before the king [33]and the king said to them, 'Take with you your lord's servants and have Shelomoh my son ride on the mule that belongs to me and have him go down to Gihon. [34]Tsadoq the priest is to anoint him there, with Natan the prophet, as king over Yisra'el. You're to blow on a horn and say, "Long live King Shelomoh!" [35]And go up after him so he comes and sits on my throne. He will reign in place of me. Him I have ordered to be chief over Yisra'el and over Yehudah.' [36]Benayahu ben Yehoyada answered the king, 'Yes, so may Yahweh the God of my lord king say it! [37]As Yahweh has been with my lord king, so may he be with Shelomoh. May he make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David!'

[38]So Tsadoq the priest went down, with Natan the prophet and Benayahu ben Yehoyada, and the Keretites and the Peletites, and they had Shelomoh ride on King David's mule and had him go to Gihon. [39]Tsadoq the priest got the horn of oil from the tent and anointed Shelomoh. They blew on the horn and the entire company said, 'Long live King Shelomoh!' [40]The entire company went up after him. The company were playing on pipes and rejoicing greatly. The earth split with the sound of them.

The danger when a coup fails

[41]Adoniyyah heard, he and all the people who had been called who were with him, as they had finished eating. Yo'ab heard the sound of the horn and said, 'Why the sound of the township in turmoil?' [42]While he was still speaking, there, Yonatan ben Ebyatar the priest came. Adoniyyah said, 'Come in, because you're a reliable man, and you announce good news.'

[43]But Yonatan answered Adoniyyah, 'Well, our lord King David has made Shelomoh king! [44]The king has sent with him Tsadoq the priest and Natan the prophet and Benayahu ben Yehoyada, and the Keretites and the Peletites, and they've had him ride on the king's mule. [45]Tsadoq the priest and Natan the prophet have anointed him as king at Gihon, and they went up from there rejoicing and the township was in an uproar. That was the sound that you heard. [46]Also Shelomoh has sat on the royal throne. [47]And also, the king's servants came to bless our lord King David, saying "May your God make Shelomoh's name better than your name and make his throne greater than your throne." And the king has bowed low on his bed. [48]And also the king said this: "Blessed be Yahweh the God of Yisra'el who has today given someone sitting on my throne, and my eyes are seeing it."'

[49]All the people who had been called who were for Adoniyyah trembled, got up and went each one his way, [50]while Adoniyyah was afraid of Shelomoh and got up and went and took strong hold of the altar horns. [51]It was told Shelomoh, 'There, Adoniyyah is afraid of King Shelomoh. There, he's grasped the altar horns, saying "King Shelomoh must swear to me this very day: if he puts his servant to death with the sword . . ."'

[52]Shelomoh said, 'If he becomes a reliable man, not one of his hairs will fall to the ground, but if something bad is found in him, he will die.' [53]So King Shelomoh sent and they got him to come down from the altar. He came and bowed low to King Shelomoh, and Shelomoh said to him, 'Go to your house.'

David's last will and testament

2 The days for David to die drew near, and he ordered Shelomoh his son: [2]'I am going the way of all the earth. You're to be strong and be a man, [3]and to keep the charge of Yahweh your God by walking in his ways, by keeping his decrees, his orders, his rulings and his affirmations as written in Mosheh's [Moses'] instruction, in order that you may thrive in everything you do and everywhere you turn your face, [4]in order that Yahweh may implement his word which he spoke to me: "If your sons keep watch over their way by walking before me in truthfulness with their entire mind and with their entire being, there will not be cut off for you someone on Yisra'el's throne."

[5]Further, you yourself know what Yo'ab ben Tseruyah did to me, what he did to the two officers of Yisra'el's armies, to Abner ben Ner and to Amasa ben Yeter. He killed them, and put the bloodshed of battle into peacetime. He put the bloodshed of battle

on his belt that's round his hips and on his boot that's on his feet. [6]Act in accordance with your smartness but don't let his white hair go down to She'ol in peace.

[7]The sons of Barzillay the Gil'adite: act with commitment to them so that they are among the people who eat at your table, because they approached me when I took flight from before Abshalom your brother. [8]But here, Shim'i ben Gera the Binyaminite [Benjaminite] from Bahurim is with you. He uttered a grievous slight of me on the day I went to Mahanayim, but when he came down to meet me at the Yarden [Jordan] I swore to him by Yahweh, "If I put you to death by the sword . . ."

[9]But now, don't treat him as free of guilt, because you're a smart man and you'll know how you should act towards him and have his white hair go down to She'ol in blood.'

A not-very subtle request

[10]So David lay down with his ancestors and was buried in David's Town. [11]The time that David reigned over Yisra'el was forty years. In Hebron he reigned seven years; in Yerushalaim he reigned thirty-three years. [12]Shelomoh sat on David his father's throne and his kingship was well established.

[13]Adoniyyah ben Haggit came to Bat-sheba, Shelomoh's mother. She said, 'Is your coming in peace?' He said, 'In peace', [14]and said, 'I have a word for you.' She said, 'Speak.' [15]He said, 'You yourself know that the kingship was mine. All Yisra'el had set their faces towards me reigning. But the kingship turned round and became my brother's, because it was his from Yahweh. [16]But now I'm making one request from you yourself. Don't turn my face back.' She said to him, 'Speak.' [17]He said, 'Please say to Shelomoh the king (because he won't turn your face back) that he should give me Abishag the Shunammite as wife.' [18]Bat-sheba said, 'Very well, I myself will speak to the king about you.'

[19]Bat-sheba came to King Shelomoh to speak to him about Adoniyyah. The king got up to meet her and bowed low to her. He sat on his throne and placed a throne for the king's mother, and she sat at his right. [20]She said, 'I'm going to make one small request from you yourself. Don't turn back my face.' The king said to her, 'Ask, mother, because I shall not turn your face back.' [21]She said, 'Abishag the Shunammite should be given to Adoniyyah your brother as wife.'

[22]King Shelomoh answered his mother, 'Why are you asking for Abishag the Shunammite for Adoniyyah? Ask for the kingship for him, because he's my brother who's older than me – for him and for Ebyatar the priest and for Yo'ab ben Tseruyah.' [23]King Shelomoh swore by Yahweh: 'May God act in this way to me, and do more in this way, because Adoniyyah has spoken this word at the cost of his life. [24]So now, as Yahweh lives, who has established me and made me sit on the throne of David my father, and made me a household, as he spoke: today Adoniyyah will indeed be put to death.'

The penalty for backing the wrong horse

[25]So King Shelomoh sent by the hand of Benayahu ben Yehoyada, and he came upon him and he died. [26]And to Ebyatar the priest, the king said 'Go to Anatot to your fields, because you deserve death, but on this day I shall not put you to death, because you carried my Lord Yahweh's chest before David my father and because you let yourself be humbled in all that my father let himself be humbled.' [27]So Shelomoh drove Ebyatar out from being Yahweh's priest, fulfilling Yahweh's word which he spoke about the household of Eli in Shiloh.

[28]When the report came to Yo'ab (because Yo'ab had turned away to follow Adoniyyah, though he had not turned away to follow Abshalom), Yo'ab fled to Yahweh's tent and took strong hold of the altar horns. [29]It was told King Shelomoh that Yo'ab had fled to Yahweh's tent. There, he was beside the altar. Shelomoh sent Benayahu ben Yehoyada, saying 'Go, come upon him.'

[30]Benayahu came to Yahweh's tent and said to him, 'The king has said this: "Out!"' He said, 'No! Rather I shall die here.' Benayahu took word back to the king, 'Yo'ab spoke like this; he answered me like this.' [31]The king said to him, 'Do as he spoke, and come upon him and bury him and remove the blood shed for nothing that Yo'ab poured out, from upon me and from upon my father's household. [32]Yahweh will bring back his blood on his head, because he came upon two men more faithful and better than him and killed them with the sword, when my father David didn't know, Abner ben Ner, Yisra'el's army officer, and Amasa ben Yeter, Yehudah's army officer. [33]Their shed blood is to come back on Yo'ab's head and on the head of his offspring permanently. But for David, for his offspring, for his household and for his throne, may things be well from Yahweh permanently.'

[34]So Benayahu ben Yehoyada went up and came upon him and put him to death. He was buried in his house in the wilderness. [35]The king made Benayahu ben Yehoyada in charge of the army in place of him, while the king made Tsadoq the priest in place of Ebyatar.

The man who might have thought twice

[36]The king sent and called for Shim'i, and said to him, 'Build yourself a house in Yerushalaim and live there. You will not go out from there anywhere. [37]On the day you go out and cross Wadi Qidron, acknowledge clearly that you will definitely die; your blood will be on your own head.' [38]Shim'i said to the king, 'The word is good. As my lord king spoke, so your servant will do.' So Shim'i lived in Yerushalaim for a long time.

[39]But at the end of three years two of Shim'i's servants took flight to Akish ben Ma'akah king of Gat. People told Shim'i, 'There, your servants are in Gat.' [40]So Shim'i set off, saddled his donkey and went to Gat to Akish to look for his servants.

So Shim'i went, and brought his servants from Gat, [41]but it was told Shelomoh that Shim'i had gone from Yerushalaim to Gat and had come back. [42]The king sent and called for Shim'i. He said to him, 'I got you to swear by Yahweh and I testified to you, didn't I, "On the day you go out and go anywhere, you're to acknowledge clearly that you will definitely die", and you said to me, "The word is good. I've listened." [43]So why didn't you keep the oath before Yahweh and the order that I gave you?' [44]The king said to Shim'i, 'You yourself know all the bad dealing (which you acknowledge in your heart) that you undertook towards David

my father. Yahweh will bring back your bad dealing on your head, [45]whereas King Shelomoh will be blessed and David's throne
will be established before Yahweh permanently.' [46]And the king gave orders to Benayahu ben Yehoyada, and he went out and
came upon him and put him to death.
So the kingship was established in Shelomoh's hand.

3 Shelomoh made a marriage relationship with Par'oh king of Misrayim [Pharaoh king of Egypt]; he took Par'oh's daughter
and brought her to David's Town until he had finished building his house and Yahweh's house and the wall of Yerushalaim
all round. [2]Only, the people were sacrificing at the shrines because the house for Yahweh's name was not yet built up to that time,
[3]but Shelomoh was loyal to Yahweh in walking by the decrees of David his father; only, he was sacrificing and burning incense at
the shrines.

What do you most want?

[4]The king went to Gib'on to sacrifice there, because it was the biggest shrine; Shelomoh would offer up a thousand burnt
offerings on that altar. [5]At Gib'on Yahweh appeared to Shelomoh in a dream by night. God said, 'Ask for what I should give
you.' [6]Shelomoh said, 'You yourself acted in great commitment with your servant David my father as he walked before you in
truthfulness and faithfulness and in uprightness of mind with you. You have kept this great commitment for him and given him a
son sitting on his throne this very day.
[7]Now, Yahweh my God, you yourself have made your servant king in place of my father David, when I am a small boy who
doesn't know how to go out and come in. [8]Your servant is among your people that you chose, a numerous people that can't be
measured or counted because of the large number. [9]So you should give your servant a listening mind to decide cases for your
people, to discern between good and bad, because who can exercise authority for this substantial people of yours?'
[10]The thing was good in the Lord's eyes, that Shelomoh had asked for this thing. [11]God said to him, 'Since you've asked for
this thing and you haven't asked for a long life for yourself and haven't asked for wealth for yourself and haven't asked for the
life of your enemies, but asked for yourself to be discerning in hearing a case: [12]there, I'm acting in accordance with your words.
Here, I am giving you a smart and discerning mind such that there has not been anyone like you before you and there will not
arise anyone like you after you. [13]What you did not ask I am also giving you, both wealth and splendour for all your days, such
that there has not been anyone like you among the kings. [14]If you walk in my ways by keeping my decrees and my orders as your
father David walked, I will make your days long.'
[15]Shelomoh woke up. There, a dream. He came to Yerushalaim and stood before the Lord's pact chest, and offered up whole
offerings and made well-being sacrifices, and made a banquet for all his servants.

Two mothers, one baby

[16]Then two women who were prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. [17]The one woman said, 'Pardon me, my lord, I
and this woman are living in one house. I gave birth with her in the house. [18]On the third day after I gave birth, this woman also
gave birth. We were together. There was no outsider in the house with us, only the two of us in the house.
[19]This woman's son died in the night because she lay on it, [20]and she got up in the middle of the night and took my son from
beside me while your handmaid was asleep, laid him in her arms and laid her dead son in my arms. [21]So I got up in the morning to
nurse my son and there – he was dead. But I considered him closely in the morning, and there – it was not my son, whom I had
given birth to.' [22]The other woman said, 'No, because the live one is my son and the dead one is your son', while the first woman
was saying, 'No, because the dead one is your son and the live one is my son.'
So they spoke before the king, [23]and the king said, 'The one woman is saying "This is my son, the live one, and the dead one is
your son", while the other one is saying, "No, because the dead one is your son, and the live one is mine."' [24]The king said, 'Get
me a sword.' They brought a sword before the king. [25]The king said, 'Divide the live child in two and give half to one and half to
the other.' [26]The woman whose son was the live one said to the king (because her insides burned for her son) – she said, 'Pardon
me, my lord, give her the live baby, my lord. Don't actually put it to death', whereas the other was saying, 'It won't be either mine
or yours – divide it.' [27]The king answered, 'Give her the live baby. Don't actually put it to death. She's its mother.'
[28]When all Yisra'el heard the decision that the king had made, they were in awe before the king, because they saw that there
was divine smartness within him for exercising authority.

Shelomoh's administration

4 So King Shelomoh was king over all Yisra'el. [2]These were the officials that he had:

Azaryahu ben Tsadoq (the priest);
[3]Elihoreph and Ahiyyahu, sons of Shisha (secretaries);
Yehoshaphat ben Ahilud (the recorder);
[4]Benayahu ben Yehoyada (in charge of the army);
Tsadoq and Ebyatar (priests);
[5]Azaryahu ben Natan (in charge of the prefects);
Zabud ben Natan the priest (the king's friend);
[6]Ahishar (in charge of the household);
Adoniram ben Abda (in charge of the workforce).

[7]Shelomoh had twelve prefects over all Yisra'el; they would provide for the king and his household. There would be a month per year for each for provisioning. [8]These were their names:
the son of Hur, in the highland of Ephrayim;
[9]the son of Deqer, in Maqats, in Sha'albim, Bet Shemesh and Bet Hanan Oak;
[10]the son of Hesed, in Arubot: Sokoh and the entire region of Hepher was his;
[11]the son of Abinadab: all Do'r Height (Taphat, Shelomoh's daughter, was his wife);
[12]Ba'ana ben Ahilud: Ta'anak, Megiddo, and all Bet She'an, which is beside Tsaratan, below Yizre'e'l, from Bet She'an as far as Meholah Meadow, as far as across from Yoqmo'am;
[13]the son of Geber: in Heights-in-Gil'ad, the Villages of Ya'ir ben Menashsheh which are in Gil'ad, were his; the district of Argob, which is in Bashan, sixty big towns with a wall and a copper bar, were his;
[14]Ahinadab ben Iddo: Mahanayim;
[15]Ahima'ats: in Napthali (also he took Basemat, Shelomoh's daughter, as wife);
[16]Ba'ana ben Hushay: in Asher and in Alot;
[17]Yehoshaphat ben Paruah: in Yissakar [Issachar];
[18]Shim'i ben Ela: in Binyamin;
[19]Geber ben Uri: in the region of Gil'ad (the country of Sihon king of the Amorites and Og the king of Bashan), and the one prefect who was in the region.
[20]Yehudah and Yisra'el were as many as the sand that's by the sea in large number, eating, drinking and rejoicing.

Shelomoh's prosperity and his smartness

[21]Shelomoh was ruling over all the kingdoms from the River to the country of the Pelishtites [Philistines], as far as the border of Misrayim, bringing offerings and serving Shelomoh all the days of his life. [22]Shelomoh's food for one day was thirty ten-gallon measures of fine flour, sixty ten-gallon measures of ordinary flour, [23]ten sturdy cattle, twenty pasture cattle and a hundred sheep, apart from deer, gazelle, roebuck and fattened geese, [24]because he was holding sway over all of Beyond the River, from Tiphsah as far as Azzah [Gaza], over all the kings of Beyond the River, and he had peace on all his borders, all round.
[25]Yehudah and Yisra'el lived in confidence, each person under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan as far as Be'er-sheba, all Shelomoh's days. [26]Shelomoh had 40,000 stalls of horses for his chariotry and 12,000 cavalry. [27]These prefects would provide for King Shelomoh and for everyone who approached King Shelomoh's table, each for his month. They did not let anything be lacking. [28]As for the barley and the straw for the horses and for the steeds, they would bring it to the place where he would be, each person according to the ruling for him.
[29]God gave Shelomoh smartness and understanding in very great measure and width of mind like the sand that's on the seashore. [30]Shelomoh's smartness was greater than the smartness of all the Qedemites and all the smartness of the Misrayimites. [31]He was smarter than all humanity, than Etan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Kalkol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. His name was among all the nations around. [32]He spoke 3,000 aphorisms and his songs were 1,005. [33]He spoke about trees from the cedar that's in the Lebanon as far as the hyssop that comes out on the wall. He spoke about animals, about birds, about moving things and about fish. [34]They came from all the peoples to listen to Shelomoh's smartness, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his smartness.

The chance to build a house for Yahweh

5 Hiram king of Tsor [Tyre] sent his servants to Shelomoh because he had heard that they had anointed him as king in place of his father, because Hiram had always been loyal to David. [2]Shelomoh sent to Hiram to say, [3]'You yourself know of David my father, that he was not able to build a house for the name of Yahweh his God because of the battle that surrounded him until Yahweh put them beneath the soles of his feet. [4]But now Yahweh my God has made things settle for me all round. There's no adversary and there's nothing bad happening.
[5]So here I'm saying to build a house for the name of Yahweh my God, as Yahweh spoke to David my father: "Your son, whom I will put on your throne in place of you, he will build the house for my name." [6]So now, order that they cut down cedars for me from the Lebanon. My servants will be with your servants, and your servants' wages – I will give it to you in accordance with anything that you say, because you yourself know that there is no one among us who knows about cutting down trees like the Tsidonites.'
[7]When Hiram heard Shelomoh's words, he rejoiced greatly. He said, 'Yahweh be blessed today, who has given David a smart son over this numerous people.' [8]Hiram sent to Shelomoh: 'I've heard what you sent me. I myself will do all you want in cedar trees and in juniper trees. [9]My servants will get them down from the Lebanon to the sea. It'll be me who makes them into rafts at the sea for the place that you send to me, and I'll split them up there. It'll be you who carries them, and you who'll do what I want in giving bread to my household.'

The labourers for the building

[10]So Hiram was giving Shelomoh cedar wood and juniper wood, all that he wanted, [11]while Shelomoh gave Hiram 20,000 ten-gallon measures of wheat as provision for his household and 20,[000] ten-gallon measures of pressed oil. Thus Shelomoh would give Hiram year by year. [12]Because Yahweh gave Shelomoh smartness, as he had spoken to him, there was peace between Hiram and Shelomoh. The two of them solemnized a pact.

[13]King Shelomoh raised a workforce from all Yisra'el; the workforce came to 30,000 men. [14]He sent them to the Lebanon
10,000 per month in shifts. They would be a month in the Lebanon, two months at home. Adoniram was in charge of the
workforce.
[15]Shelomoh had 70,000 load-carriers and 80,000 stonecutters in the highland, [16]apart from Shelomoh's prefect officers who
were in charge of the work, 3,300 holding sway over the company who were doing the work. [17]The king gave them orders and
they transported big stones, fine stones, so as to found the house with hewn stones. [18]Shelomoh's builders, Hiram's builders and
men from Byblos shaped them, and prepared the wood and the stones for building the house.
6 In the four hundred and eightieth year of the Yisra'elites' getting out of the country of Misrayim, in the fourth year in the
month Ziv (i.e. the second month) of Shelomoh's reign over Yisra'el, he built the house for Yahweh. [2]The house that King
Shelomoh built for Yahweh:

its length was thirty metres;
its width ten metres;
its height fifteen metres.

[3]The porch on the front of the hall of the house:

its length was ten metres (along the width of the house);
its width five metres (along the front of the house).

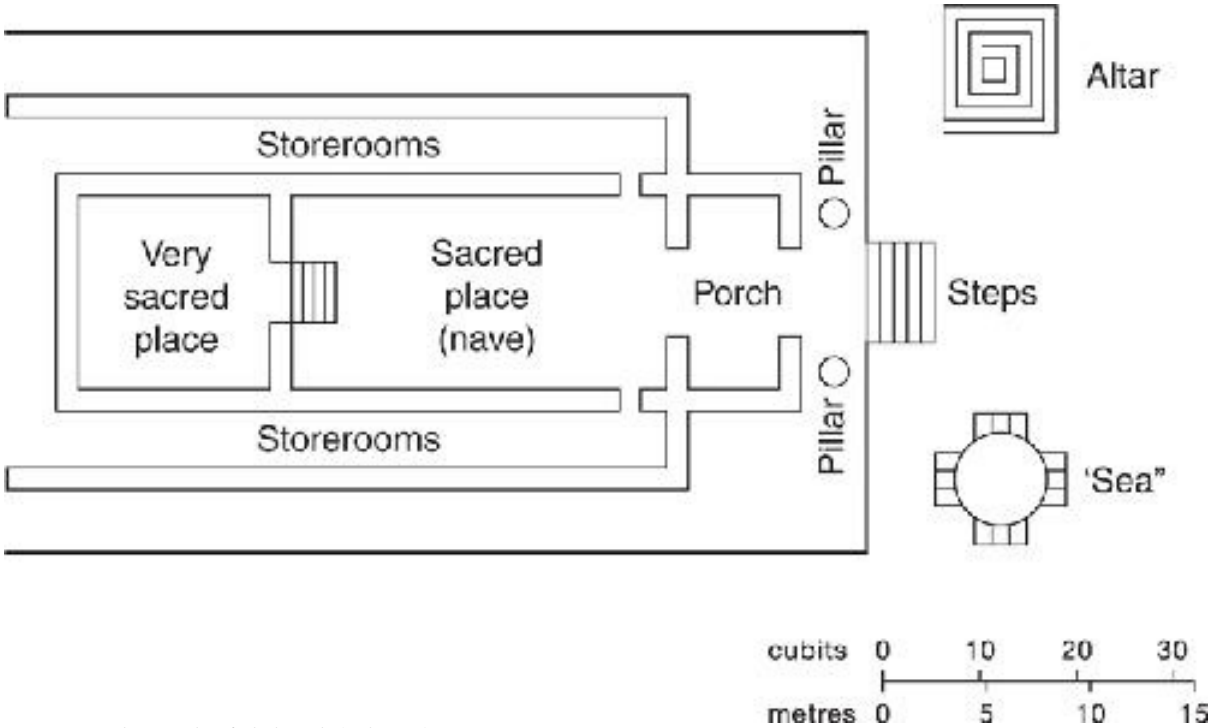
[4]He made recessed latticed windows for the house, [5]against the wall of the house he built an extension all round (the walls of
the house round the hall and the inner sanctuary), and he made side rooms all round.

[6]The lowest extension: its width was two and a half metres;
the middle: its width was three metres;
the third: its width was three and a half metres;

because he put supports for the house all round outside so as not to fasten them to the walls of the house.

If you walk

[7]When the house was built, it was built of whole quarry stone. Hammers or chisel, any iron tool, did not make itself heard in the
house when it was built. [8]The entrance to the middle side room was on the right side of the house, and winding stairs went up to
the middle one and from the middle one to the third.
[9]So he built the house and finished it, and panelled the house with beams and planks of cedar. [10]He built the extension against
the entire house, two and a half metres its height, and secured the house with cedar wood.
[11]Yahweh's word came to Shelomoh: [12]'This house that you're building: if you walk by my decrees and act by my rulings and
keep all my orders, walking by them, I will implement with you my word that I spoke to David your father. [13]I will dwell among
the Yisra'elites and I will not abandon my people Yisra'el.'
[14]So Shelomoh built the house and finished it. [15]He built the walls of the house on the inside with cedar planks from the floor of
the house up to the ceiling walls. He overlaid it with wood on the inside and overlaid the floor of the house with juniper planks.
[16]He built with cedar boards ten metres from the sides of the house, from the floor as far as the walls, and built for it inside an
inner room as the very sacred place. [17]The house (i.e. the hall, in front) was twenty metres. [18]The cedar for the house within:
carving of melons and open flowers, everything cedar. No stone was visible.
[19]He prepared an inner room inside the house, within, to put Yahweh's pact chest there. [20]In front of the inner room it was ten
metres in length, ten metres in width and ten metres in its height. He overlaid it with beaten gold and overlaid the altar with cedar.



1 Kings 6: The temple of Shelomoh (Solomon)

The inner room

[21]Shelomoh overlaid the house inside with beaten gold, and passed gold chains in front of the inner room and overlaid it with gold. [22]So the entire house he overlaid with gold until the entire house was complete, and the entire altar belonging to the inner room he overlaid with gold. [23]In the inner room he made two sphinxes of oil wood; its height was five metres. [24]One sphinx's wing was two and a half metres and the second sphinx's wing was two and a half metres. From the ends of its wings to the other ends of its wings was five metres, [25]and the second sphinx was five metres: one measure and one profile for the two sphinxes. [26]The height of one sphinx was five metres, and so the second sphinx.

[27]He put the sphinxes in the middle of the inner house. They spread the sphinxes' wings so that the wing of the one touched the wall and the wing of the second sphinx was touching the second wall, with their wings towards the middle of the house, wing touching wing. [28]He overlaid the sphinxes with gold, [29]and all the walls of the house, all round, he carved with carved engravings of sphinxes, palms and open flowers, inside and outside. [30]The floor of the house he overlaid with gold, inside and outside.

[31]As the entrance of the inner room he made doors of oil wood, the upright (the doorposts) fivefold, [32]the two doors of oil wood. He carved on them carvings of sphinxes, palms and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold. He hammered the gold on to the sphinxes and on to the palms. [33]In this way he made for the entrance to the hall doorposts of oil wood, out of a quarter, [34]and two doors of juniper wood, one door of two leaves folding and the other door of two leaves folding. [35]He carved sphinxes, palms and open flowers and overlaid them with gold, fitted on to the chiselling. [36]He built the inner courtyard with three rows of hewn stone and a row of cedar timbers.

The forest-like meeting house

[37]In the fourth year Yahweh's house was founded, in the month of Ziv, [38]and in the eleventh year in the month of Bul (i.e. the eighth month) the house got finished in keeping with all his words and with all his rulings. He built it over seven years.

7 His own house Shelomoh built over thirteen years. He finished his entire house [2]and built the Lebanon Forest house:
its length fifty metres, its width twenty-five metres and its height fifteen metres;
on four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar timbers on the pillars;
[3]it was panelled with cedar above, on top of the planks that were on the forty-five pillars (fifteen per row);
[4]frames, three rows, face to face, three times;
[5]all the entrances and the doorposts, square in frame, in front, face to face, three times;
[6]the porch of pillars he made, twenty-five metres its length and fifteen metres its width;
a porch in front of them and pillars and a canopy in front.

[7]He made the porch for the throne where he would exercise authority (the authority porch). It was covered in cedar from floor to floor. [8]His house where he would live (the other courtyard within the porch) was of this same making. He would make a house for Par'oh's daughter, whom Shelomoh took, like this porch. [9]All these things:
fine stone, hewn according to measure, trimmed with a trimmer, inside and outside, from foundation to coping, from outside as far as the big courtyard;
[10]the foundation: fine stones, big stones, five-metre stones and four-metre stones;

[11]on top: fine stones, hewn according to measure, and cedar;
[12]the big courtyard all round: three rows of hewn stone and a row of cedar timbers, both for the inner courtyard of Yahweh's house and for the house's porch.

The other Hiram

[13]King Shelomoh sent and got Hiram from Tsor. [14]He was the son of a woman who was a widow from the clan of Naphtali, but his father had been a Tsorite, a coppersmith. He was full of smartness, of understanding and of knowledge for doing all work in copper. So he came to King Shelomoh and did all his work. [15]He shaped the two pillars, of copper.
The height of one pillar was nine metres.
A line of six metres would go round the second pillar.
[16]Two capitals he made to put on the tops of the pillars, cast in copper; the height of one capital was two and a half metres and the height of the second capital was two and a half metres.
[17]Nets of netted work, twists of chainwork, for the capitals that were on the top of the pillars, seven for one capital, seven for the second capital.
[18]He made the pillars with two rows all round on each net, to cover the capitals that were on the top of the pomegranates, and in this way he made it for the second capital.
[19]The capitals that were on the top of the pillars made of lotuses, in the porch, two metres.
[20]The capitals on the two pillars also above, next to the bulge that was across from the net.
The 200 pomegranates in rows all round on the second capital.
[21]He set up the pillars for the porch of the hall: he set up the right pillar and named it 'He-Establishes' and set up the left pillar and named it 'In-Him-Is-Strength'.
[22]On the top of the pillars: lotus work.
So the work on the pillars was complete.

The 'sea' and its stands

[23]He made the sea, cast:
five metres from its lip to its lip, circular all round, two and a half metres its height;
a line of fifteen metres would go round it all round;
[24]melons under its lip going round it, all round, five metres, encircling the sea all round; two rows of melons cast with its casting;
[25]standing on twelve cattle, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south, three facing east, with the sea on them, above, and all their rears inwards;
[26]its thickness a handbreadth;
its lip like the making of the lip of a cup, a lotus petal;
it could contain 2,000 five-gallon measures.
[27]He made the ten stands, copper:
the length of one stand two metres, two metres its width, and one and a half metres its height;
[28]this was the making of a stand: they had rims, and rims between the frames;
[29]on the rims that were between the frames, lions, cattle and sphinxes;
on the frames a stand;
on top and below the lions and the cattle, spirals of hammered making;
[30]four copper wheels for each stand, and copper axles;
its four legs had shoulder-pieces under the basin;
the shoulder-pieces, cast, with spirals across from each;
[31]its mouth inside the capital and half a metre above;
its mouth circular, the making of a stand, three quarters of a metre;
also on the mouth, carvings;
their rims square, not circular;
[32]the four wheels below the rims;
the wheels' supports in the stand;
the height of a wheel three quarters of a metre;
[33]the making of the wheels like the making of a chariot wheel;
their supports, their backs, their spokes and their hubs, all cast;
[34]four shoulder-pieces at the four corners of each stand; from the stand its shoulder-pieces;
[35]at the top of the stand a circular band all round, the height a quarter of a metre;
on the top of the stand, its handles and its rims coming from it.

The engraved sphinxes

[36]He engraved on the panels of its handles and on its rims sphinxes, lions and palms, according to the space on each, with spirals all round. [37]Like this he made the ten stands, each cast, one measure, one shape for all of them. [38]He made ten copper basins. Each basin would contain 45-gallon measures, each basin two metres, each on its stand, for the ten stands. [39]He put the stands five at the right shoulder of the house and five at the left shoulder of the house. The sea he put at the right shoulder of the

house to the east, towards the south. [40]Hiram made the basins, the shovels and the bowls.
So Hiram finished doing all the work that he did for King Shelomoh at Yahweh's house:
[41]two pillars;
two globes for the capitals that were on the top of the pillars;
two nets to cover the two globes for the capitals that were on the top of the pillars;
[42]the 400 pomegranates for the two nets, two rows of pomegranates for each net, to cover the two globes for the capitals that were on the face of the pillars;
[43]the ten stands and the ten basins on the stands;
[44]the one sea and the twelve cattle beneath the sea;
[45]the buckets, the shovels, the basins, all these articles that Hiram made for King Shelomoh for Yahweh's house, polished copper.
[46]The king cast them in the Yarden Plain, in the earthen compactness between Sukkot and Tsaretan. [47]Shelomoh left all the articles alone [unweighed], because of the very, very large number; the weight of the copper was not searched out.
[48]Shelomoh made all the articles that were for Yahweh's house:
the gold altar;
the table on which was the presence bread, gold;
[49]the lights (five on the right and five on the left) in front of the inner room, beaten gold;
the flowers, the lamps and the tongs, gold;
[50]the basins, the snuffers, the sprinklers, the ladles and the pans, beaten gold;
the hinges for the doors of the inner house, for the very sacred place, for the doors of the house, for the hall, gold.

The work completed

[51]So all the work that King Shelomoh had done for Yahweh's house was complete, and Shelomoh brought in the sacred things from David his father; the silver, the gold and the articles he put in the treasuries of Yahweh's house.

8 Then Shelomoh congregated Yisra'el's elders (all the heads of the clans, the Yisra'elites' ancestral leaders) to King Shelomoh in Yerushalaim, to take up Yahweh's pact chest from David's Town (i.e. Tsiyyon [Zion]). [2]All the Yisra'elites congregated to King Shelomoh in the month of Etanim at the festival (i.e. the seventh month). [3]All Yisra'el's elders came and the priests carried the chest. [4]They took up Yahweh's chest, the appointment tent and all the sacred articles that were in the tent. The priests and the Levites took them up [5]while King Shelomoh and the entire assembly of Yisra'el who had assembled to him were with him before the chest, sacrificing sheep and cattle that could not be numbered and could not be counted because of the large number.
[6]The priests brought Yahweh's pact chest to its place, to the inner room of the house, to the very sacred place, under the sphinxes' wings, [7]because the sphinxes were spreading their wings to the chest's place; the sphinxes screened the chest and its poles from above. [8]The poles extended and the heads of the poles could be seen from the sacred place in front of the inner room, but they could not be seen outside. They have been there until this day. [9]There was nothing in the chest, only the two stone tablets that Mosheh had set down there at Horeb, when Yahweh solemnized things with the Yisra'elites, when they got out from the country of Misrayim.
[10]When the priests went out from the sacred place and the cloud was filling Yahweh's house, [11]the priests were not able to stand to minister before the cloud, because Yahweh's splendour was filling Yahweh's house.

The God who dwells in the cloud

[12]Then Shelomoh said:

Yahweh has said he would dwell in a thundercloud.
[13]I have indeed built a stately house for you, an established place for you to live in to the ages.

[14]The king turned his face round and blessed Yisra'el's entire congregation, as Yisra'el's entire congregation was standing. [15]He said, 'Blessed be Yahweh the God of Yisra'el who spoke by his own mouth with David my father, and by his own hand has fulfilled it: [16]"From the day that I got my people Yisra'el out of Misrayim I didn't choose a town from all Yisra'el's clans to build a house for my name to be there, but I chose David to be in charge of my people Yisra'el."
[17]It was in David my father's mind to build a house for the name of Yahweh the God of Yisra'el, [18]but Yahweh said to David my father, "In that it was in your mind to build a house for my name, you did well that it was in your mind. [19]Only you yourself will not build the house. Rather, your son, who is going to come out from your insides, he will build the house for my name."
[20]Yahweh has implemented his word that he spoke. I have arisen in place of David my father, I have sat on Yisra'el's throne as Yahweh spoke and I have built the house for the name of Yahweh the God of Yisra'el. [21]I have set a place there for the chest where Yahweh's pact is, which he solemnized with our ancestors when he got them out of the country of Misrayim.'
[22]Shelomoh stood before Yahweh's altar in front of the entire congregation of Yisra'el and spread out his palms to the heavens.

Will God really live on earth?

[23]He said, 'Yahweh, God of Yisra'el, there is no god like you in the heavens above or on the earth beneath, keeping pact and commitment for your servants who walk before you with their entire mind, [24]who has kept for your servant David my father what

you spoke to him. You spoke with your own mouth and with your own hand you have fulfilled it, this very day.
[25]So now, Yahweh, God of Yisra'el, keep for your servant David my father what you spoke to him: "There will not be cut off for you someone before me sitting on Yisra'el's throne, if only your sons keep watch over their way in walking before me as you have walked before me." [26]So now, God of Yisra'el, may your word please prove trustworthy that you spoke to your servant David my father.
[27]Because will God truly live on the earth? There – the heavens, even the highest heavens, could not contain you, certainly not this house that I have built. [28]But turn your face towards your servant's plea and towards his prayer for grace, Yahweh my God, so as to listen to the resounding cry and to the plea that your servant is making before you today, [29]so that your eyes are opened towards this house night and day, towards the place of which you've said, "My name will be there", so as to listen to the plea that your servant makes towards this place. [30]May you listen to the prayer for grace by your servant and your people Yisra'el, which they make towards this place. May you yourself listen towards the place where you live, towards the heavens, listen and pardon.

Some things to pray for

[31]Someone who does wrong, an individual to his neighbour, and he takes up an oath against him to get him to swear, and the oath comes before your altar in this house, [32]may you yourself listen in the heavens, and act, and exercise authority for your servants, so as to show the person in the wrong to be in the wrong, bringing his conduct on his head, and to show the person in the right to be in the right, bringing to him in accordance with his being in the right.
[33]When your people Yisra'el take a beating before an enemy because they do wrong in relation to you, but they turn back to you and confess your name and plead and pray for grace towards you in this house, [34]may you yourself listen in the heavens and pardon your people Yisra'el's wrongdoing and take them back to the land that you gave to their ancestors.
[35]When the heavens hold back and there's no rain because they do wrong in relation to you, but they plead towards this place and confess your name, and turn back from their wrongdoing because you humble them, [36]may you yourself listen in the heavens and pardon the wrongdoing of your servants, of your people Yisra'el, when you instruct them in the good way that they should walk in, and give rain on your country that you gave your people as a domain.

More things to pray for

[37]When famine happens in the country, when an epidemic happens, blight, mildew, locust, caterpillar, when it happens; when its enemy besieges it in the region of its settlements; any affliction, any illness; [38]any plea, any prayer for grace that any human being belonging to your entire people Yisra'el may have, who acknowledge, each one, the affliction of his heart and spreads out his palms towards this house, [39]may you yourself listen in the heavens, the established place where you live, and pardon, and act, and give to the individual in accordance with all his ways, in that you know his mind (because you alone know the mind of all human beings), [40]in order that they may live in awe of you all the days that they are alive on the face of the ground that you gave to our ancestors.
[41]Further, to the foreigner who is not of your people Yisra'el but comes from a distant country for the sake of your name ([42]because they hear of your big name, your strong hand and your extended arm) and comes and pleads towards this house, [43]may you yourself listen in the heavens, in the established place where you live, and act in accordance with everything for which the foreigner calls to you, in order that all earth's peoples may acknowledge your name so as to live in awe of you like your people Yisra'el and to acknowledge that your name is called out over this house that I have built.
[44]When your people goes out to battle against its enemy by the way that you send them and they plead to Yahweh in the direction of the town that you have chosen and the house that I have built for your name, [45]may you listen in the heavens to their plea and to their prayer for grace, and decide for them.

One more

[46]When they do wrong in relation to you (because there is no human being who doesn't do wrong) and you're angry with them and you give them up before an enemy, and their captors take them off captive to the enemy's country, far or near, [47]and they turn their mind back in the country where they are captive, and turn back and pray towards you for grace in their captors' country, saying "We've done wrong, we've been wayward, we've been faithless", [48]and they turn back to you with their entire mind and with their entire being in the country of their enemies who have taken them off captive, and make their plea to you in the direction of their country that you gave their ancestors, the town that you've chosen and the house that I've built for your name, [49]may you listen in the heavens, in the established place where you live, to their plea, their prayer for grace, and decide for them, [50]and pardon your people who've done wrong in relation to you, for all their acts of rebellion that they have committed against you, and give them compassion before their captors so they may have compassion on them, [51]because they are your people, your domain, which you got out of Misrayim, from inside the iron furnace, [52]so that your eyes are opened to your servant's prayer for grace and to your people Yisra'el's prayer for grace, so that you listen to them every time they call to you, [53]because you yourself made them distinct for yourself as a domain from all the peoples of the earth, as you spoke by means of Mosheh your servant when you got our ancestors out of Misrayim, Lord Yahweh.'

Blessings

[54]When Shelomoh had finished making to Yahweh all this plea and prayer for grace, he got up from before Yahweh's altar, from bending down on his knees with his palms spread out to the heavens, [55]and stood and blessed the entire congregation of

Yisra'el, in a loud voice:
[56]'Blessed be Yahweh, who has given his people Yisra'el a place to settle down in accordance with all that he spoke. Not one word has fallen down of all his good word that he spoke by means of Mosheh his servant. [57]May Yahweh our God be with us as he was with our ancestors and may he not abandon us, may he not leave us, [58]by inclining our mind to him so that we walk in all his ways and keep his orders, his decrees and his rulings that he ordered our ancestors. [59]May these words of mine that I have made as a plea before Yahweh be near to Yahweh our God day and night so that he may decide for his servant and decide for his people Yisra'el, each day's requirement in its day, [60]in order that all the peoples of the earth may acknowledge that Yahweh is God; there is no other. [61]And may your mind be perfect with Yahweh your God so as to walk in his decrees and keep his orders this very day.'
[62]The king and all Yisra'el with him were making sacrifice before Yahweh. [63]Shelomoh made as well-being sacrifices, which he made for Yahweh, 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep. So the king and all the Yisra'elites dedicated Yahweh's house. [64]That day the king made the middle part of the court sacred, which was in front of Yahweh's house, because he made the burnt offering, the grain offering and the fat parts of the well-being sacrifices there, because the copper altar that was before Yahweh was too small to contain the burnt offering, the grain offering and the fat parts of the well-being sacrifices.

Yahweh appears again, with a warning

[65]Shelomoh made the festival at that time, he and all Yisra'el with him (a big congregation from Lebo Hamat as far as the Misrayimite Wadi) before Yahweh our God for seven days, then seven days, fourteen days. [66]On the eighth day he sent the people off and they blessed the king. They went to their tents, rejoicing and good-hearted because of all the good things that Yahweh had done for David his servant and for Yisra'el his people.
9 When Shelomoh had finished building Yahweh's house and the king's house and everything that drew Shelomoh's attraction that he wanted to do, [2]Yahweh appeared to Shelomoh a second time, as he had appeared to him at Gib'on. [3]Yahweh said to him, 'I've listened to your plea and your prayer for grace which you've made before me. I've made this house that you have built sacred, so as to put my name there permanently. My eyes and my mind will be there for all time.
[4]You yourself, if you walk before me as David your father walked, with wholeness of mind and with uprightness, acting in accordance with all that I've ordered you, you will keep my decrees and my rulings, [5]and I will set up your kingly throne over Yisra'el permanently, as I spoke to David your father: "There will not be cut off for you someone on Yisra'el's throne." [6]If you all and your sons actually turn back from following me and don't keep my orders, my decrees that I've put before you, and you go and serve other gods and bow low to them, [7]I will cut off Yisra'el from on the face of the land that I gave them, and the house that I have made sacred for my name I will send off from before my face. Yisra'el will become an object lesson and a taunt among all the peoples.
[8]Whereas this house is high, anyone who passes by it will be desolate and will whistle. They will say, "Why did Yahweh act in that way to this country and to this house?" [9]And people will say, "On account of the fact that they abandoned Yahweh their God who got their ancestors out of the country of Misrayim, and took strong hold of other gods and bowed low to them and served them. That's why Yahweh brought upon them all this bad experience."'

Building projects

[10]At the end of the twenty years while Shelomoh built the two houses, Yahweh's house and the king's house, [11]when Hiram king of Tsor had supported Shelomoh with cedar wood and with juniper wood and with gold, all he wanted, King Shelomoh then gave Hiram twenty towns in the region of Galilee. [12]Hiram went out from Tsor to see the towns that Shelomoh had given him, but they were not right in his eyes. [13]He said, 'What are these towns that you've given me, brother?' He called them the Region of Kabul ['Like-Nothing'], until this day. [14](Hiram had sent the king 120 talents of gold.)
[15]This is the account of the workforce that King Shelomoh raised to build Yahweh's house, his own house, the Fill, the Yerushalaim wall, and Hatsor, Megiddo and Gezer, [16]when Par'oh king of Misrayim had gone up and taken Gezer, burned it with fire, killed the Kena'anites who lived in the town and given it as a dowry to his daughter, Shelomoh's wife. [17]Shelomoh built up Gezer, Lower Bet Horon, [18]Ba'alat and Tadmor in the wilderness, within the country, [19]and all the supply towns that Shelomoh had, the chariot towns, the cavalry towns and the things Shelomoh felt an attraction for building in Yerushalaim, in the Lebanon and in all the country that he ruled.
[20]The entire people that was left of the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivvite and the Yebusite, who were not born of the Yisra'elites ([21]their descendants who were left after them in the country, whom the Yisra'elites were not able to devote), Shelomoh raised as a serf workforce until this day. [22]Of the Yisra'elites Shelomoh did not make anyone a serf; rather they were men of battle, his servants, his officers, his adjutants, his chariot officers and his cavalry; [23]these were the prefect officers who were in charge of the work for Shelomoh, 550, holding sway over the company doing the work. [24]Yet Par'oh's daughter went up from David's Town to her house which he built for her. Then he built the Fill.

Enter the queen of Sheba

[25]Three times a year Shelomoh used to offer up burnt offerings and well-being sacrifices on the altar that he built for Yahweh, and burn incense with it (the one that was before Yahweh). So he completed the house.
[26]King Shelomoh made a fleet at Etsyon-geber, which is by Elot on the shore of the Reed Sea in the country of Edom. [27]In the fleet Hiram sent his servants, shipmen who knew the sea, with Shelomoh's servants. [28]They came to Ophir and got gold from there, 420 talents, and brought it to King Shelomoh.

10 Since the queen of Sheba had been hearing report of Shelomoh in connection with Yahweh's name, she came to test him with conundrums. [2]She came to Yerushalaim with a very substantial force, camels carrying spices, very much gold and precious stones. She came to Shelomoh and spoke to him of everything that was in her mind, [3]and Shelomoh told her about all the things she said. Nothing was concealed from the king that he didn't tell her.

[4]The queen of Sheba saw all Shelomoh's smartness, the house that he had built, [5]the food on his table, the seating of his servants, the standing of his ministers and their dress, his wine waiters, and his burnt offering that he would offer up at Yahweh's house, and there was no longer any breath left in her.

Far more impressive than I had been told

[6]She said to the king, 'The thing was true that I heard in my country about your words and about your smartness. [7]I didn't trust in the words until I came and my eyes saw. But here, the half had not been told me. You have more smartness and good things than the report that I heard. [8]The blessings of your people, the blessings of these servants of yours who are standing continually before you, listening to your smartness! [9]May Yahweh your God be blessed, who delighted in you so as to put you on Yisra'el's throne in Yahweh's loyalty to Yisra'el, permanently. He made you king to exercise authority with faithfulness.'

[10]She gave the king 120 talents of gold, very many spices and precious stones. There never again came spices in the quantity that the queen of Sheba gave King Shelomoh. [11]Hiram's fleet, which carried gold from Ophir, also brought very much almug wood and precious stones. [12]The king made the almug wood into supports for Yahweh's house and for the king's house and into guitars and mandolins for the singers. Such almug wood has not come and has not been seen until this day. [13]King Shelomoh himself gave the queen of Sheba all that she wanted, that she asked for, beyond what he gave her in accordance with what King Shelomoh possessed. Then she turned her face and went to her country, she and her servants.

[14]The weight of the gold that came to Shelomoh in one year was 666 talents of gold, [15]apart from what came from the traders, from the merchants' business, and all the kings of Arabia and the governors of the region. [16]King Shelomoh made 200 body-shields of hammered gold (he would raise 600 gold pieces for each shield) [17]and 300 hand-shields of hammered gold (he would raise three pounds of gold for each shield). The king put them in the Lebanon Forest house.

Throne, fleet, trade

[18]The king made a big ivory throne and overlaid it with refined gold, [19]with six steps to the throne, and a circular top for the throne at the back of it, and arms on this side and on that side of the place where one sat, and two lions standing beside the arms, [20]and twelve lions standing there on the six steps on this side and on that side. None was made like this for any kingdom.

[21]All King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold and all the vessels in the Lebanon Forest house were beaten gold, none silver – it was not thought of for anything in Shelomoh's days, [22]because the king had a Tarshish fleet at sea with Hiram's fleet. Once in three years the Tarshish fleet would come carrying gold and silver, tusks, monkeys and peacocks.

[23]King Shelomoh was bigger than all the kings of the earth in wealth and in smartness. [24]All the earth was seeking audience with Shelomoh to listen to his smartness, which God had put into his mind, [25]and they were bringing each his offering: silver objects and gold objects, robes, weaponry and spices, horses and mules, each year's requirement in its year. [26]Shelomoh gathered chariotry and cavalry, and had 1,400 chariotry and 12,000 cavalry. He settled them in chariot towns, and with the king in Yerushalaim.

[27]The king made the silver in Yerushalaim like the stones, and made the cedars like the wild fig trees that are in the foothills in the large number. [28]The origin of the horses that Shelomoh had was from Misrayim and from Qewe. The king's dealers would get them from Qewe at a price; [29]a chariot went up (it came out from Misrayim) for 600 silver pieces, a horse for 150. In this way they would get them out by their own hand to all the kings of the Hittites and to the kings of Aram.

Diplomatic marriages

11 Now King Shelomoh loved many foreign women (and Par'oh's daughter), Mo'abites, Ammonites, Edomites, Tsidonites and Hittites, [2]from the nations of which Yahweh had said to the Yisra'elites, 'You will not have sex with them and they will not have sex with you. They will surely turn away your mind after their gods.' To them Shelomoh attached himself in love. [3]He had 700 consorts and 300 secondary wives, and his wives did turn away his mind.

[4]So in Shelomoh's old age, his wives did turn his mind away after other gods. His mind became not perfect with Yahweh his God like the mind of David his father. [5]Shelomoh followed Shameful Ashtar the god of the Tsidonites and Milkom the abomination of the Ammonites. [6]Shelomoh did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes and did not fully follow Yahweh like David his father. [7]Shelomoh built a shrine for Kemosh the abomination of Mo'ab on the mountain that's facing Yerushalaim, and for the Shameful King, the abomination of the Ammonites. [8]He did so for all his foreign wives who were burning incense and sacrificing to their gods.

[9]Yahweh showed himself angry with Shelomoh because his mind turned away from Yahweh the God of Yisra'el who had appeared to him twice [10]and had given him orders about this thing, not to follow other gods. He didn't keep what Yahweh ordered. [11]Yahweh said to Shelomoh, 'Since this has been with you, and you haven't kept my pact and my decrees which I ordered you, I will tear the kingdom right away from you and give it to your servant. [12]Yet in your days I won't do it, for the sake of David your father; from the hand of your son I will tear it away. [13]Only, the entire kingdom I will not tear away; one clan I will give to your son, for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Yerushalaim, which I chose.'

Adversaries

[14]Yahweh made rise as an adversary for Shelomoh Hadad the Edomite. He was from the royal offspring in Edom. [15]When David had been with Edom, Yo'ab went up to bury the people who had been run through, and he had struck down every male in Edom, [16]because for six months Yo'ab and all Yisra'el stayed there until he had cut down every male in Edom. [17]But Adad took flight, he and some Edomite men, some of his father's servants, with him, so as to come to Misrayim; Hadad was a small boy. [18]They set off from Midyan and came to Pa'ran, took some men with them from Pa'ran and came to Misrayim, to Par'oh king of Misrayim. He gave him a house, said there would be bread for him and gave him land.

[19]Hadad found grace greatly in Par'oh's eyes and he gave him his wife's sister, the sister of Tahpenes, the queen, as wife. [20]Tahpenes' sister gave birth to Genubat, his son, for him. Tahpenes weaned him within Par'oh's household, and Genubat was in Par'oh's household among Par'oh's sons.

[21]When Hadad heard in Misrayim that David had lain down with his ancestors and that Yo'ab the army officer was dead, Hadad said to Par'oh, 'Send me off, so I may go to my country.' [22]Par'oh said to him, 'What do you lack with me, that here, you're seeking to go to your country?' He said, 'No, but do send me off.'

[23]And God made rise for him as an adversary Retson ben Elyada, who had taken flight from Hadad'ezer king of Tsobah, his lord. [24]He collected men round him and became officer over a raiding gang (when David was killing them); they went to Dammeseq [Damascus] and lived there, and reigned in Dammeseq. [25]He was an adversary to Yisra'el all Shelomoh's days, along with the bad thing that Hadad was. He harassed Yisra'el. He reigned over Aram.

Yarob'am (Jeroboam)

[26]Now Yarob'am ben Nebat, an Ephratite from Tseredah (his mother's name was Tseru'ah, a woman who was a widow), a servant of Shelomoh, raised a hand against the king. [27]This was the thing in connection with which he raised a hand against the king. When Shelomoh built the Fill, he secured the breach in David his father's town. [28]This individual Yarob'am was a forceful strong man, and Shelomoh saw the boy when he was doing work and appointed him over the entire labour force in the household of Yoseph.

[29]At that time, when Yarob'am went out of Yerushalaim, Ahiyyah the Shilonite, the prophet, found him on the road. He was covering himself with a new coat and the two of them were alone in the open country. [30]Ahiyyah seized the new coat that was on him and tore it into twelve pieces. [31]He said to Yarob'am, 'Take yourself ten pieces, because Yahweh the God of Yisra'el has said this: "Here am I, tearing the kingdom from Shelomoh's hand and giving you the ten clans. [32]One clan will be his, for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Yerushalaim, the town that I chose from all Yisra'el's clans. [33]Because they've abandoned me and bowed low to Shameful Ashtar the god of the Tsidonites, to Kemosh the god of Mo'ab and to Milkom the god of the Ammonites, and have not walked in my ways by doing what is upright in my eyes, my decrees and my rulings, like David his father.

[34]I shall not take the entire kingdom from his hand and I shall make him leader all the days of his life for the sake of David my servant, whom I chose, who kept my orders and my decrees. [35]But I shall take the kingdom from his son's hand and give it to you (the ten clans). [36]To his son I will give one clan for the sake of there always being hegemony for David my servant before me in Yerushalaim, the town that I chose for myself to put my name there. [37]But you I shall take, and you will reign over all that your appetite longs for. You will be king over Yisra'el. [38]If you listen to all that I command you, walk in my ways and do what is upright in my eyes by keeping my decrees and my orders as David my servant did, I will be with you and I will build for you a trustworthy household as I built for David, and I will give Yisra'el to you. [39]I will humble David's offspring on account of this (yet not for all time)."'

Rehab'am (Rehoboam)

[40]Shelomoh sought to put Yarob'am to death, but Yarob'am set off and took flight to Misrayim to Shishaq king of Misrayim, and he was in Misrayim until Shelomoh's death. [41]The rest of the things about Shelomoh, all that he did and his smartness, they're written on the document about things regarding Shelomoh, aren't they. [42]The time that Shelomoh reigned in Yerushalaim over all Yisra'el was forty years. [43]Then Shelomoh lay down with his ancestors and was buried in David his father's town, and Rehab'am his son began to reign in place of him.

12 Rehab'am went to Shekem, because all Yisra'el had come to Shekem to make him king. [2]When Yarob'am ben Nebat heard while he was still in Misrayim, where he had taken flight from before King Shelomoh (so Yarob'am lived in Misrayim), [3]they sent and called for him. Yarob'am came with the entire congregation of Yisra'el and they spoke to Rehab'am: [4]'Your father – he made our yoke tough. So you, now, lighten something of your father's tough servitude and of his heavy yoke that he put on us, and we'll serve you.'

[5]He said to them, 'Go for three more days, and come back to me.' The people went, [6]and King Rehab'am took counsel with the elders who had been standing before Shelomoh his father when he was alive: 'How do you counsel me to give back word to this people?' [7]They spoke to him, 'If today you'll be a servant to this people, and serve them, and answer them and speak good words to them, they'll be your servants for all time.'

Declining the chance to be a servant leader

[8]But he abandoned the elders' counsel which they gave him and took counsel with the young men who grew up with him, who were standing before him. [9]He said to them, 'What are you going to counsel, so that we may give back word to this people who

spoke to me, “Lighten something of the yoke that your father put on us”?’ [10]The young men who grew up with him spoke with him: ‘You should say this to this people who spoke to you, “Whereas your father made our yoke heavy, you, lighten it from on us” – you should speak like this to them: “My little finger is thicker than my father’s hips. [11]So now, whereas my father imposed a heavy yoke on you, I myself will add to your yoke. Whereas my father disciplined you with whips, I myself will discipline you with scorpions.”’

[12]Yarob’am and the entire people came to Rehab’am on the third day as the king had spoken, ‘Come back to me on the third day’, [13]and the king answered the people toughly. He abandoned the counsel of the elders that they had given him [14]and spoke to them in accordance with the counsel of the young men: ‘Whereas my father made your yoke heavy, I myself will add to your yoke. Whereas my father disciplined you with whips, I myself will discipline you with scorpions.’ [15]The king didn’t listen to the people, because it was a turn of affairs from Yahweh in order to implement his word, which Yahweh had spoken by means of Ahiyyah the Shilonite to Yarob’am ben Nebat.

[16]All Yisra’el saw that the king had not listened to them, and the people gave word back to the king:

What share do we have in David?
– we have no domain in ben Yishay [Jesse].
To your tents, Yisra’el;
now see to your own household, David.

So Yisra’el went to its tents, [17]though the Yisra’elites who were living in the towns of Yehudah – Rehab’am reigned over them. [18]King Rehab’am sent Adoram, who was in charge of the workforce, but all Yisra’el pelted him with stones and he died, while King Rehab’am got himself together to get up into the chariot to flee to Yerushalaim.

[19]So Yisra’el has rebelled against David’s household until this day.

Yahweh confronts Rehab’am

[20]When all Yisra’el heard that Yarob’am had come back, they sent and called him to the assembly and made him king over all Yisra’el. No one followed David’s household except the clan of Yehudah alone.

[21]Rehab’am came to Yerushalaim and congregated Yehudah’s entire household and the clan of Binyamin, 180,000 picked men doing battle, to go to battle with the household of Yisra’el, to get the kingship back for Rehab’am son of Shelomoh. [22]But God’s word came to Shema’yah, the supernatural man: [23]‘Say to Rehab’am son of Shelomoh king of Yehudah, and to the entire household of Yehudah and Binyamin and the rest of the people: [24]“Yahweh has said this: ‘You will not go up, you will not go to battle with your Yisra’elite brothers. Go back each one to his house, because this thing has come about from me.”’ They listened to Yahweh’s word and turned back to go, in accordance with Yahweh’s word.

[25]Yarob’am built up Shekem in the highland of Ephrayim and lived there; then he went out from there and built up Penu’el. [26]Yarob’am said to himself, ‘The kingship will now go back to the household of David: [27]if this people go up to make sacrifices in Yahweh’s house in Yerushalaim, this people’s mind will turn back to their lord, to Rehab’am king of Yehudah. They’ll kill me and turn back to Rehab’am king of Yehudah.’

[28]So the king took counsel and made two gold bullocks. He said to them, ‘It’s too much for you to go up to Yerushalaim. Yisra’el, here are your gods who brought you up from the country of Misrayim.’ [29]He placed the one in Bet-el and the other he put in Dan, [30]and this thing became a wrongdoing; the people went before the one as far as Dan. [31]And he made the house at the shrines and made priests from the sections of the people who were not from the Levites.

1 Kings 12: The two nations – Ephrayim and Yehudah (Ephraim and Judah)

The destiny of Yarob'am's altar

[32]Yarob'am made a festival in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like the festival that was in Yehudah, and went up on to the altar. He acted in this way at Bet-el, sacrificing to the bullocks that he had made.

So he put in place at Bet El the priests of the shrines that he had made [33]and went up on the altar that he had made at Bet-el on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, which he devised out of his own mind, and made a festival for the Yisra'elites. He went up on to the altar to burn an offering,

and there, a supernatural man came from Yehudah by Yahweh's word to Bet-el, when Yarob'am was standing on the altar to burn an offering. [2]He called out against the altar by Yahweh's word: 'Altar, altar, Yahweh has said this: "Here, a son is going to be born to David's household (Yo'shiyyahu [Josiah] his name). He will sacrifice on you the priests of the shrines who burn offerings on you. People will burn human bones on you."' [3]He gave a sign that day: 'This is the sign that Yahweh has spoken: "There, the altar is going to split apart and the waste that's on it will pour out."'

[4]When the king heard the word of the supernatural man which he called out against the altar at Bet-el, Yarob'am put out his hand from above the altar, saying, 'Seize him!' But his hand which he put out against him dried up and he couldn't take it back to himself, [5]while the altar split apart and the waste from the altar poured out in accordance with the sign that the supernatural man had given by Yahweh's word. [6]The king avowed to the supernatural man, 'Please seek the goodwill of Yahweh your God and plead for me so that my hand comes back to me.' The supernatural man sought Yahweh's goodwill and the king's hand came back to him, and became as it was previously.

Another prophet in Bet-el

[7]The king spoke to the supernatural man: 'Do come with me to the house and have some sustenance, and I'll give you a gift.' [8]The supernatural man said to the king, 'If you give me half your household I won't come with you; I won't eat bread or drink water in this place, [9]because that's how he ordered me, by Yahweh's word: "You will not eat bread and you will not drink water, and you will not go back by the way that you went".' [10]So he went by another way and didn't go back by the way that he came to Bet-el.

[11]Now an old prophet was living in Bet-el. His son came and recounted to him everything that the supernatural man had done this day in Bet-el, the words that he had spoken to the king. They recounted them to their father [12]and their father spoke to them: 'Where exactly is the way he went?' His sons had seen the way that the supernatural man had gone, who had come from Yehudah. [13]He said to his sons, 'Saddle the donkey for me.' They saddled the donkey for him and he mounted it [14]and went after the supernatural man. He found him sitting under an oak. He said to him, 'Are you the supernatural man who came from Yehudah?' He said, 'I am.' [15]He said to him, 'Go with me to my house and eat some bread.' [16]He said, 'I can't go back with you or come with you. I won't eat bread and I won't drink water with you in this place, [17]because a thing came to me by Yahweh's word, "You will not eat bread and you will not drink water there; you will not go back by going the way that you went."'

Prophets, and when to ignore them

[18]He said to him, 'I am also a prophet, like you, and an envoy spoke to me by Yahweh's word: "Get him to go back with you to your house so he can eat bread and drink water."' He was lying to him. [19]But he went back with him and ate bread in his house and drank water.

[20]As they were sitting at the table, Yahweh's word came to the prophet who had got him to go back, [21]and he called out to the supernatural man who had come from Yehudah, 'Yahweh has said this: "Since you have rebelled against Yahweh's bidding and not kept the order that Yahweh your God gave you, [22]but have gone back and eaten bread and drunk water in the place of which he spoke to you, 'You're not to eat bread and you're not to drink water', your corpse will not come to your ancestors' grave."'

[23]After he had eaten bread and after he had drunk, he saddled for him the donkey belonging to the prophet whom he had got to go back, [24]and he went, but a lion met him on the way and put him to death. His corpse was thrown on the way. The donkey was standing beside it and the lion was standing beside the corpse, [25]and there, some men were passing and they saw the corpse thrown on the way with the lion standing beside the corpse. They came and spoke of it in the town where the old prophet was living. [26]The prophet who had got him to go back from the way heard and said, 'It's the supernatural man who rebelled against Yahweh's bidding. Yahweh has given him over to the lion and it's mauled him and put him to death in accordance with Yahweh's word, which he spoke to him.'

[27]He spoke to his sons: 'Saddle the donkey for me', and they saddled it. [28]He went and found his corpse thrown on the way, with the donkey and the lion standing beside the corpse. The lion had not eaten the corpse and it had not mauled the donkey.

[29]The prophet took up the supernatural man's corpse, laid it on the donkey and took it back. So it came to the old prophet's town for lamenting and burying it. [30]He laid his corpse in his own grave and they lamented over it, 'Oh, my brother!' [31]After burying him he said to his sons, 'When I die, bury me in the grave where the supernatural man is buried; lay my bones beside his bones, [32]because the word that he called out by Yahweh's word against the altar that's in Bet-el and against all the houses at the shrines that are in the towns of Shomron [Samaria] will definitely come about.'

[33]After this thing Yarob'am did not turn back from his bad ways but again made priests for the shrines from all sections of the people. Anyone who wanted commissioned himself and became priests of the shrines. [34]This thing was the wrongdoing of Yarob'am's household both to efface and to annihilate it from upon the face of the ground.

When the apostate king's son gets ill

14 At that time Abiyyah ben Yarob'am got ill. [2]Yarob'am said to his wife, 'Set off, please, make yourself look different so people won't know that you're Yarob'am's wife, and go to Shiloh. There, the prophet Ahiyyah is there. It was he who spoke of me that I would be king over this people. [3]Take ten loaves of bread in your hand, and some crackers and a jar of syrup, and come to him. It's he who will tell you what will happen to the boy.'

[4]Yarob'am's wife did so. She set off and went to Shiloh and came to the house of Ahiyyah. Ahiyyahu couldn't see, because his eyes had set, through his old age, [5]but Yahweh himself had said to Ahiyyahu, 'Here, Yarob'am's wife is coming to enquire for a word from you concerning her son, because he's ill. You're to speak such and such things to her. But when she comes she'll be acting like a stranger.'

Tough prophet, tough message

[6]So when Ahiyyahu heard the sound of her feet as she came through the entrance, he said 'Come in, wife of Yarob'am. Why is

it you're acting like a stranger?
I'm sent to you with something tough. [7]Go say to Yarob'am, "Yahweh the God of Yisra'el has said this: 'Since I raised you
from among the people and made you chief over my people Yisra'el [8]and tore the kingship from David's household and gave it to
you, but you have not been like my servant David who kept my orders and followed me with all his mind by doing only what was
upright in my eyes, [9]and you've dealt more badly in what you've done than all who were before you, and gone and made yourself
other gods and cast images, so as to provoke me, and me you've thrown behind your back, [10]therefore here I am bringing bad
fortune to Yarob'am's household. I shall cut off for Yarob'am the one who pisses against a wall (bound or freed) in Yisra'el. I
shall burn away after Yarob'am's household, as one burns away dung, until it's finished. [11]The person who belongs to Yarob'am
who dies in the town the dogs will eat; the person who dies in the open country the birds of the heavens will eat. Because Yahweh
has spoken.'"
[12]So you, set off, go to your house. When your foot comes to the town, the child will die. [13]All Yisra'el will lament for him and
bury him, because this person alone who belongs to Yarob'am will come into a grave since in him something good has been found
in relation to Yahweh the God of Yisra'el, in the household of Yarob'am. [14]But Yahweh will set up for himself a king over
Yisra'el who will cut off the household of Yarob'am. This is the day, and what even now? [15]Yahweh will strike Yisra'el down as
a reed sways in the water and he will uproot Yisra'el from upon this good ground that he gave to their ancestors, and scatter them
beyond the River, since they've made their totem poles that provoke Yahweh. [16]He will give Yisra'el over on account of
Yarob'am's wrongdoings that he committed and that he caused Yisra'el to commit.'
[17]Yarob'am's wife set off and went, and came to Tirtsah. She was coming through the threshold of the house as the boy died.
[18]They buried him, and all Yisra'el lamented for him in accordance with Yahweh's word which he had spoken by means of his
servant Ahiyyahu the prophet.
[19]The rest of the things about Yarob'am, how he did battle and how he reigned: there, they're written on the document about
things of the time regarding the kings of Yisra'el. [20]The time that Yarob'am reigned was twenty-two years; then he lay down with
his ancestors, and Nadab his son began to reign in place of him.

In Yehudah: Rehab'am

[21]Rehab'am son of Shelomoh reigned in Yehudah. Rehab'am was a man of forty-one years when he began to reign and he
reigned seventeen years in Yerushalaim, the town where Yahweh chose to put his name out of all the clans of Yisra'el. His
mother's name was Na'amah the Ammonite. [22]Yehudah did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes and aroused greater passion in him
than anything that their ancestors had done by the wrongdoings that they did. [23]They too built for themselves shrines, columns and
totem poles on every lofty hill and under every verdant tree. [24]There were also hierodules in the country. They acted in
accordance with all the offensive practices of the nations that Yahweh dispossessed before the Yisra'elites.
[25]In the fifth year of King Rehab'am, Shishaq king of Misrayim went up against Yerushalaim [26]and took the treasures of
Yahweh's house and the treasures of the king's house. He took everything. He took the gold shields that Shelomoh had made;
[27]King Rehab'am made copper shields in place of them and appointed them to the control of the officers in charge of the runners
who kept watch over the entrance to the king's house. [28]Whenever the king came to Yahweh's house the runners would carry
them, then take them back to the runners' chamber.
[29]The rest of the things about Rehab'am and all that he did are written on the document about things of the time regarding the
kings of Yehudah, aren't they. [30]There was battle between Rehab'am and Yarob'am all the time.

Abiyyam, Asa

[31]Rehab'am lay down with his ancestors and was buried with his ancestors in David's Town. His mother's name was Na'amah
the Ammonite. Abiyyam his son began to reign in place of him.
15 It was in the eighteenth year of King Yarob'am ben Nebat that Abiyyam began to reign over Yehudah. [2]He reigned three
years in Yerushalaim. His mother's name was Ma'akah bat Abishalom. [3]He walked in all the wrongdoings of his father,
which he did before him. His mind was not perfect with Yahweh his God like the mind of David his father. [4]Because it was for
David's sake that Yahweh his God gave him hegemony in Yerushalaim by setting up his son after him and by having Yerushalaim
stand, [5]because David did what was upright in Yahweh's eyes and did not turn aside from anything that he ordered him all the
days of his life, except in the thing about Uriyyah the Hittite. [6]There was battle between Rehab'am and Yarob'am all the days of
his life.
[7]The rest of the things about Abiyyam and all that he did are written on the document about things of the time regarding the
kings of Yehudah, aren't they. There was battle between Abiyyam and Yarob'am. [8]Abiyyam lay down with his ancestors and they
buried him in David's Town. Asa his son began to reign in place of him.
[9]It was in the twentieth year of Yarob'am king of Yisra'el that Asa began to reign as king of Yehudah. [10]He reigned forty-one
years in Yerushalaim. His mother's name was Ma'akah bat Abishalom. [11]Asa did what was upright in Yahweh's eyes, like David
his ancestor. [12]He put away the hierodules from the country and removed all the idols that his ancestors had made. [13]In addition,
Ma'akah his mother he removed from being queen mother, because she had made a monstrosity for Asherah. Asa cut down her
monstrosity and burned it in Wadi Qidron, [14]though the shrines did not disappear. Yet Asa's mind was perfect with Yahweh all
his days. [15]He brought into Yahweh's house the sacred things belonging to his father and his own sacred things, silver, gold and
articles.

Asa and Ben-hadad

[16]There was battle between Asa and Ba'sha king of Yisra'el all their days. [17]Ba'sha king of Yisra'el went up against Yehudah
and built up The Height, so as not to grant Asa king of Yehudah anyone going out or coming in. [18]Asa got all the silver and gold
that was left in the treasuries of Yahweh's house and the treasuries of the king's house and gave them into the hand of his
servants, and King Asa sent them to Ben-hadad ben-Tabrimmon son of Hezyon king of Aram, who lived in Dammeseq, saying
[19]'A pact between me and you, between my father and your father: here, I have sent you a bribe of silver and gold. Go contravene
your pact with Ba'sha king of Yisra'el so he may go up from me.'
[20]Ben-hadad listened to King Asa and sent the officers of the forces that he had against Yisra'el's towns. He struck down
Iyyon, Dan, Bet-ma'akah Meadow and all Kinnerot, on top of all the region of Naphtali. [21]When Ba'sha heard, he left off building
up The Height and stayed in Tirtsah, [22]while King Asa got all Yehudah to listen (there was no one free of obligation) and they
carried the stones from The Height and its timber with which Ba'sha had built, and with them King Asa built up Geba in
Binyamin and The Watchtower.
[23]The rest of all the things about Asa, all his strength, all that he did and the towns that he built up, are written on the document
about things of the time regarding the kings of Yehudah. Only, at the time when he was old he had an illness in his feet. [24]Asa lay
down with his ancestors and was buried with his ancestors in David his father's town. Yehoshaphat his son began to reign in place
of him.

In Ephrayim: Nadab, Ba'sha

[25]Now Nadab ben Yarob'am had become king over Yisra'el in the second year of Asa king of Yehudah. He reigned over
Yisra'el two years. [26]He did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes; he walked in the way of his father and in his wrongdoing, which he
caused Yisra'el to commit. [27]Ba'sha ben Ahiyyah, of the household of Yissakar, conspired against him. Ba'sha struck him down
at Gibbeton, which belonged to the Pelishtites, while Nadab and all Yisra'el were besieging Gibbeton.
[28]Ba'sha put him to death in the third year of Asa king of Yehudah and became king in place of him. [29]When he began to reign
he struck down Yarob'am's entire household and did not allow anyone breathing to remain to Yarob'am until he had annihilated
it, in accordance with Yahweh's word which he spoke by means of his servant Ahiyyah the Shilonite [30]because of the wrongs that
Yarob'am committed and that he caused Yisra'el to commit, with his provocation that he offered to Yahweh the God of Yisra'el.
[31]The rest of the things about Nadab and all that he did are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings
of Yisra'el, aren't they.
[32]There was battle between Asa and Ba'sha king of Yisra'el all their days. [33]It was in the third year of Asa king of Yehudah
that Ba'sha ben Ahiyyah began to reign over all Yisra'el in Tirtsah, for twenty-four years. [34]He did what was bad in Yahweh's
eyes. He walked in the way of Yarob'am and in his wrongdoing that he caused Yisra'el to commit.
16 Yahweh's word came to Yehu ben Hanani, against Ba'sha: [2]'Since I raised you from the ground and made you chief over my
people Yisra'el, but you have walked in the way of Yarob'am and caused my people Yisra'el to do wrong, so as to provoke
me with their wrongdoings, [3]here, I'm going to burn away after Ba'sha and after his household. I shall make your household like
the household of Yarob'am ben Nebat. [4]The person belonging to Ba'sha who dies in the town, the dogs will eat; and the person
belonging to him who dies in the open country, the birds of the heavens will eat.'

The devastating word

[5]The rest of the things about Ba'sha, what he did and his strength, are written on the document about things of the time
regarding the kings of Yisra'el, aren't they. [6]Ba'sha lay down with his ancestors and was buried in Tirtsah, and Elah his son began
to reign in place of him. [7]But by means of Yehu ben Hanani the prophet, Yahweh's word had come regarding Ba'sha and
regarding his household also, because of all that was bad that he did in Yahweh's eyes, so as to provoke him by the action of his
hands, in being like Yarob'am's household, and because he had struck it down.
[8]It was in the twenty-sixth year of Asa king of Yehudah that Elah ben Ba'sha began to reign over Yisra'el in Tirtsah, for two
years. [9]His servant Zimri, officer in charge of half the chariotry, conspired against him. When he was in Tirtsah getting drunk in
the house of Artsa who was in charge of the household at Tirtsah, [10]Zimri came in, struck him down and put him to death, in the
twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Yehudah. He began to reign in place of him, [11]and when he began to reign, as soon as he sat
on his throne, he struck down Ba'sha's entire household. He did not let anyone who pisses against a wall remain to him, either a
restorer of his or a friend of his.
[12]So Zimri annihilated Ba'sha's entire household, in accordance with Yahweh's word that he spoke regarding Ba'sha by means
of Yehu the prophet [13]and regarding all Ba'sha's wrongdoings and Elah his son's wrongdoings that they had committed and that
they had caused Yisra'el to commit, so as to provoke Yahweh the God of Yisra'el with their hollow things. [14]The rest of the
things about Elah and all that he did are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Yisra'el, aren't
they.

King for a week

[15]It was in the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Yehudah that Zimri reigned seven days in Tirtsah, when the company was
encamped at Gibbeton which belonged to the Pelishtites. [16]The company encamped heard, 'Zimri has conspired, and he has
actually struck down the king', and all Yisra'el made Omri the army officer king over Yisra'el that day in the camp. [17]Omri went
up, and all Yisra'el with him, from Gibbeton, and they besieged Tirtsah. [18]When Zimri saw that the town was taken, he came into
the citadel in the king's house and burned the king's house with fire over himself. So he died [19]because of his wrongdoings that he
committed by doing what was bad in Yahweh's eyes by walking in the way of Yarob'am, and through his wrongdoing that he

committed by causing Yisra'el to do wrong. [20]The rest of the things about Zimri and his conspiracy which he formed are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Yisra'el, aren't they.

[21]Then the people of Yisra'el split in half. Half the people followed Tibni ben Ginat to make him king, and half followed Omri. [22]The company that followed Omri was stronger than the company of those who followed Tibni ben Ginat, but Tibni died and Omri began to reign.

[23]It was in the thirty-first year of Asa king of Yehudah that Omri began to reign over Yisra'el, for twelve years. In Tirtsah he reigned six years, [24]then he acquired the Shomron Mountain from Shemer for two talents of silver, built up the mountain, and called the town he built by the name of Shemer, the lord of the Shomron Mountain.

[25]Omri did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes; he dealt badly more than all who were before him. [26]He walked in all the way of Yarob'am ben Nebat and in his wrongdoing that he caused Yisra'el to commit so as to provoke Yahweh the God of Yisra'el with their hollow things. [27]The rest of the things about Omri, what he did and his strength that he showed, are written on the document about things regarding the kings of Yisra'el, aren't they.

Ah'ab and Izebel (Jezebel)

[28]Omri lay down with his ancestors and was buried in Shomron, and Ah'ab his son began to reign in place of him.[29]Ah'ab ben Omri began to reign over Yisra'el in the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Yehudah. Ah'ab ben Omri reigned over Yisra'el in Shomron twenty-two years. [30]Ah'ab ben Omri did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes, more than all who were before him. [31]Was it a slight thing, his walking in the wrongdoings of Yarob'am ben Nebat, that he took as wife Izebel bat Etba'al, king of the Tsidonites, and went and served the Master? He bowed low to him [32]and set up an altar for the Master at the Master's house which he built in Shomron, [33]and Ah'ab made a totem pole. Ah'ab continued to act so as to provoke Yahweh the God of Yisra'el more than all the kings of Yisra'el who were before him.

[34]In his time Hi'el the Bet Elite built up Yeriho [Jericho]. With Abiram his firstborn he founded it and with Segub his youngest he put up its doors, in accordance with Yahweh's word which he spoke by means of Yehoshua ben Nun.

17 Eliyyahu [Elijah] the Tishbite from the inhabitants of Gil'ad said to Ah'ab, 'As Yahweh lives, the God of Yisra'el before whom I have stood, if during these years there will be dew or rain except at the bidding of my word . . .'

[2]Yahweh's word came to him: [3]'Go from here. Turn your face east and hide in Wadi Kerit, which faces the Yarden. [4]You will drink from the wadi and I have ordered the ravens to provide for you there.' [5]He went and acted in accordance with Yahweh's word. He went and stayed in Wadi Kerit, which faces the Yarden, [6]while the ravens were bringing him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the wadi.

The ravens and the widow

[7]After a time the wadi dried up because there was no rain in the country. [8]Yahweh's word came to him: [9]'Set off, go to Tsarephat which belongs to Tsidon and stay there. Here, I have ordered a woman there who is a widow to provide for you.'

[10]He set off and went to Tsarephat, and came to the entrance to the town. There, a woman who was a widow was gathering wood there. He called to her, 'Please get me a little water in a container so I can drink', [11]and she went to get it. He called to her, 'Please get me a bit of bread in your hand.' [12]She said, 'As Yahweh your God lives, if I have anything baked, only a fistful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug . . . So here I am, collecting a couple of pieces of wood and I shall come and make it for me and for my son, and we'll eat it and die.'

[13]Eliyyahu said to her, 'Don't be afraid. Come, act in accordance with your word, only make me a small loaf from there first and bring it out to me, and make one for you and for your son afterwards. [14]Because Yahweh the God of Yisra'el has said this: "The jar of flour will not be finished and the jug of oil will not lack until the day Yahweh gives rain on the face of the ground."' [15]She went and acted in accordance with Eliyyahu's word, and she ate, she and he and her household for some time. [16]The jar of flour was not finished and the jug of oil did not lack, in accordance with Yahweh's word which he spoke by means of Eliyyahu.

Back from the dead

[17]After these things, the son of the woman who was mistress of the household got ill. His illness grew very severe, until no breath remained in him. [18]She said to Eliyyahu, 'What is between you and me, supernatural man? You've come to me to bring my waywardness to mind and put my son to death.' [19]He said to her, 'Give me your son.' He took him out of her arms and brought him up to the upper floor where he was staying, laid him on his bed [20]and called to Yahweh: 'Yahweh my God, the woman with whom I am residing, are you really going to deal badly with her by putting her son to death?'

[21]He measured himself out over the child three times and called to Yahweh, 'Yahweh my God, please may this child's breath come back inside him!' [22]Yahweh listened to the voice of Eliyyahu. The child's breath came back inside him and he came alive. [23]Eliyyahu got the child and took him down from the upper floor into the house, and gave him to his mother. Eliyyahu said, 'Look, your son is alive.' [24]The woman said to Eliyyahu, 'Now I do acknowledge that you are a supernatural man and Yahweh's word in your mouth is truthful.'

18 After much time, Yahweh's word came to Eliyyahu, in the third year: 'Go appear to Ah'ab, and I will give rain on the face of the ground.' [2]So Eliyyahu went to appear to Ah'ab. Now the famine was severe in Shomron, [3]and Ah'ab had called for Obadyah, who was in charge of the household. Obadyah was someone who lived greatly in awe of Yahweh. [4]When Izebel cut off Yahweh's prophets, Obadyah had got a hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty individuals to a cave, and provided them with bread and water.

[5]Ah'ab said to Obadyah, 'Go through the country, to all the water springs and to all the wadis. Perhaps we'll find grass so we

can keep horse and mule alive so we don't cut off some of the animals.'

The man who served God and king

[6]They split the country for themselves so as to pass through it. While Ah'ab went one way alone and Obadyah went the other way alone, [7]and Obadyah was on the way, there, Eliyyahu met him. He recognized him and fell on his face, and said, 'Is this you, my lord Eliyyahu?' [8]He said to him, 'It's me. Go say to your lord, "There's Eliyyahu."'
[9]He said, 'What wrong have I done that you're giving your servant into the hand of Ah'ab, to put me to death? [10]As Yahweh your God lives, if there's a nation or kingdom to which my lord has not sent to seek you out . . . They say, "He's not here", and he makes the kingdom or the nation swear that it can't find you. [11]And now you're saying, "Go say to your lord, 'There's Eliyyahu'", [12]and I myself will go from being with you and Yahweh's spirit will carry you to where I don't know, and I'll come to tell Ah'ab and he won't find you and he'll kill me, when your servant has lived in awe of Yahweh from my youth. [13]It's been told my lord, hasn't it, what I did when Izebel killed Yahweh's prophets and I hid a hundred of Yahweh's prophets, fifty individuals to a cave, and fed them bread and water. [14]And now you're saying, "Go say to your lord, 'There's Eliyyahu'", and he'll kill me.'
[15]Eliyyahu said, 'As Yahweh of Armies lives, before whom I have stood, I will indeed appear to him today.' [16]So Obadyah went to meet Ah'ab and told him, and Ah'ab went to meet Eliyyahu. [17]When Ah'ab saw Eliyyahu, Ah'ab said to him, 'Is this you, troubler of Yisra'el?' [18]He said, 'I haven't troubled Yisra'el. Rather, you and your father's household have, by abandoning Yahweh's orders and following the Masters. [19]So now, send to gather all Yisra'el to me to Mount Carmel, with the 450 prophets of the Master and the 400 prophets of Asherah who eat at Izebel's table.'

There are times when you have to choose

[20]So Ah'ab sent among all the Yisra'elites and gathered the prophets to Mount Carmel. [21]Eliyyahu came up to the entire people and said, 'How long are you going to dither between two positions? If Yahweh is God, follow him. If it's the Master, follow him.' The people didn't answer him a word.
[22]Then Eliyyahu said to the people, 'I alone am left as a prophet of Yahweh. The Master's prophets are 450 individuals. [23]They're to give us two bulls, and they're to choose one bull for themselves, divide it up and put it on the wood, but not set fire. I shall prepare the other bull and put it on the wood, but not set fire. [24]You will call in your god's name; I'll call in Yahweh's name. The God who answers by fire – he is God.' The entire people answered, 'What you say is good.'
[25]So Eliyyahu said to the Master's prophets, 'Choose one bull for yourselves and prepare it first, because you're the majority. Call on your god's name but don't set fire.' [26]They took the bull that someone gave them, prepared it and called on the Master's name from morning until midday, saying 'Master, answer us', but there was no sound, no one answering. They jumped round the altar that people had made.
[27]At midday Eliyyahu played about with them: 'Call in a loud voice, because he's a god, but it's because he's talking or he's moving or he's on a journey. Perhaps he's asleep and he'll wake up.' [28]So they called in a loud voice and slashed themselves in accordance with their ruling with swords and with spears until blood flowed over them. [29]After midday passed they prophesied until the time for presenting the offering, but there was no sound, no one answering, no heeding.

Yahweh, he is God

[30]Then Eliyyahu said to the entire people, 'Come up to me.' The entire people came up to him and he mended Yahweh's altar that was torn down. [31]Eliyyahu got twelve stones, in accordance with the number of the twelve clans of the sons of Ya'aqob [Jacob] (to whom Yahweh's word had come, 'Yisra'el will be your name'). [32]He built the stones into an altar in Yahweh's name and made a trench, like a receptacle for a two-measure barrel of seed, round the altar. [33]He laid out the wood and divided the bull and put it on the wood.
[34]He said, 'Fill four jars with water and pour it over the burnt offering and over the wood.' He said, 'Do it a second time.' They did it a second time. He said, 'Do it a third time.' They did it a third time. [35]The water went round the altar and he also filled the trench with water.
[36]At the time for presenting the offering, Eliyyahu the prophet came up and said, 'Yahweh, God of Abraham, Yitshaq [Isaac] and Yisra'el, today may it be acknowledged that you are God in Yisra'el and that I am your servant, and that by your word I have done all these things. [37]Answer me, Yahweh, answer me, so that this people may acknowledge that you Yahweh are God and that you yourself have turned their mind round.'
[38]Yahweh's fire fell and consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones and the earth, and the water that was in the trench it licked up. [39]The entire people saw and fell on their faces and said, 'Yahweh, he is God; Yahweh, he is God.' [40]Eliyyahu said to them, 'Capture the Master's prophets. None of them must escape.' They captured them, and Eliyyahu took them down to Wadi Qishon and slaughtered them there.

The prophet takes flight

[41]Eliyyahu said to Ah'ab, 'Go up, eat and drink, because there's a rumbling sound of rain.' [42]Ah'ab went up to eat and to drink, while Eliyyahu went up to the top of Carmel, crouched to the ground and put his face between his knees. [43]He said to his boy, 'Please go up and look in the direction of the sea.' He went up and looked and said, 'There isn't anything.' He said 'Go back', seven times. [44]On the seventh he said, 'There, a small cloud, like a person's fist, going up from the west.' He said, 'Go up, say to

Ah'ab, "Hitch up, and get down, so that the rain won't hold you back."' [45]Right then, right then, when the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, there was a great downpour.

Ah'ab got into his chariot and went to Yizre'e'l. [46]Yahweh's hand came on Eliyyahu, he hitched things round his hips, and he ran before Ah'ab as far as when you come to Yizre'e'l.

19 Ah'ab told Izebel all that Eliyyahu had done and all about how he had killed all the prophets with the sword, [2]and Izebel sent an envoy to Eliyyahu saying, 'May the gods do like this and may they do more, because this very time tomorrow I shall make your life like the life of one of them.'

[3]He was afraid, and he set off and went for his life. He came to Be'er Sheba which belongs to Yehudah, left his boy behind there, [4]and he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came and sat under a broom bush and asked for his life, that he might die: 'It's too much. Take my life now, Yahweh, because I'm no better than my ancestors.'

The low murmuring sound

[5]He lay down and slept under a broom bush. And there, an envoy touching him. He said to him, 'Get up, eat.' [6]He looked, and there, by his head a loaf baked on coals and a jar of water. He ate and drank, and lay down again. [7]Yahweh's envoy came back a second time and touched him and said, 'Get up, eat, because the journey is too much for you.' [8]He got up and ate and drank, and went in the energy of that food for forty days and forty nights as far as God's mountain, Horeb.

[9]He came to a cave there and stayed the night there. And there, Yahweh's word came to him. He said to him, 'What is there for you here, Eliyyahu?' [10]He said, 'I've been very passionate for Yahweh, the God of Armies, because the Yisra'elites have abandoned your pact. Your altars they've torn down; your prophets they've killed with the sword. I alone am left, and they've been seeking my life, to take it.' [11]He said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain before Yahweh.' There was Yahweh passing, and a great, strong wind, splitting mountains and breaking up cliffs before Yahweh (Yahweh was not in the wind), after the wind an earthquake (Yahweh was not in the earthquake), [12]after the earthquake a fire (Yahweh was not in the fire) and after the fire a low murmuring sound.

[13]When Eliyyahu heard it, he wrapped his face in his coat, went out and stood at the cave's entrance. And there, a voice came to him and said, 'What is there for you here, Eliyyahu?' [14]He said, 'I've been very passionate for Yahweh, the God of Armies, because the Yisra'elites have abandoned your pact. Your altars they've torn down, your prophets they've killed with the sword. I alone am left, and they've been seeking my life, to take it.'

The chilling commission

[15]Yahweh said to him, 'Go, turn back on your way, to the Dammeseq wilderness. You're to come and anoint Haza'el as king over Aram. [16]And Yehu ben Nimshi you're to anoint as king over Yisra'el, and Elisha ben Shaphat, from Meholah Meadow, you're to anoint as prophet in place of you. [17]The person who escapes from Haza'el's sword, Yehu will put to death. The person who escapes from Yehu's sword, Elisha will put to death. [18]But I will leave in Yisra'el 7,000, all the knees that have not bent down to the Master and every mouth that has not kissed him.'

[19]So he went from there and found Elisha ben Shaphat. He was ploughing with twelve pairs in front of him; he was with the twelfth. Eliyyahu crossed over to him and threw his coat towards him. [20]He abandoned the cattle, ran after Eliyyahu and said, 'I shall kiss my father and my mother, please, and follow you.' He said to him, 'Go, turn back, because what have I done to you?' [21]He went back from following him, took a pair of cattle and sacrificed it. With the cattle's equipment he cooked them (the meat) and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set off and followed Eliyyahu, and ministered to him.

20 Now Ben-hadad king of Aram had collected his entire force, thirty-two kings with him, and horse and chariotry. He went up and besieged Shomron. He did battle against it [2]and sent envoys to the town to Ah'ab king of Yisra'el, [3]and said to him, 'Ben-hadad has said this: "Your silver and your gold are mine; your good wives and children are mine."' [4]The king of Yisra'el answered, 'In accordance with your word, my lord king, I and all that I have are yours.'

The point to say no

[5]The envoys went back and said, 'Ben-hadad has said this: "When I sent to you saying 'You're to give me your silver and your gold, your wives and your children': [6]rather at this very time tomorrow I shall send my servants to you and they will search your house and your servants' houses, and everything that's desirable in your eyes they will put into their own hand and take."'

[7]The king of Yisra'el called for all the country's elders and said, 'Please acknowledge and see how this man is seeking something bad, because he sent to me for my wives and for my children, for my silver and for my gold, and I didn't hold them back from him.' [8]All the elders and the entire people said to him, 'Don't listen. You will not agree.' [9]So he said to Ben-hadad's envoys, 'Say to my lord the king, "Everything about which you sent to your servant at first, I will do, but this thing I cannot do."' The envoys went and took back word. [10]Ben-hadad sent to him: 'May the gods do like this and may they do more if the earth of Shomron suffices for handfuls for the entire company that's behind me.' [11]The king of Yisra'el answered, 'Speak: "The one who buckles on should not take pride like the one who loosens."'

[12]When he heard this word (he was drinking, he and the kings, at Sukkot), he said to his servants, 'Get set', and they got set against the town. [13]But there, a prophet came up to Ah'ab king of Yisra'el and said, 'Yahweh has said this: "You've seen all of this big horde? Here, I'm giving it into your hand today, and you will acknowledge that I am Yahweh."' [14]Ah'ab said, 'Through whom?' He said, 'Yahweh has said this: "Through the provincial officials' boys".' He said, 'Who will hitch up for the battle?' He said, 'You.'

The boys lead the way to victory

[15]So he registered the provincial officers' boys (they were 232) and after them registered the entire company, all the Yisra'elites (7,000), [16]and they went out at midday. Ben-hadad was getting drunk at Sukkot, he and the thirty-two kings helping him. [17]The provincial officials' boys went out first. Ben-hadad sent, and they told him, 'Some men have gone out from Shomron.' [18]He said, 'If they've gone out for peace, capture them alive – and if they've gone out for battle, capture them alive.' [19]But these men went out from the town, the provincial officials' boys with the force that was behind them, [20]and they struck down each his man. So the Aramites fled, and the Yisra'elites pursued them. Ben-hadad king of Aram escaped on a horse, with cavalry.

[21]The king of Yisra'el went out and struck down the horse and the chariotry. He struck the Aramites down in a great rout. [22]But the prophet came up to the king of Yisra'el and said to him, 'Go, assert your strength, acknowledge and see what you're to do, because at the turn of the year the king of Aram is going to go up against you.'

[23]Now the king of Aram's servants said to him, 'Their God is a mountain God. That's why they were stronger than us. However, we should do battle with them in the flatland. If we will not be stronger than them . . .

[24]This is the thing you should do. Remove the kings, each from his place, and put governors in their places. [25]You should count for yourself a force like the force that fell away from being with you, horse for horse, chariot for chariot, so we can battle with them in the flatland, if we will not be stronger than them . . .'

He listened to their voice and did so.

Ben-hadad tries again

[26]At the turn of the year Ben-hadad registered the Aramites and went up to Apheq for battle with Yisra'el. [27]When the Yisra'elites had been registered and provided for, they went to meet them. The Yisra'elites camped opposite them like two bare flocks of goats, while the Aramites filled the region. [28]A supernatural man came up and said to the king of Yisra'el, 'Yahweh has said this: "Since the Aramites have said, 'Yahweh is a mountain God, he's not a vale God', I shall give all of this big horde into your hand, and you will acknowledge that I am Yahweh."'

[29]One side camped opposite the other side for seven days. On the seventh day the battle began, and the Yisra'elites struck down the Aramites, 100,000 men on foot on one day. [30]The ones who were left fled to Apheq, into the town, but the wall fell on the 27,000 men who were left.

Now Ben-hadad had fled and come into the town, to an inner room. [31]His servants said to him, 'Here, please, we've heard that the kings of the household of Yisra'el – that they are kings who show commitment. Please let's put sack on our hips and ropes on our head and go out to the king of Yisra'el. Perhaps he will let you live.'

[32]So they wrapped sack on their hips and ropes on their heads, came to the king of Yisra'el and said, 'Your servant Ben-hadad has said, "Please let me live."' He said, 'Is he still alive? He's my brother.' [33]Now the men could divine and they speedily caught it from him, and said, 'Ben-hadad is your brother.' He said, 'Go on, get him.'

A prophet puts on a disguise

Ben-hadad went out to him and he got him up into the chariot. [34]He said to him, 'The towns that my father got from your father, I'll give back, and you may put street markets for yourself in Dammeseq as my father put them in Shomron.'

[Ahab said,] 'And I myself in pact will send you off.' He solemnized a pact towards him and sent him off.

[35]Now a certain man from among the people who prophesied said to his neighbour, 'By Yahweh's word, please strike me down.' But the man refused to strike him down. [36]He said to him, 'Since you haven't listened to Yahweh's voice, there, you will be going from being with me and a lion will strike you down.' He went from beside him and a lion found him and struck him down.

[37]He found another man and said, 'Please strike me down', and the man struck him down and wounded him. [38]Then the prophet went and stood for the king by the road and disguised himself with a bandage over his eyes. [39]As the king was passing, he cried out to the king, 'Your servant went out in the middle of the battle and there, a man turned aside and brought a man to me and said, "Keep watch over this man! If he's actually counted missing, it will be your life in place of his life, or you'll weigh out a talent of silver." [40]But your servant was doing things here and there and he – he wasn't there.' The king of Yisra'el said to him, 'Thus you yourself have determined the decision about you.'

[41]He speedily removed the bandage from on his eyes and the king of Yisra'el recognized him, that he was one of the prophets. [42]He said to him, 'Yahweh has said this: "Since you sent off from your hand the man who was to be devoted to me, it will be your life in place of his life and your people in place of his people."' [43]The king of Yisra'el went to his house ill-disposed and vexed, and came to Shomron.

Nabot and the family land

21 After these things, as Nabot the Yizre'e'lite had a vineyard that was in Yizre'e'l beside the palace of Ah'ab king of Shomron, [2]Ah'ab spoke to Nabot: 'Give me your vineyard so it can be a vegetable garden for me, because it's right beside my house. In place of it I'll give you a better vineyard than it. If it's good in your eyes, I'll give you silver as the price for this one.' [3]But Nabot said to Ah'ab, 'Far be it from me by Yahweh that I give you my ancestors' domain.'

[4]Ah'ab came to his house ill-disposed and vexed because of the word that Nabot the Yizre'e'lite had spoken to him when he said 'I won't give you my ancestors' domain.' He lay on his bed and turned his face round, and didn't eat bread. [5]Izebel his wife came to him and spoke to him: 'Why is it that your spirit's ill-disposed and you're not eating bread?' [6]He spoke to her: 'I spoke to

Nabot the Yizre'e'lite and said to him, "Give me your vineyard for silver, or if you want I'll give you a vineyard in place of it", but he said, "I won't give you my vineyard."' [7]Izebel his wife said to him, 'You should now exercise kingship over Yisra'el. Get up, eat bread so you may be in good heart. I myself will give you the vineyard of Nabot the Yizre'e'lite.'

[8]She wrote documents in Ah'ab's name, sealed them with his seal, and sent the documents to the elders and to the important people who were living in the town with Nabot. [9]She wrote in the documents: 'Call a fast and sit Nabot at the head of the people, [10]and sit two scoundrels in front of him. They are to testify against him: "You have 'blessed' God and the king", and take him out and stone him so that he dies.'

The capital of corruption

[11]The men of the town, the elders and the important people who were living in his town, did as Izebel sent to them, as was written in the documents that she sent to them. [12]They called a fast and sat Nabot at the head of the people. [13]The two scoundrels came and sat in front of him. The two scoundrels testified against Nabot in front of the people, 'Nabot "blessed" God and the king', and they took him outside the town and pelted him with stones, and he died.

[14]They sent to Izebel: 'Nabot has been stoned. He has died.' [15]When Izebel heard that Nabot had been stoned and had died, Izebel said to Ah'ab, 'Set off, take possession of the vineyard of Nabot the Yizre'e'lite, which he refused to give you for silver, because Nabot is not alive. Rather he's dead.' [16]When Ah'ab heard that Nabot was dead, Ah'ab set off to go down to the vineyard of Nabot the Yizre'e'lite to take possession of it.

[17]But Yahweh's word came to Eliyyahu the Tishbite: [18]'Set off, go down to meet Ah'ab king of Yisra'el who is in Shomron: there, in Nabot's vineyard, where he's gone down to take possession of it. [19]You're to speak to him: "Yahweh has said this: 'Have you murdered and also taken possession?'" You're to speak to him: "Yahweh has said this: 'In the place where dogs lapped up Nabot's blood, dogs will lap up your blood, yours too.'"'

The dogs will eat Izebel

[20]Ah'ab said to Eliyyahu, 'Have you found me, my enemy?' He said, 'I've found you, since you sold yourself to do what is bad in Yahweh's eyes. [21]"Here am I: I'm going to deal badly with you. I'm going to burn away after you and cut off for Ah'ab the one who pisses against a wall (bound or freed) in Yisra'el. [22]I will make your household like the household of Yarob'am ben Nebat and like the household of Ba'sha ben Ahiyyah, for the provocation that you have offered, and you caused Yisra'el to do wrong."

[23]Yahweh has also spoken about Izebel: "The dogs will eat Izebel on the rampart of Yizre'e'l. [24]The person who belongs to Ah'ab who dies in the town the dogs will eat; the person who dies in the open country the birds of the heavens will eat."' ([25]Indeed there was no one like Ah'ab who sold himself to do what was bad in Yahweh's eyes, whom Izebel his wife incited. [26]He acted most offensively in following idols, in accordance with everything that the Amorites did, whom Yahweh dispossessed from before the Yisra'elites.)

[27]When Ah'ab heard these words, he tore his clothes and put sack on his body, and fasted. He lay down in sack and went about quietly. [28]And Yahweh's word came to Eliyyahu the Tishbite: [29]'Have you seen that Ah'ab has bowed down before me? Since he has bowed down before me, I will not bring the bad fortune in his days. In the days of his son I will bring the bad fortune on his household.'

The prophet with ten horns

22 They stayed three years while there was no battle between Aram and Yisra'el. [2]In the third year Yehoshaphat king of Yehudah went down to the king of Yisra'el. [3]The king of Yisra'el had said to his servants, 'Do you acknowledge that Heights-in-Gil'ad belongs to us but we are sitting still instead of taking it from the hand of the king of Aram?' [4]So he said to Yehoshaphat, 'Will you go with me for battle at Heights-in-Gil'ad?' Yehoshaphat said to the king of Yisra'el, 'I'll be the same as you, my company the same as your company, my horses the same as your horses.' [5]But Yehoshaphat said to the king of Yisra'el, 'Please enquire for Yahweh's word today.'

[6]So the king of Yisra'el collected the prophets, some 400 individuals, and said to them, 'Shall I go up against Heights-in-Gil'ad for the battle, or leave off?' They said, 'Go up, and the Lord will give it into the king's hand.' [7]But Yehoshaphat said, 'Is there no further prophet of Yahweh here, so we can enquire of him?' [8]The king of Yisra'el said to Yehoshaphat, 'There's one further individual to enquire of Yahweh from, but I myself dislike him because he doesn't prophesy good for me, but bad: Mikayehu ben Yimlah.' Yehoshaphat said, 'The king shouldn't say that.' [9]So the king of Yisra'el called to a courtier and said, 'Do hurry Mikayehu ben Imlah.'

[10]As the king of Yisra'el and Yehoshaphat king of Yehudah were sitting, each on his throne, dressed in robes, at the threshing floor at the entrance to the gateway at Shomron, and all the prophets were prophesying before them, [11]Tsidqiyyah ben Kena'anah had made himself iron horns, and he said, 'Yahweh has said this: "With these you will gore the Aramites until you have finished them off."' [12]All the prophets were prophesying in this way: 'Go up to Heights-in-Gil'ad and succeed. Yahweh will give it into the king's hand.'

[13]Now the envoy who went to call for Mikayehu spoke to him: 'Here, please, the prophets' words are good for the king as one bidding. Your word should please be like the word of one of them. You should speak of something good.' [14]Mikayehu said, 'As Yahweh lives, what Yahweh says to me – I will speak it.'

Who will entice Ah'ab?

[15]He came to the king and the king said to him, ‘Mikayehu, shall we go up to Heights-in-Gil’ad for battle, or shall we leave off?’ He said to him, ‘Go up and succeed. Yahweh will give it into the king’s hand.’ [16]The king said to him, ‘How many times am I going to get you to swear that you won’t speak to me anything but truth in Yahweh’s name?’

[17]So he said, ‘I saw all Yisra’el scattering towards the mountains like a flock that have no shepherd. Yahweh said, “These people have no lords. They should go back, each to his house, with things being well.”’ [18]The king of Yisra’el said to Yehoshaphat, ‘I said to you, “He won’t prophesy good fortune for me, but only bad”, didn’t I.’

[19]He said, ‘Therefore listen to Yahweh’s word. I saw Yahweh sitting on his throne, with the entire heavenly army standing by him on his right and on his left. [20]Yahweh said, “Who will entice Ah’ab so he’ll go up but fall at Heights-in-Gil’ad?” One said “In this way” and another said “In this way”. [21]Then a spirit went out and stood before Yahweh and said, “I’m the one who’ll entice him.” Yahweh said to him, “How?” [22]He said, “I’ll go out and become a false spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.” He said, “You’re to entice. Yes, you’ll be able to. Go out and do it.” [23]So now, there, Yahweh put a spirit of falsehood in the mouth of all these prophets, in that Yahweh has spoken of something bad for you.’

[24]Tsidqiyyahu ben Kena’anah went up and struck Mikayehu on the jaw, and said, ‘Which way did Yahweh’s spirit pass from being with me to speak with you?’ [25]Mikayehu said, ‘There, you’re going to see, on that day when you come to an innermost room to hide.’

You can disguise but you can’t hide

[26]The king of Yisra’el said, ‘Get Mikayehu and take him back to Amon the town official and to Yo’ash the king’s son, [27]and say “The king has said this: ‘Put this man in the cells and give him slave bread and slave water until I come with things being well.’”’ [28]Mikayehu said, ‘If you really do come back with things being well, Yahweh did not speak through me.’ (And he said, ‘Listen, you peoples, all of them.’)

[29]So the king of Yisra’el went up with Yehoshaphat king of Yehudah to Heights-in-Gil’ad. [30]The king of Yisra’el said to Yehoshaphat, ‘I’m putting on disguise and coming into battle, but you, dress in your robes.’ So the king of Yisra’el put on disguise and came into battle.

[31]Now the king of Aram had ordered the thirty-two chariot officers that he had, ‘You will not battle anyone small or great except the king of Yisra’el alone.’ [32]When the chariot officers saw Yehoshaphat and said, ‘Yes, he’s the king of Yisra’el’, they turned aside to him to do battle. But Yehoshaphat cried out, [33]and when the chariot officers saw that he was not the king of Yisra’el, they turned back from following him. [34]But a man drew his bow innocently, and struck the king of Yisra’el between the links and the armour. He said to his charioteer, ‘Turn your hand, get me out from the camp, because I’m wounded.’

[35]The battle mounted that day, while the king was kept standing in his chariot opposite the Aramites. But he died in the evening. The blood from the wound poured down into the base of the chariot. [36]A shout passed through the camp as the sun set: ‘Each man to his town, each man to his land.’

[37]So the king died and came to Shomron, and they buried the king in Shomron. [38]They washed off the chariot by the pool in Shomron, and the dogs licked up his blood as the prostitutes bathed, in accordance with the word of Yahweh that he had spoken.

The fleet that sank

[39]The rest of the things about Ah’ab, all that he did, the ivory house that he built and all the towns that he built up, are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Yisra’el, aren’t they. [40]Ah’ab lay down with his ancestors, and Ahazyahu, his son, began to reign in place of him.

[41]Yehoshaphat ben Asa had become king over Yehudah in the fourth year of Ah’ab king of Yisra’el. [42]Yehoshaphat was a man of thirty-five years when he began to reign and he reigned in Yerushalaim twenty-five years. His mother’s name was Azubah bat Shilhi. [43]He walked in all the way of Asa his father. He did not turn aside from it, in doing what was upright in Yahweh’s eyes. Yet the shrines did not disappear; the people were still sacrificing and burning incense at the shrines. [44]Yehoshaphat made peace with the king of Yisra’el. [45]The rest of the things about Yehoshaphat, and his strength with which he acted and with which he battled, are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Yehudah, aren’t they. [46]The rest of the hierodules who were left in the time of Asa his father he burned away from the country.

[47]There being no king in Edom, a prefect was king, [48]and Yehoshaphat made Tarshish ships to go to Ophir for gold, but he didn’t go because the ships broke up at Etsyon Geber. [49]It was then that Ahazyahu ben Ah’ab said to Yehoshaphat, ‘My servants should go on the ships with your servants’, but Yehoshaphat was not willing.

[50]Yehoshaphat lay down with his ancestors and was buried with his ancestors in David his ancestor’s town, and Yehoram his son began to reign in place of him.

[51]Now Ahazyahu ben Ah’ab had become king over Yisra’el in Shomron in the seventeenth year of Yehoshaphat king of Yehudah. He reigned over Yisra’el two years. [52]He did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes; he walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Yarob’am ben Nebat, who had caused Yisra’el to do wrong. [53]He served the Master and bowed low to him, and provoked Yahweh the God of Yisra’el in accordance with all that his father did.

2 Kings

The division of the books of Kings into two is arbitrary; the narrative continues seamlessly. The first two thirds of 2 Kings continue the interwoven account of Israel and Judah, with the involvement of prophets such as Elijah and Elisha. While the background of the book's opening chapters is tension between Israel (and Judah) and Syria (Aram), on the horizon is the bigger power of Assyria, the first great Middle Eastern empire to have an impact on Israel and Judah. The middle of the book relates how the Assyrians invade Israel and attempt to require them to function as Assyria's underlings, but Israel resists and in due course the Assyrians invade again, conquer the Israelite capital, Samaria, transport its people and replace them with people from other parts of their empire. Subsequently, the Assyrians did take action to enable these immigrants to know how they should properly worship Yahweh in this land of his, and in some respects they do, but many people continue to worship the gods they had followed in the countries they came from. The aftermath of this forced migration forms background to relations between Judah and Samaria about which we read in Ezra.

The second book of Kings pauses at this point to explain what has happened, not politically but religiously (see 2 Kings 17). The fall of Samaria happened because of its people's false worship of Yahweh and its worship of other deities, its resistance to its prophets, to its covenant and to the rules of that covenant, and its practices such as human sacrifice. The interwovenness of the political and the religious in the story supports the suggestion that one of the key themes in 2 Kings is the interwovennness of divine sovereignty and human sovereignty in politics. Sometimes human leaders do things they wish to do, and it can form part of positive things God wishes to achieve. Sometimes human leaders do things they want to do, and it can form part of negative things God wishes to do. Sometimes human leaders do things they want to do, and it works against God's purpose, and he then frustrates their aims.

The last part of 2 Kings tells more briefly the less complicated story of the last generations of Judah when it has become the rump embodiment of Israel. The story begins with the great King Hezekiah. He also experiences invasion by Assyria, but he is faithful to Yahweh and he has on his side the temple in Jerusalem and the promise to David, not to say the prophet Isaiah. The Assyrians wreak havoc in Judah but fail to take Jerusalem, which constitutes Yahweh's great act of deliverance.

Sadly, Hezekiah's son is the renegade Manasseh, who experiences more Assyrian pressure, adopts much of northern Israel's apostate ways, but reigns much longer than he therefore should. His grandson Josiah is both motivated and politically able to revert to Hezekiah's commitments. In the course of cleaning up the temple, his envoys discover a scroll of Moses' Torah there which causes panic when people read of the consequences that follow practices like the ones Manasseh sponsored. The discovery thereby encourages further reform. Overlaps with what Josiah does suggest that the Torah scroll may have been a version of what we call Deuteronomy.

Alas, it seems that the policies Manassah implemented are too deeply ingrained to be eliminated, and after Josiah's untimely death things revert to the way they were, which results in Jerusalem and Judah going through the same experience that northern Israel and Samaria had had. The account of the fall of Jerusalem and associated events has a pained atmosphere that conveys something of the grief of the people who went through the experience.

The book of 2 Kings comprises the last part the gargantuan work that began in Genesis and it takes the story down to the time of the people who will have heard the story read when it was first compiled. It thus helps them understand who they are and how they need to look at themselves. As is often the case with stories or histories, reading it from the end is illuminating.

One of the factors that has influenced God in keeping the state of Judah in being is the promise he had made that he would never let David's line of kings disappear, and the last event related by 2 Kings is the release of a deposed and exiled king of Judah. It is a hint that God has indeed not abandoned his promises.

The lord of the flies

1 Mo'ab rebelled against Yisra'el [Israel] after Ah'ab's death.
[2]Ahazyah fell through the lattice in his upper quarters, which were in Shomron [Samaria], and he was ill. He sent envoys and said to them, 'Go enquire of the Fly Master, the god of Eqron, whether I will live on after this illness.' [3]But Yahweh's envoy – he spoke to Eliyyahu [Elijah] the Tishbite: 'Set off, go up to meet the king of Shomron's envoys and speak to them: "Is it for lack of a God in Yisra'el that you're going to enquire of the Fly Master, the god of Eqron? [4]So, therefore, Yahweh has said this: 'The bed that you have climbed into, you won't get down from, because you will actually die.'"' And Eliyyahu went.
[5]The envoys went back to him, and he said to them, 'Why is it that you've come back?' [6]They said to him, 'There was a man came up to meet us and he said to us, "Go, turn back to the king who sent you, and speak to him: 'Yahweh has said this: "Is it for lack of a God in Yisra'el that you are sending to enquire of the Fly Master, the god of Eqron? Therefore the bed that you have climbed into, you won't get down from, because you will actually die."'"' [7]He spoke to them, 'What was the manner of the man who came up to meet you and spoke these words to you?' [8]They said to him, 'A man with lots of hair and a leather wrap belted round his hips.' He said, 'It was Eliyyahu the Tishbite.'
[9]He sent to him an officer over fifty and his fifty men, and he went up to him. There, he was sitting on the top of a mountain. He spoke to him: 'Supernatural man, the king himself has spoken: come down.' [10]Eliyyahu answered the officer over fifty, 'If I'm a supernatural man, may fire come down from the heavens and consume you and your fifty men!' And fire came down from the heavens and consumed him and his fifty men.

Fire from the heavens again

[11]He again sent to him another officer over 50 and his 50 men. He went up and spoke to him, 'Supernatural man, the king himself has said this: "Come down speedily!"' [12]Eliyyahu answered them, 'If I'm a supernatural man, may fire come down from

the heavens and consume you and your 50 men!' And supernatural fire came down from the heavens and consumed him and his 50 men.

[13]He again sent a third officer over 50 and his 50 men. The third officer over 50 went up, and came and bent down on his knees in front of Eliyyahu and asked him for grace. He spoke to him: 'Supernatural man, please may my life and the life of these 50 servants of yours be valuable in your eyes! [14]Here, fire fell from the heavens and consumed the previous two officers over 50 and their 50 men. But now, may my life be valuable in your eyes.'

[15]Yahweh's envoy spoke to Eliyyahu: 'Go down with him. Don't be afraid of him.' So he set off and went down with him to the king, [16]and spoke to him: 'Yahweh has said this: "Since you sent envoys to enquire of the Fly Master, the god of Eqron: is it for lack of a God in Yisra'el to enquire of his word? Therefore the bed that you have climbed into, you will not get down from, because you will actually die."'

[17]He died in accordance with Yahweh's word which Eliyyahu spoke. Yehoram began to reign in place of him, in the second year of Yehoram ben Yehoshaphat king of Yehudah [Judah], because he had no son. [18]The rest of the things about Ahazyahu, what he did, are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Yisra'el, aren't they.

Eliyyahu's cloak

2 When Yahweh took Eliyyahu up to the heavens in a hurricane, Eliyyahu had gone with Elisha from Gilgal. [2]Eliyyahu said to Elisha, 'Stay here, please, because Yahweh has sent me as far as Bet-el.' Elisha said, 'As Yahweh lives and as you yourself live, if I abandon you . . .' So they went down to Bet-el. [3]The people who prophesied who were at Bet-el went out to Elisha and said to him, 'Do you know that today Yahweh is going to take your lord from being your head?' He said, 'Yes, I myself know. Be quiet.'

[4]Eliyyahu said to him, 'Elisha, stay here, please, because Yahweh has sent me to Yeriho [Jericho].' He said, 'As Yahweh lives and as you yourself live, if I abandon you . . .' So they came to Yeriho. [5]The people who prophesied who were at Yeriho went up to Elisha and said to him, 'Do you know that today Yahweh is going to take your lord from being your head?' He said, 'Yes, I myself know. Be quiet.'

[6]Eliyyahu said to him, 'Stay here, please, because Yahweh has sent me to the Yarden [Jordan].' He said, 'As Yahweh lives and as you yourself live, if I abandon you . . .' So the two of them went, [7]while fifty men from among the people who prophesied went and stood at a distance, far off, and the two of them stood at the Yarden.

[8]Eliyyahu got his cape, rolled it up and struck the water. It divided in both directions and the two of them crossed on dry ground. [9]As they crossed, Eliyyahu said to Elisha, 'Ask what I should do for you before I'm taken from being with you.' Elisha said, 'A double share in your spirit should please come to me.' [10]He said, 'You've been tough in asking. If you see me taken from being with you, so it will happen for you. If not, it won't happen.'

[11]As they were continuing to walk and speak, there – fiery chariotry and fiery horses. They separated the two of them and Eliyyahu went up in a hurricane to the heavens, [12]while Elisha was looking and crying out, 'Father, father, Yisra'el's chariotry and cavalry!' Then he could no longer see.

2 Kings 2: Eliyyahu (Elijah) and Elisha

No more miscarriage

He took strong hold of his clothes and tore them into two pieces, [13]and lifted up Eliyyahu's cape which had fallen from upon him. He went back and stood at the Yarden bank. [14]He got Eliyyahu's cape which had fallen from upon him, struck the water and said, 'Where is Yahweh, the God of Eliyyahu? Yes, him?' He struck the water, it divided in both directions and Elisha crossed. [15]The people who prophesied who were at Yeriho, at a distance, saw him and said, 'Eliyyahu's spirit has alighted on Elisha!' They came to meet him and bowed low to the ground before him.

[16]They said to him, 'Here, please, with your servants there are fifty men, forceful people. They should please go and look for

your lord in case Yahweh's spirit has taken him up and thrown him down on one of the mountains or in one of the ravines.' He said to them, 'You will not send.' [17]But they pressed him until he was shamed, and he said, 'Send.' They sent fifty men and they looked for three days but didn't find him. [18]They came back to him while he was staying in Yeriho, and he said to them, 'I said to you, "Don't go", didn't I.'

[19]The town's people said to Elisha, 'Here, please, the settlement in the town is good, as my lord sees, but the water is bad and the region causes miscarriage.' [20]He said, 'Get me a new bowl and put salt in it.' They got it for him [21]and he went out to the water outlet and threw the salt there. He said, 'Yahweh has said this: "I am healing this water. No more will death and miscarriage come from there."' [22]The water became healthy, until this day, in accordance with the word of Elisha which he spoke.

[23]He went up from there to Bet-el. He was going up the road and small boys came out of the town and mocked him: 'Go up, baldy, go up, baldy!' [24]He turned his face behind him and saw them and slighted them in Yahweh's name, and two bears came out of the forest. Of them they mauled forty-two boys. [25]He went from there to Mount Carmel and from there went back to Shomron.

Isn't there a prophet we can ask?

3 Yehoram ben Ah'ab began to reign over Yisra'el in Shomron in the eighteenth year of Yehoshaphat king of Yehudah and reigned twelve years. [2]He did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes, only not like his father or like his mother, and he removed the Master's column which his father had made. [3]Only, the wrongdoings of Yarob'am [Jeroboam] ben Nebat that he caused Yisra'el to commit – he was attached to them and didn't depart from them.

[4]Now Mesha king of Mo'ab was a sheep breeder. He used to give back to the king of Yisra'el 100,000 lambs and 100,000 rams' wool. [5]When Ah'ab died, the king of Mo'ab rebelled against the king of Yisra'el. [6]That day King Yehoram left Shomron and registered all Yisra'el. [7]He went on to send to Yehoshaphat king of Yehudah to say, 'Given that the king of Mo'ab has rebelled against me, will you go with me to Mo'ab for battle?' He said, 'I will go up; I'm the same as you, my company is the same as your company, my horse is the same as your horse.' [8]He said, 'By which road shall we go up?' He said, 'The road through the Edom Wilderness.'

[9]So the king of Yisra'el went, with the king of Yehudah and the king of Edom, and they went round on the road for seven days. Then there was no water for the camp or for the animals that were behind them. [10]The king of Yisra'el said, 'Oh no! Yahweh has called for these three kings to give them into the hand of Mo'ab!' [11]But Yehoshaphat said, 'Isn't there a prophet of Yahweh here so we can enquire of Yahweh from him?' One of the king of Yisra'el's servants answered, 'Elisha ben Shaphat, who poured water on Eliyyahu's hands, is here.' [12]Yehoshaphat said, 'Yahweh's word is with him.' So the king of Yisra'el and Yehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him.

The water that looked like blood

[13]Elisha said to the king of Yisra'el, 'What do you and I have in common? Go to your father's prophets and to your mother's prophets.' The king of Yisra'el said to him, 'No, because Yahweh has called for these three kings to give them into the hand of Mo'ab.' [14]Elisha said, 'As Yahweh of Armies lives, before whom I stand, if I did not have regard for Yehoshaphat king of Yehudah, I would not look to you or see you. [15]But now, get me a musician' (when the musician played, Yahweh's hand would come on him).

[16]Then he said, 'Yahweh has said this: "This wadi is going to make pools, pools." [17]Because Yahweh has said this: "You will not see wind, you will not see rain, but that wadi – it will fill with water. Both you and your cattle and your livestock will drink." [18]This is a slight thing in Yahweh's eyes: and he will give the Mo'abites into your hand. [19]You will strike down every fortified town and every choice town. Every good tree you will fell, all springs of water you will stop up and every good plot you will make suffer with stones.' [20]And in the morning at the time for making the offering – there, water was coming from the direction of Edom. The region filled with water.

[21]Now all the Mo'abites had heard that the kings had gone up to battle against them. They had themselves called out, from everyone who could fasten a belt and upwards, and they stood at the border. [22]In the morning they started early, and when the sun rose over the water, from a distance the Mo'abites saw the water red like blood. [23]They said, 'This is blood! The kings have actually been put to the sword. Each man has struck down his neighbour. Now, to the plunder, Mo'abites!' [24]They came to the Yisra'elite camp, but the Yisra'elites set to and struck down the Mo'abites, and they fled from before them.

An ultimate sacrifice

So they came into it and struck down Mo'ab. [25]The towns they tore down, on every good plot they threw each man his stone and covered it, every water spring they stopped up and every good tree they would fell, until what was left remaining in Qir Hareset was its stones. The slingers surrounded it and struck it down.

[26]The king of Mo'ab saw that the battle was too hard for him and he got with him 700 men drawing a sword to break through to the king of Edom, but they couldn't. [27]So he got his eldest son who was to reign in place of him, and offered him up as a burnt offering on the wall. A great fury came on Yisra'el, and they moved on from there and went back to the land.

4 Now a woman, one of the wives of the people who prophesied, cried out to Elisha, 'Your servant, my husband, is dead, and you yourself acknowledge that your servant was someone who has lived in awe of Yahweh, and a creditor is coming to take my two children for himself as servants.' [2]Elisha said to her, 'What am I to do for you? Tell me what you have in the house.' She said, 'Your maidservant has nothing at all in the house except a jug of oil.' [3]He said, 'Go and ask for containers for yourself from outside, from all the people who live near you, empty containers. Don't make it a few. [4]Come in, shut the door behind you and behind your sons, and pour into all these containers. The full one, remove.'

[5]She went from being with him and shut the door behind her and behind her sons. People were bringing them up to her and she was pouring. [6]When the containers were full, she said to her son, ‘Bring up another container to me’, but he said to her, ‘There isn’t another container’; and the oil halted. [7]She came and told the supernatural man. He said, ‘Go sell the oil and make good your debt, and you and your children can live on what’s left.’

The woman who had almost everything

[8]One day Elisha passed through to Shunem. A big woman was there and she took strong hold of him so he would eat bread. Whenever he passed through, he would turn aside there to eat bread. [9]She said to her husband, ‘Here, please, I know that it’s a sacred supernatural man who passes by us regularly. [10]Please let’s make a little upstairs room with a wall and put a bed for him there and a table and a chair and a lamp. When he comes to us he can turn aside there.’

[11]One day he came there and turned aside to the upstairs room and lay down there, [12]and said to Gehazi, his boy, ‘Call this Shunammite woman.’ He called her and she stood before him. [13]He said to him, ‘Please say to her, “Here, you’ve acted towards us with all this concern. What is there to do for you? Is there something to speak to the king for you, or to the army officer?”’ She said, ‘I’m living among my own people.’ [14]He said, ‘So what is there to do for her?’ Gehazi said, ‘Well, she doesn’t have a son, and her husband is old.’ [15]He said, ‘Call her.’ He called her and she stood in the entrance. [16]He said, ‘At this season, at [nature’s] reviving time, you’re going to embrace a son.’ She said, ‘Don’t, my lord, supernatural man, don’t lie to your maidservant.’ [17]But the woman got pregnant and gave birth to a son at this season at reviving time, as Elisha spoke to her.

[18]The child grew up, but one day he went out to his father, to the reapers, [19]and he said to his father, ‘My head, my head!’ He said to a boy, ‘Carry him to his mother.’ [20]He carried him and brought him to his mother, and he sat on her knees until noon, and died. [21]She took him up, laid him down on the supernatural man’s bed, closed up behind him and went out.

Did I ask for a son?

[22]She called her husband and said, ‘Please send me one of the boys and one of the she-donkeys so I can run to the supernatural man, and come back.’ [23]He said, ‘Why are you going to him today? It’s not new month or sabbath.’ She said, ‘Things will be well.’ [24]She saddled the donkey and said to her boy, ‘Drive, go, don’t hold back from riding unless I say it to you.’

[25]So she went, and came to the supernatural man at Mount Carmel. When the supernatural man saw her from a distance, he said to Gehazi his boy, ‘There’s that Shunammite woman. [26]Now please run to meet her and say to her, “Are things well with you? Are things well with your husband? Are things well with the child?”’ She said, ‘Things are well.’ [27]She came to the supernatural man at the mountain and took strong hold of his feet. Gehazi came up to push her away, but the supernatural man said, ‘Let go of her, because her entire being is bitter to her, whereas Yahweh has hidden it from me and not told me.’

[28]She said, ‘Did I ask for a son from my lord? I said, “Don’t deceive me”, didn’t I.’ [29]He said to Gehazi, ‘Wrap things round your hips, take my staff in your hand and go. When you meet someone, you will not bless him, and when someone blesses you, you will not answer him. Place my staff on the boy’s face.’ [30]But the boy’s mother said, ‘As Yahweh lives and as you yourself live, if I abandon you . . .’

So he set off and followed her. [31]Now Gehazi passed on before them and placed the staff on the boy’s face. But there was no sound and no heeding. He went back to meet him and told him, ‘The boy has not woken up.’ [32]Elisha came to the house and there – the boy was dead, laid on his bed. [33]He came in and shut the door behind the two of them and pleaded with Yahweh.

Death and life

[34]He climbed up and lay on the child, put his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, his palms on his palms, and crouched over him. And the child’s flesh warmed up. [35]He went back and went into the house here and there, then climbed up and crouched over him, and the boy sneezed seven times. Then the boy opened his eyes. [36]He called Gehazi and said, ‘Call this Shunammite woman.’ He called her and she came to him. He said, ‘Take up your son.’ [37]She came, and fell at his feet and bowed low to the earth, and took up her son and went out.

[38]When Elisha went back to Gilgal and there was a famine in the region, and the people who prophesied were sitting before him, he said to his boy, ‘Put the big pot on and cook stew for the people who prophesy.’ [39]One went out into the wild to gather herbs, found a vine of the wild and gathered gourds of the wild from it, enough to fill his garment. He came and sliced them into the pot of stew, because they didn’t know them. [40]They poured it out for the people to eat, but as they ate some of the stew and they cried out, they said, ‘There’s death in the pot, supernatural man.’ They couldn’t eat it. [41]He said, ‘So get some flour’, and he threw it into the pot and said, ‘Pour it out for the company so that they eat.’ And there was nothing bad in the pot.

[42]Now a man came from Ba’al Shalishah and brought the supernatural man some first-products bread, twenty barley loaves and some plantation growth on the stalk. He said, ‘Give it to the company so they can eat.’ [43]His minister said, ‘How can I put this before a hundred individuals?’ He said, ‘Give it to the company so they can eat. Because Yahweh has said this: “Eat and have some left.”’ [44]So he put it before them, they ate and they had some left, in accordance with Yahweh’s word.

The little girl who knows

5 Now Na’aman, army officer of the king of Aram, was a big man before his lord, and held in high regard, because through him Yahweh had given deliverance to Aram. Now the man was a forceful strong man, with scaliness. [2]The Aramites had gone out as raiding gangs and had taken captive a little girl from the country of Yisra’el. She was before Na’aman’s wife [3]and she

said to her mistress, ‘If only my lord were before the prophet who’s in Shomron. Then he would restore him from his scaliness.’
[4]He came and told his lord, ‘The girl who’s from the country of Yisra’el has spoken such and such’, [5]and the king of Aram said,
‘Come on, go, I’ll send a document to the king of Yisra’el.’ So he went, took in his hand ten talents of silver, 6,000 gold pieces
and ten changes of clothes, [6]and brought the document to the king of Yisra’el, saying: ‘Now, when this document comes to you:
here, I’ve sent Na’aman my servant to you so you may restore him from his scaliness.’
[7]When the king of Yisra’el read the document, he tore his clothes and said, ‘Am I God, to put to death and make alive, that this
man is sending to me to restore someone from his scaliness? Rather, please acknowledge for sure and see, that he is seeking a
confrontation with me.’
[8]When Elisha the supernatural man heard that the king of Yisra’el had torn his clothes, he sent to the king: ‘Why have you torn
your clothes? He should please come to me, so he may acknowledge that there is a prophet in Yisra’el.’
[9]Na’aman came with his horses and with his chariotry and halted at the entrance of Elisha’s house. [10]Elisha sent an envoy to
him to say, ‘Go and wash seven times in the Yarden so your flesh may come back for you, and be pure.’

A skin disorder removed

[11]Na’aman was furious and went. He said, ‘Here, I said to myself, “He’ll definitely come out and stand and call in the name of
Yahweh his God and wave his hand at the place and restore the scaliness. [12]Amanah and Pharpar, the rivers in Dammeseq
[Damascus], are better than all the water in Yisra’el, aren’t they. I could wash in them and be pure, couldn’t I.’ So he turned his
face and went in wrath. [13]But his servants came up and spoke to him: ‘Father, had the prophet spoken to you of a big thing,
wouldn’t you do it? How much more when he said to you, “Wash, and be pure”?’
[14]So he went down and dipped in the Yarden seven times in accordance with the word of the supernatural man, and his flesh
came back like a little boy’s. He was pure. [15]He went back to the supernatural man, he and all his camp, and came and stood
before him, and said, ‘Here, please, I acknowledge that there is no God in all the earth except in Yisra’el. So now please take a
blessing from your servant.’ [16]He said, ‘As Yahweh lives, before whom I stand, if I take anything . . .’
He pressed him to take it, but he refused. [17]Na’aman said, ‘Then please may there not be given to your servant a mule pair’s
load of earth, because your servant will no longer make a burnt offering or a sacrifice to any other god but Yahweh. [18]With regard
to this thing, may Yahweh pardon your servant: when my lord comes into Rimmon’s house to bow down there and he leans on my
hand and I bow down there in Rimmon’s house – when I bow down in Rimmon’s house, may Yahweh pardon your servant in this
thing.’ [19]He said to him, ‘Go, and things will be well.’
He went a distance in the region from him, [20]and Gehazi, Elisha the supernatural man’s boy, said, ‘Here, my lord has held back
Na’aman this Aramite from taking from his hand what he brought. As Yahweh lives, I shall run after him and take something
from him.’

A skin disorder imposed

[21]So Gehazi pursued after Na’aman. Na’aman saw him running after him, fell from his chariot to meet him and said, ‘Are
things well?’ [22]He said, ‘Things are well. My lord has sent me to say, “Here, just now two boys have come to me from the
highland of Ephrayim, from among the people who prophesy. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of clothes.”’
[23]Na’aman said, ‘Resolve to take two talents!’ He pressed him, and tied up two talents of silver in two bags and two changes of
clothes and gave them to two of his boys. They carried them before him. [24]He came to the acropolis, took them from their hand,
deposited them in the house and sent the men off.
So they went, [25]while he came and stood with his lord. Elisha said to him, ‘Where have you come from, Gehazi?’ He said,
‘Your servant hasn’t gone here or there.’ [26]He said to him, ‘My mind didn’t go along as the man turned from his chariot to meet
you? Is it time to take silver or to take clothes or olive trees or vineyards or sheep or cattle or servants or maidservants?
[27]Na’aman’s scaliness will attach itself to you and to your offspring permanently.’ He went out from before him, made scaly like
snow.
6 The people who prophesied said to Elisha, ‘Here, please, the place where we’re living before you is too confined for us.
[2]Please let’s go as far as the Yarden and get a beam each from there and make ourselves a place there to live in.’ He said,
‘Go.’ [3]One said, ‘Please resolve to go with your servants.’ He said, ‘I’ll go.’ [4]He went with them and they came to the Yarden.
They cut down trees, [5]but one was felling a beam and the iron fell into the water. He cried out, ‘Oh, my lord, and it was
borrowed!’ [6]The supernatural man said, ‘Where did it fall?’ He let him see the place, and he cut down a stick and threw it there,
and it made the iron float. [7]He said, ‘Take it up for yourself’, and he put out his hand and got it.

Horses and chariots of fire round Elisha

[8]Now the king of Aram was battling against Yisra’el, and he took counsel with his servants, saying, ‘My camp will be at such
and such a place’, [9]but the supernatural man sent to the king of Yisra’el saying, ‘Keep watch not to pass by this place, because the
Aramites are going down there.’ [10]So the king of Yisra’el sent to the place that the supernatural man had said to him and warned
him, and kept watch there more than once or twice.
[11]The mind of the king of Aram was agitated about this thing. He called his servants and said to them, ‘Won’t you tell me who
of us is on the king of Yisra’el’s side?’ [12]One of his servants said, ‘No, my lord king, rather it’s Elisha, the prophet who’s in
Yisra’el, who tells the king of Yisra’el the things that you speak in your bedroom.’ [13]He said, ‘Go and see where he is so I can
send and get him.’
It was told him, ‘There, in Dotan’, [14]and he sent horses and chariotry there, with a substantial force. They came by night and

encircled the town. [15]The supernatural man's minister started early and got up and went out, and there, a force was surrounding the town, with horses and chariotry. His boy said to him, 'Oh no, my lord, what shall we do?' [16]He said, 'Don't be afraid, because there are more with us than with them.' [17]Elisha pleaded, 'Yahweh, please open his eyes so he sees.' Yahweh opened the boy's eyes and he saw: there, the highland was full of fiery horses and chariotry surrounding Elisha.

The depths to which people can be driven

[18]They came down against him, and Elisha pleaded with Yahweh, 'Please strike down this nation with dazzling.' He struck them down with dazzling in accordance with Elisha's word. [19]Elisha said to them, 'This isn't the way, and this isn't the town. Follow me and I'll enable you to go to the man that you're looking for', and he enabled them to go to Shomron.

[20]When they came to Shomron, Elisha said, 'Yahweh, open these people's eyes so they can see.' Yahweh opened their eyes and they saw: there, they were inside Shomron. [21]The king of Yisra'el said to Elisha, on seeing them, 'Shall I strike them down, strike them down, father?' [22]He said, 'You will not strike them down. Do you strike down people whom you took captive with your sword and with your bow? Put bread and water before them so they can eat and drink, and go to their lords.' [23]He made a great banquet for them, and they ate and drank. Then he sent them off and they went to their lords, and the Aramite raiding gangs no longer came into Yisra'el.

[24]Subsequently, Ben-hadad king of Aram collected his entire camp and went up and besieged Shomron, [25]and there was a big famine in Shomron. There, they were besieging it until a donkey's head was eighty silver pieces and a quarter of a litre of pigeon dung was five silver pieces. [26]The king of Yisra'el was passing by on the wall when a woman cried out to him: 'Deliver me, my lord king!' [27]He said, 'Don't. Yahweh must deliver you. From where am I to deliver you – from the threshing floor or from the winepress?' [28]But the king said to her, 'What's the matter?' She said, 'This woman said to me, "Give up your son and we'll eat him today, and we'll eat my son tomorrow", [29]and we cooked my son and ate him. The next day I said to her, "Give up your son and we'll eat him", but she hid her son.'

The men who gave up

[30]When the king heard the woman's words, he tore his clothes, and as he passed by on the wall, the people saw: there, sack on his flesh, inside. [31]He said, 'May God do this to me and may he do more if the head of Elisha ben Shaphat stays on him today.'

[32]While Elisha was sitting in his house and the elders were sitting with him, he sent a man from before him. Before the envoy came to him, he himself said to the elders, 'Do you see that this murderous man has sent to remove my head? See, when the envoy comes, shut the door and press him against the door. The sound of his lord's feet will be behind him, won't it.'

[33]While he was still speaking with them, there, the envoy was coming down to him. He said, 'Here, this is the bad fate coming from Yahweh. How can I wait for Yahweh any more?'

7 Elisha said, 'Listen to Yahweh's word. Yahweh has said this: "This very time tomorrow: a measure of fine flour will be for a sheqel, two measures of barley for a sheqel, at the gateway of Shomron."' [2]The adjutant on whose hand the king leaned answered the supernatural man, 'There, were Yahweh making apertures in the heavens, would this thing happen?' He said, 'There, you're going to see it with your eyes, but you won't eat of it.'

[3]Now there were four men with scaliness at the entrance to the gateway. They said, one to his neighbour, 'Why are we sitting here until we die? [4]If we say, "Let's go into the town", there's famine in the town and we'll die there, and if we sit here, we'll die. So now, come on, let's surrender to the Aramite camp. If they let us live, we'll live. If they put us to death, we'll die.' [5a]So they set off at dusk to come to the Aramite camp.

The mysterious panicked flight

[5b]They came to the edge of the Aramite camp, and there – no one was there. [6]The Lord had made the Aramite camp hear the sound of chariotry, the sound of horse, the sound of a big force, and they had said to one another, 'Here, the king of Yisra'el has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Misrayim [Egypt], to come against us.' [7]They had set off and fled at dusk. They had abandoned their tents and their horses and their donkeys, the camp as it was, and fled for their life.

[8]So these men with scaliness came to the edge of the camp and came into a tent and ate and drank and carried silver and gold and clothes from there and went and buried it, and went back and came into another tent and carried silver and gold and clothes from there and went and buried it. [9]But they said each to his neighbour, 'We're not doing right. This day is a day of good news. We're keeping quiet. And should we wait until morning light, waywardness will find us out. Now, come on, let's go and tell the king's household.' [10]So they came and called to the town gateman. They told them, 'We came to the Aramite camp and there, no one and no human sound was there, but horse tied up and donkey tied up and tents as they were.'

[11]The gatemen called, and they told the king's household, within. [12]The king got up in the night and said to his servants, 'May I please tell you what the Aramites have done to us? They know that we're starving, and they've gone out of the camp to hide in the fields, saying "When they go out from the town we'll capture them alive and come into the town."'

Was it just a coincidence? (1)

[13]One of his servants answered, 'People should please take five of the remaining horses, the ones that have remained here. There, they are like the entire horde of Yisra'el that have remained here: there they are, like the entire horde of Yisra'el that have come to an end. So let's send them and see.'

[14]They got two chariots of horses and the king sent them after the Aramite camp, saying 'Go and see.' [15]They followed them as

far as the Yarden and there, the entire road was full of clothes and articles that the Aramites had thrown away in their haste. The envoys came back and told the king. [16]So the people went out and plundered the Aramite camp, and it was a measure of fine flour for a sheqel and two measures of barley for a sheqel, in accordance with Yahweh's word.

[17]Now in charge of the gateway the king had appointed the adjutant on whose hand he leaned, and the people trampled on him in the gateway and he died, as the supernatural man had spoken when the king went down to him, [18]when the supernatural man said to the king, 'Two measures of barley for a sheqel and a measure of fine flour for a sheqel, it will be at this very time tomorrow at the gateway of Shomron.' [19]The adjutant had answered the supernatural man, 'There, were Yahweh making apertures in the heavens, would something such as this happen?' And he had said, 'There, you're going to see it with your eyes, but you won't eat of it.' [20]It happened to him. The people trampled him in the gateway and he died.

Was it just a coincidence? (2)

8 Now Elisha had spoken to the woman whose son he brought to life: 'Set off and go, you and your household, and reside wherever you can reside, because Yahweh has called for a famine and it is indeed going to come on the country for seven years.' [2]The woman set off and acted in accordance with the word of the supernatural man. She went, she and her household, and resided in the Pelishtites' [Philistines'] country seven years.

[3]At the end of the seven years the woman came back from the Pelishtites' country and went out to cry out to the king about her house and about her fields. [4]The king was speaking with Gehazi, the supernatural man's boy, saying, 'Please tell me all the big things that Elisha has done.' [5]He was recounting to the king how he had brought the dead person to life, and there, the woman whose son he had brought to life was crying out to the king about her house and about her fields. Gehazi said, 'My lord king, this is the woman and this is her son whom Elisha brought to life.' [6]The king asked the woman and she recounted it to him, and the king gave her a courtier, saying, 'Get back all that belongs to her and all the yield from her fields from the day she abandoned the country until now.'

[7]Elisha came to Dammeseq, when Ben-hadad king of Aram was ill. It had been told him, 'The supernatural man is coming here.' [8]The king said to Haza'el, 'Take an offering in your hand and go to meet the supernatural man and enquire of Yahweh from him, "Will I live on after this illness?"'

The assassination

[9]Haza'el went to meet him and took an offering in his hand, all the good things of Dammeseq, forty camel loads. He came and stood before him and said, 'Your son, Ben-hadad king of Aram, sent me to you, saying "Will I live on after this illness?"' [10]Elisha said to him, 'Go say to him: "You will definitely live on." But Yahweh has let me see that he will definitely die.' [11]He made his face stay firm, until he was shamed. But the supernatural man cried, [12]and Haza'el said, 'Why is my lord crying?' He said, 'Because I know the bad things that you will do to the Yisra'elites. Their fortifications you will set on fire. Their young men you will slay with the sword. Their little ones you will tear to pieces. Their pregnant women you will rip open.' [13]Haza'el said, 'What is your servant, a dog, that he should do this big thing?' Elisha said, 'Yahweh has let me see you as king over Aram.'

[14]He went from Elisha and came to his lord. He said to him 'What did Elisha say to you?' He said, 'He said to me, "You will definitely live on."' [15]But next day he got a cloth, dipped it in water and spread it over his face, and he died. So Haza'el began to reign in place of him.

[16]In the fifth year of Yoram ben Ah'ab king of Yisra'el, whereas Yehoshaphat had been king of Yehudah, Yehoram ben Yehoshaphat began to reign as king of Yehudah. [17]He was a man of thirty-two years when he began to reign and he reigned eight years in Yerushalaim.

[18]He walked in the way of the kings of Yisra'el, as Ah'ab's household had done, because he had Ah'ab's daughter as wife. He did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes. [19]But Yahweh was not willing to devastate Yehudah, for the sake of David his servant, as he had said to him that he would give him hegemony for his sons for all time.

Two kings called Yoram/Yehoram

[20]In his days Edom rebelled from under Yehudah's hand, and they made a king reign over themselves. [21]Yoram crossed to Tsa'ir, he and all the chariotry with him. He set off by night and struck down the Edomites (who were surrounding him) and the chariotry officers, and the company fled to their tents. [22]But Edom has rebelled from under Yehudah's hand until this day. Then Libnah rebelled at this time.

[23]The rest of the things about Yoram and all that he did are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Yehudah, aren't they. [24]Yoram lay down with his ancestors and was buried with his ancestors in David's Town, and Ahazyahu his son began to reign in place of him.

[25]It was in the twelfth year of Yoram ben Ah'ab king of Yisra'el that Ahazyahu ben Yehoram began to reign in Yehudah. [26]Ahazyahu was a man of twenty-two years when he began to reign and he reigned one year in Yerushalaim. His mother's name was Atalyahu bat Omri, king of Yisra'el.

[27]He walked in the way of the household of Ah'ab and did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes like Ah'ab's household, because he was an in-law of Ah'ab's household. [28]He went with Yoram ben Ah'ab for battle with Haza'el king of Aram at Heights-in-Gil'ad. The Aramites struck down Yoram, [29]and King Yoram went back to heal in Yizr'e'el from the wounds with which the Aramites had struck him down at The Height when he was battling with Haza'el king of Aram, while Ahazyahu ben Yehoram king of Yehudah went down to see Yoram ben Ah'ab because he was ill.

The anointing of another assassin

9 Now Elisha the prophet had called one of the people who prophesied and said to him, ‘Wrap things round your hips, take this
flask of oil in your hand and go to Heights-in-Gil’ad. [2]When you come there, look for Yehu ben Yehoshaphat son of Nimshi,
there. You’re to come and get him up from among his brothers and bring him to an inner room. [3]Take the flask of oil, pour it on
his head and say, “Yahweh has said this: ‘I anoint you king over Yisra’el’”, and open the door and flee; don’t wait.’
[4]So the boy (the prophet’s boy) went to Heights-in-Gil’ad. [5]When he came, there, the officers of the force were sitting. He said,
‘I have a word for you, officer.’ Yehu said, ‘For whom out of all of us?’ He said, ‘For you, officer.’
[6]He got up and came into the house, and he poured the oil on his head and said to him, ‘Yahweh, the God of Yisra’el, has said
this: “I anoint you king for Yahweh’s people, for Yisra’el. [7]You’re to strike down the household of Ah’ab, your lord, and I will
take redress from the hand of Izebel [Jezebel] for the shed blood of my servants the prophets and the shed blood of all Yahweh’s
servants. [8]The entire household of Ah’ab will perish, and I shall cut off for Ah’ab the one who pisses against a wall (bond or
freed) in Yisra’el. [9]I shall make Ah’ab’s household like the household of Yarob’am ben Nebat and like the household of Ba’sha
ben Ahiyyah. [10]And Izebel: the dogs will eat her in a Yizre’e’l plot and there will be no one burying her.’ And he opened the door
and fled.

The man who drives like a madman

[11]When Yehu went out to his lord’s servants, they said to him, ‘Are things well? Why did this madman come to you?’ He said
to them, ‘You know the man and his talk.’ [12]They said, ‘Lies! Tell us, please.’ He said, ‘This and that very thing he said to me:
“Yahweh has said this: ‘I anoint you king for Yisra’el.’”’ [13]They made speed and got each person his coat and put it under him on
the top step, and blew on a horn and said, ‘Yehu has become king!’ [14]So Yehu ben Yehoshaphat son of Nimshi conspired against
Yoram.
Now Yoram had been keeping watch at Heights-in-Gil’ad, he and all Yisra’el, from before Haza’el king of Aram, [15]but King
Yehoram had gone back to heal in Yizre’e’l from the wounds with which the Aramites had struck him down when he was battling
with Haza’el king of Aram.
So Yehu said, ‘If it’s your desire, no one is to escape and go out of the town to go to tell of it in Yizre’e’l.’ [16]Yehu got into his
chariot and went to Yizre’e’l, because Yoram was lying there, and Ahazyah king of Yehudah had come down to see Yehoram.
[17]The lookout was standing on the tower in Yizre’e’l and saw Yehu’s pack as it was coming. He said, ‘I see a pack!’ Yehoram
said, ‘Get a rider and send him to meet them. He’s to say, “Are things well?”’ [18]The horse rider went to meet him and said, ‘The
king has said this: “Are things well?”’ Yehu said, ‘What do you and “Are things well” have in common? Turn round after me.’
The lookout told them, ‘The envoy came right to them, but he didn’t come back.’
[19]He sent a second horse rider. He came to them and said, ‘The king has said this: “Are things well?”’ And Yehu said, ‘What
do you and “Are things well” have in common? Turn round after me.’ [20]The lookout told them, ‘The envoy came right to them,
but he didn’t come back. The driving is like the driving of Yehu ben Nimshi, because he drives like a madman.’

The whorings of Izebel

[21]Yehoram said, ‘Hitch up!’, and they hitched up his chariot. Yehoram king of Yisra’el went out, with Ahazyahu king of
Yehudah, each in his chariot. They went out to meet Yehu, and found him on the plot of Nabot the Yizre’e’lite. [22]When Yehoram
saw Yehu he said, ‘Are things well, Yehu?’ He said, ‘What can be well while the whorings of Izebel your mother and her
sorceries are so many?’ [23]Yehoram turned his hands round and fled, and said to Ahazyahu, ‘Guile, Ahazyah!’, [24]as Yehu put his
hand to his bow and struck down Yehoram between the shoulders. The arrow went out through his heart and he bowed down on
his knees in his chariot.
[25]He said to Bidqar his adjutant, ‘Take him up, throw him into the plot of field belonging to Nabot the Yezre’e’lite, because
remember me and you riding as a pair behind Ah’ab his father when Yahweh took up this oracle about him: [26]“If I did not see
Nabot’s shed blood and his sons’ shed blood yesterday (Yahweh’s proclamation) . . . And I will make it good to you on this plot
(Yahweh’s proclamation).” So now take him up, throw him on the plot in accordance with Yahweh’s word.’
[27]When Ahazyah king of Yehudah saw it, he fled by the Bet Haggan road. Yehu pursued after him and said, ‘Him as well,
strike him down’ – in his chariot at the Gur Ascent, which is by Yible’am. He fled to Megiddo and died there. [28]His servants took
him in a chariot to Yerushalaim and buried him in his grave with his ancestors in David’s Town. [29]It had been in the eleventh year
of Yoram ben Ah’ab that Ahazyah began to reign over Yehudah.

Izebel puts on her make-up

[30]Yehu came to Yizre’e’l, and when Izebel heard, she put mascara on her eyes and made her hair look good and watched
through the window. [31]When Yehu came through the gateway, she said ‘Are things well, Zimri, slayer of his lord?’ [32]He lifted his
face to the window and said, ‘Who is with me? Who?’ Two or three courtiers looked towards him. [33]He said, ‘Drop her down!’
They dropped her down, and some of her blood spattered on the wall and on the horses, and they trampled her.
[34]He came in and ate and drank, and said ‘Please attend to this accursed woman and bury her, because she’s the daughter of a
king.’ [35]They went to bury her, but they couldn’t find anything of her, only the skull and the feet and the palms of her hands.
[36]They came back and told him, and he said, ‘It’s Yahweh’s word that he spoke by means of his servant Eliyyahu the Tishbite:
“On a Yizre’e’l plot the dogs will eat Izebel’s flesh. [37]Izebel’s carcase will be like manure on the face of the fields on a Yizre’e’l
plot, so that people cannot say, ‘This is Izebel.’”’

10 Now Ah'ab had seventy sons in Shomron. Yehu wrote documents and sent them to Shomron, to the officials in Yizre'e'l, the elders, and to Ah'ab's guardians, saying, [2]'Now, when this document comes to you, and your lord's sons are with you, and chariotry and horses are with you, and a fortified city, and weaponry, [3]see who is the best and most upright of your lord's sons, put him on his father's throne and do battle for your lord's household.' [4]But they were very, very fearful, and said, 'Here, two kings didn't stand before him; how can we stand?' [5]So the one in charge of the household, the one in charge of the town, the elders and the guardians sent to Yehu saying, 'We are your servants. Everything that you say to us we will do. We will not make anyone king. Do what is good in your eyes.'

Seventy heads fall

[6]So he wrote them a second document: 'If you're on my side and you're going to listen to my voice, take the heads of the men (your lord's sons) and come to me this very time tomorrow in Yizre'e'l.' The king's sons, seventy of them, were with the big people in the town, who were bringing them up. [7]When the document came to them, they got the king's sons, slaughtered the seventy, put their heads in baskets and sent them to him in Yizre'e'l.

[8]An envoy came and told him, 'They've brought the heads of the king's sons.' He said, 'Put them in two heaps at the entrance to the town gateway until morning.' [9]In the morning he went out and stood and said to the entire people, 'You are in the right. There, I myself conspired against my lord and killed him, but who struck down all these? [10]Acknowledge how nothing will fall to the earth of Yahweh's word, which Yahweh spoke concerning the household of Ah'ab, since Yahweh has done what he spoke by means of his servant Eliyyahu.' [11]Yehu struck down all that remained of the household of Ah'ab in Yizre'e'l, and all his big people, his friends and his priests, until he let no survivor remain to him.

[12]Then he set off; he came, and went to Shomron; he was at the shepherds' binding house on the way, [13]and when Yehu found brothers of Ahazyahu king of Yehudah, he said, 'Who are you?' They said, 'We are brothers of Ahazyahu. We've come down regarding whether things are well with the king's sons and the queen's sons.' [14]He said, 'Capture them alive.' They captured them alive but slew them at the binding house cistern, forty-two individuals. He didn't let one of them remain.

The great festival for Ba'al

[15]He went from there and found Yehonadab ben Rekab, coming to meet him. He blessed him and said to him, 'Is your mind upright, as my mind is with your mind?' Yehonadab said, 'It is.' 'Since it is, give me your hand.' He gave him his hand and took him up to him into the chariot. [16]He said, 'Go with me and see my passion for Yahweh.' So he got him to ride in his chariot. [17]He came to Shomron and struck down all the people who remained to Ah'ab in Shomron until he had annihilated them, in accordance with Yahweh's word that he spoke to Eliyyahu.

[18]Yehu collected all the people and said to them, 'Whereas Ah'ab served the Master a little, Yehu will serve him much. [19]So now, all the Master's prophets, all his servants and all his priests – call them to me. Not one is to be counted missing, because I have a big sacrifice for the Master. No one who is counted missing will live.' Yehu was acting with guile in order that he might obliterate the Master's servants.

[20]So Yehu said, 'Make a sacred assembly for the Master', and they called it. [21]Yehu sent through all Yisra'el, and all the Master's servants came. Not one remained who didn't come. They came to the Master's house; the Master's house filled, end to end. [22]He said to the person in charge of the wardrobe, 'Get out apparel for all the Master's servants.' He got the apparel out for them. [23]Yehu came with Yehonadab ben Rekab into the Master's house and said to the Master's servants, 'Search, and see that there are none of Yahweh's servants here with you, but rather the Master's servants alone.' [24]They came to make sacrifices and burnt offerings, while Yehu had placed for himself eighty people outside and had said, 'The individual who escapes from the people that I am bringing into your hands: his life in place of his life.'

The sacrifice

[25]When he'd finished making the burnt offering, Yehu said to the runners and to the adjutants, 'Come, strike them down. No one is to get out.' The runners and the adjutants struck them down with the edge of the sword and threw them down. They went right to the town in the Master's house, [26]got out the columns in the Master's house and burned them. [27]They demolished the Master's columns and demolished the Master's house and turned it into latrines, until this day.

[28]So Yehu annihilated the Master from Yisra'el; [29]only, the wrongdoings of Yarob'am ben Nebat that he caused Yisra'el to commit – Yehu did not depart from them (the gold bullocks that were at Bet-el and that were at Dan). [30]But Yahweh said to Yehu, 'Since you've done what is good, in doing what was upright in my eyes (in accordance with all that was in my mind you have acted towards the household of Ah'ab), sons to the fourth [generation] will sit on Yisra'el's throne for you.' [31]But Yehu did not keep watch to walk by the instruction of Yahweh the God of Yisra'el with his entire mind. He did not depart from the wrongdoings of Yarob'am that he caused Yisra'el to commit.

[32]In those days Yahweh began to reduce Yisra'el, and Haza'el struck them down through Yisra'el's entire territory [33]from the Yarden eastward, the entire region of Gil'ad (the Gadites, the Re'ubenites and the Menashshites), from Aro'er, which is by Wadi Arnon, both Gil'ad and Bashan.

[34]The rest of the things about Yehu, all that he did and all his strength, are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Yisra'el, aren't they. [35]Yehu lay down with his ancestors and they buried him in Shomron, and Yeho'az his son began to reign in place of him. [36]The time that Yehu had reigned over Yisra'el was twenty-eight years in Shomron.

The boy king-in-waiting

11 When Atalyah, Ahazyahu's mother, saw that her son was dead, she set to and obliterated all the royal offspring. [2]But Yehosheba the daughter of King Yoram, sister of Ahazyahu, got Yo'ash ben Ahazyah and stole him away from among the king's sons who were being put to death, him and his nanny, in a bedroom. They concealed him from Atalyahu and he wasn't put to death.

[3]He was with her in Yahweh's house hiding six years, while Atalyah was reigning over the country. [4]In the seventh year, Yehoyada sent and got the centurions of the Karites and of the runners and brought them to him into Yahweh's house. He solemnized a pact with them and made them swear in Yahweh's house, and let them see the king's son.

[5]He ordered them, 'This is the thing that you're to do: a third of you who are coming in on the sabbath and keeping watch over the king's house, [6]a third at the Sur Gate and a third at the gateway behind the runners: you're to keep watch over the house, as a defence. [7]The two sections among you, all who are going out on the sabbath, will keep watch over Yahweh's house for the king. [8]You're to encircle the king all round, each man with his equipment in his hand. Anyone who comes against the ranks is to be put to death. Be with the king when he goes out and when he comes in.'

[9]The centurions acted in accordance with all that Yehoyada the priest ordered. They took each his men who were coming in on the sabbath with those who were going out on the sabbath, and came to Yehoyada the priest. [10]The priest gave the centurions the lance and the bows that belonged to King David, which were in Yahweh's house. [11]The runners stood, each with his equipment in his hand, from the shoulder of the house on the right to the shoulder of the house on the left, at the altar and at the house, in charge of the king all round.

An unusual covenant

[12]Then he got the king's son out and put the diadem and the affirmation on him, and they made him king and anointed him. They clapped the palms of their hands and said 'Long live the king.'

[13]Atalyah heard the sound of the runners, the people, and came to the people at Yahweh's house. [14]She saw, there, the king was standing by the pillar in accordance with the ruling, the officials with the trumpets by the king, and the entire people of the country rejoicing and blowing on trumpets. Atalyah tore her clothes and called, 'Conspiracy, conspiracy!'

[15]Yehoyada the priest ordered the centurions appointed over the force, 'Take her out between the rows. The person who follows her, put to death with the sword' (because the priest said she should not be put to death in Yahweh's house). [16]They laid hands on her and she came by way of the Horses' Entrance to the king's house, and she was put to death there.

[17]Yehoyada solemnized a pact between Yahweh, the king and the people, that they would be a people for Yahweh, and between the king and the people. [18]The entire people of the country came to the Master's house and tore it down. Its altars and its images they broke up, doing it well, and Mattan, the Master's priest, they killed before the altars.

The priest set appointees over Yahweh's house. [19]He got the centurions, the Karites, the runners and the entire people of the country, and they took the king down from Yahweh's house. They came by way of the Runners' Gate to the king's house, and he sat on the kings' throne.

[20]The entire people of the country rejoiced, while the town was calm, when they had put Atalyahu to death with the sword at the king's house. [21]Yeho'ash was seven years of age when he began to reign.

A plan to restore the temple

12 It was in the seventh year of Yehu that Yeho'ash began to reign and he reigned forty years in Yerushalaim. His mother's name was Tsibyah from Be'er-sheba. [2]Yeho'ash did what was upright in Yahweh's eyes all his days that Yehoyada the priest taught him. [3]Only, the shrines did not disappear; the people were still sacrificing and burning incense at the shrines.

[4]Yeho'ash said to the priests, 'All the silver from the sacred offerings that's brought into Yahweh's house, the silver that's current for an individual (the silver for persons), his evaluation, all the silver that it comes into an individual's mind to bring to Yahweh's house, [5]the priests are to take for themselves, each from his assessor, and they themselves are to strengthen the defects in the house, everywhere a defect is found.'

[6]But in the twenty-third year of King Yeho'ash the priests had not strengthened the defects in the house. [7]So King Yeho'ash called Yehoyada the priest, with the priests, and said to them, 'Why are you not strengthening the defects in the house? So now don't take the silver from your assessors but give it for the defects in the house.'

[8]The priests consented not to take silver from the people and not to strengthen the defects in the house. [9]Yehoyada the priest got a chest, bored a hole in its lid and put it by the altar, on the right when one comes into Yahweh's house. The priests who were keeping watch over the threshold would put there all the silver that was brought to Yahweh's house. [10]When they saw that the amount of silver in the chest was great, the royal scribe went up with the big priest and they tied up and counted the silver that was found in Yahweh's house.

Not the fate he deserved

[11]So they would put the silver that had been quantified into the hands of the men doing the work, who had been appointed to Yahweh's house. They would have it go out to the carpenters and to the builders who were doing things in Yahweh's house, [12]and to the masons and to the stonecutters, and for acquiring wood and dressed stones to strengthen the defects in Yahweh's house, and for all that would need to go out in connection with Yahweh's house. [13]Yet silver basins, snuffers, bowls, trumpets, all gold articles and silver articles, were not made for Yahweh's house from the silver brought into Yahweh's house, [14]because they would give it to the people doing the work so they would strengthen Yahweh's house.

[15]They didn't keep a reckoning of the men into whose hand they would give the silver to give to the people doing the work,

because they were acting with trustworthiness. [16]Reparation silver and decontamination silver would not be brought into Yahweh's house; it would be the priests'.

[17]Then Haza'el king of Aram went up and battled against Gat, and captured it, and Haza'el set his face to go up to Yerushalaim. [18]Yeho'ash king of Yehudah got all the sacred things that Yehoshaphat, Yehoram and Ahazyahu, his ancestors, kings of Yehudah, had made sacred, and his own sacred things, and all the gold that could be found in the treasuries of Yahweh's house and the king's house, and sent them to Haza'el king of Aram, and he went up from Yerushalaim.

[19]The rest of the things about Yo'ash, and all that he did, are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Yehudah, aren't they. [20]His servants arose and formed a conspiracy, and struck down Yo'ash at Fill House, which goes down to Silla. [21]Yozabad ben Shim'at and Yehozabad ben Shomer, of his servants – they struck him down and he died. They buried him with his ancestors in David's Town, and Amatsyah his son began to reign in place of him.

God sees Yisra'el's affliction

13 In the twenty-third year of Yo'ash ben Ahazyahu king of Yehudah, Yeho'ahaz ben Yehu began to reign over Yisra'el in Shomron, for seventeen years. [2]He did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes and followed the wrongdoings of Yarob'am ben Nebat that he caused Yisra'el to commit. He did not depart from it.

[3]So Yahweh's anger raged against Yisra'el and he gave them into the hand of Haza'el king of Aram and into the hand of Ben-hadad ben Haza'el, all the time. [4]Yeho'ahaz sought to gain Yahweh's goodwill and Yahweh listened to him, because he saw Yisra'el's affliction, how the king of Aram afflicted them. [5]Yahweh gave Yisra'el a deliverer and they got out from under the hand of Aram, and the Yisra'elites lived in their tents as they had in previous days. [6]Yet they didn't depart from the wrongdoings of Yarob'am's household that it caused Yisra'el to commit. They walked in them, and further, the totem pole stood in Shomron. ([7]Because he didn't leave a company to Yeho'ahaz, except 50 cavalry, 10 chariotry and 10,000 men on foot, because the king of Aram had obliterated them and made them like earth for trampling.)

[8]The rest of the things about Yeho'ahaz and all that he did, and his strength, are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Yisra'el, aren't they. [9]Yeho'ahaz lay down with his ancestors and they buried him in Shomron. Yo'ash his son began to reign in place of him. [10]It was in the thirty-seventh year of Yo'ash king of Yehudah that Yeho'ash ben Yeho'ahaz began to reign over Yisra'el in Shomron, for sixteen years. [11]He did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes. He didn't depart from all the wrongdoings of Yarob'am ben Nebat that he caused Yisra'el to commit. He walked in them.

[12]The rest of the things about Yo'ash, all that he did, and his strength in that he battled with Amatsyah king of Yehudah, are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Yisra'el, aren't they. [13]Yo'ash lay down with his ancestors, and Yarob'am sat on his throne. Yo'ash was buried in Shomron with the kings of Yisra'el.

The God who has to be merciful

[14]Now Elisha was ill with the illness of which he died, and Yo'ash king of Yisra'el went down to him. He wept upon his face and said, 'Father, father, the chariotry of Yisra'el and its cavalry!' [15]Elisha said to him, 'Get a bow and arrows.' He got himself a bow and arrows. [16]He said to the king of Yisra'el, 'Mount your hand on the bow.' He mounted his hand. Elisha put his hands on the king's hands [17]and said, 'Open the window to the east.' He opened it. Elisha said, 'Shoot', and he shot. He said, 'Yahweh's deliverance arrow! A deliverance arrow against Aram! You will strike down Aram at Apheq so as to finish it off!'

[18]He said, 'Get the arrows', and he got them. He said to the king of Yisra'el, 'Strike the ground.' He struck three times, and stopped. [19]The supernatural man was furious with him and said, 'Striking five or six times! Then you would have struck Aram so as to finish it off, but now it will be three times that you strike Aram.'

[20]Elisha died and they buried him. Now raiding gangs from Mo'ab would come into the country at the coming of the new year. [21]People were burying someone and there – they saw a raiding band, and they threw the man into Elisha's grave. He went, and touched Elisha's bones, and came to life and stood on his feet.

[22]Now Haza'el king of Aram afflicted Yisra'el all the days of Yeho'ahaz, [23]but Yahweh was gracious to them and had compassion on them. He turned his face to them for the sake of his pact with Abraham, Yitshaq [Isaac] and Ya'aqob [Jacob]. He was not willing to devastate them, and he has not thrown them out from before his face until now.

[24]Haza'el king of Aram died, and Ben-hadad his son began to reign in place of him. [25]Yeho'ash ben Yeho'ahaz took back again from the hand of Ben-hadad ben Haza'el the towns that he had taken from the hand of his father Yeho'ahaz in battle. Three times Yo'ash struck him down and got back the Yisra'elite towns.

Individuals are put to death for their own wrongdoing

14 In the second year of Yo'ash ben Yo'ahaz king of Yisra'el, Amatsyahu ben Yo'ash king of Yehudah began to reign. [2]He was a man of twenty-five years when he began to reign and he reigned twenty-nine years in Yerushalaim. His mother's name was Yeho'addan from Yerushalaim. [3]He did what was upright in Yahweh's eyes, only not like David his ancestor; in accordance with all that Yo'ash his father did, he did. [4]Only, the shrines did not disappear; the people were still sacrificing and burning incense at the shrines.

[5]When the kingship was strong in his control, he struck down his servants who had struck down the king, his father. [6]But the sons of the people who had struck him down, he did not put to death, as it is written in Mosheh's [Moses'] instruction document where Yahweh ordered: 'Parents will not be put to death for children and children will not be put to death for parents. Rather, an individual will be put to death for his own wrongdoing.' [7]It was he who struck down Edom in Salt Ravine, 10,000, and captured The Cliff in the battle. He named it Yoqte'el, until now.

[8]Then Amatsyah sent envoys to Yeho'ash ben Yeho'ahaz son of Yehu, king of Yisra'el, saying, 'Come on, let's face each other.' [9]Yeho'ash king of Yisra'el sent to Amatsyahu king of Yehudah, saying, 'A thistle that was in the Lebanon sent to a cedar that was in the Lebanon, saying "Give your daughter to my son as wife." But an animal of the wild that was in the Lebanon passed by and trampled the thistle. [10]You have indeed struck down Edom and your mind has lifted you up. Enjoy your splendour but stay in your house. Why engage with bad fortune and fall, you and Yehudah with you?'

The king who didn't listen

[11]Amatsyahu didn't listen. So Yeho'ash king of Yisra'el went up and they faced each other, he and Amatsyahu king of Yehudah at Bet-shemesh, which belongs to Yehudah. [12]Yehudah took a beating before Yisra'el and they fled each man to his tents. [13]Amatsyahu king of Yehudah, son of Yeho'ash ben Ahazyahu – Yeho'ash king of Yisra'el captured him at Bet-shemesh, came to Yerushalaim and broke down the Yerushalaim wall at the Ephrayim Gate as far as the Corner Gate, 200 metres. [14]He took all the gold and the silver and all the articles that were to be found in Yahweh's house and in the treasuries of the king's house, and pledges, and went back to Shomron.

[15]The rest of the things about Yeho'ash, what he did, and his strength and how he battled with Amatsyahu king of Yehudah, are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Yisra'el, aren't they. [16]Yeho'ash lay down with his ancestors and was buried in Shomron with the kings of Yisra'el, and Yarob'am his son began to reign in place of him.

[17]Amatsyahu ben Yo'ash king of Yehudah lived after the death of Yeho'ash ben Yeho'ahaz king of Yisra'el fifteen years. [18]The rest of the things about Amatsyahu are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Yehudah, aren't they. [19]People formed a conspiracy against him in Yerushalaim and he fled to Lakish, but they sent after him to Lakish and put him to death there. [20]But they carried him on horses and he was buried in Yerushalaim with his ancestors in David's Town. [21]All the people of Yehudah got Azaryah (he was sixteen years of age) and made him king in place of his father Amatsyahu. [22]It was he who built up Elat. He had got it back for Yehudah after the king lay down with his ancestors.

The king who heard from Yonah [Jonah]

[23]In the fifteenth year of Amatsyahu ben Yo'ash king of Yehudah, Yarob'am ben Yo'ash king of Yisra'el began to reign in Shomron, for forty-one years. [24]He did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes; he didn't depart from all the wrongdoings of Yarob'am ben Nebat that he caused Yisra'el to commit. [25]It was he who got Yisra'el's territory back from Lebo Hamat as far as the Steppe Sea, in accordance with the word of Yahweh the God of Yisra'el which he spoke by means of his servant Yonah ben Amittay the prophet, who was from Gat-hepher. [26]Because Yahweh saw Yisra'el's very bitter humbling (neither bound nor freed) and there was no helper for Yisra'el. [27]Yahweh had not spoken of wiping out Yisra'el's name from under the heavens, and he delivered them by the hand of Yarob'am ben Yo'ash.

[28]The rest of the things about Yarob'am, all that he did, and his strength, how he battled and how he got back Dammeseq and Hamat belonging to Yehudah in Yisra'el, are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Yisra'el, aren't they. [29]Yarob'am lay down with his ancestors, with the kings of Yisra'el, and Zekaryah his son began to reign in place of him.

15 It was in the twenty-seventh year of Yarob'am king of Yisra'el that Azaryah ben Amatsyah king of Yehudah began to reign. [2]He was sixteen years of age when he began to reign and he reigned fifty-two years in Yerushalaim. His mother's name was Yekolyahu from Yerushalaim. [3]He did what was upright in Yahweh's eyes in accordance with all that Amatsyahu his father did. [4]Only, the shrines did not disappear; the people were still sacrificing and burning incense at the shrines. [5]Yahweh touched the king and he was made scaly until the day of his death. He lived in a house apart, while Yotam the king's son was in charge of the household, exercising authority over the people in the country.

A war crime

[6]The rest of the things about Azaryahu and all that he did are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Yehudah, aren't they. [7]Azaryah lay down with his ancestors and they buried him with his ancestors in David's Town, and Yotam his son began to reign in place of him.

[8]It was in the thirty-eighth year of Azaryahu king of Yehudah that Zekaryahu ben Yarob'am began to reign over Yisra'el in Shomron, for six months. [9]He did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes as his ancestors had done. He didn't depart from the wrongdoings of Yarob'am ben Nebat that he caused Yisra'el to commit. [10]Shallum ben Yabesh conspired against him; he struck him down before the people, put him to death and began to reign in place of him. [11]The rest of the things about Zekaryah, there they are, written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Yisra'el. [12]That was Yahweh's word which he spoke to Yehu: 'Sons to the fourth [generation] will sit on Yisra'el's throne for you.' So it came about.

[13]Shallum ben Yabesh began to reign in the thirty-ninth year of Uzziyyah king of Yehudah, and reigned for a full month in Shomron. [14]Menahem ben Gadi went up from Tirtsah, came to Shomron, and struck down Shallum ben Yabesh in Shomron and put him to death. He began to reign in place of him. [15]The rest of the things about Shallum and his conspiracy that he formed, there they are, written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Yisra'el.

[16]Then Menahem struck down Tiphsah and everyone who was in it and its territories, from Tirtsah, because it didn't open up, so he struck it down. He split open all its pregnant women.

The Assyrians start to cause trouble

[17]It was in the thirty-ninth year of Azaryah king of Yehudah that Menahem ben Gadi began to reign over Yisra'el, for ten years.
[18]He did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes; he didn't depart from the wrongdoings of Yarob'am ben Nebat that he caused Yisra'el
to commit, all his days. [19]Pul king of Ashshur [Assyria] came against the country, and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of
silver so that his hands would be with him to strengthen the kingship in his hand. [20]Menahem put the silver out on Yisra'el, on all
the forceful strong men, to give to the king of Ashshur, fifty sheqels of silver for each man, and the king of Ashshur went back
and did not stop there in the country.
[21]The rest of the things about Menahem and all that he did are written on the document about things of the time regarding the
kings of Yisra'el, aren't they. [22]Menahem lay down with his ancestors, and Peqahyah his son began to reign in place of him.
[23]It was in the fiftieth year of Azaryah king of Yehudah that Peqahyah ben Menahem began to reign over Yisra'el in Shomron,
for two years. [24]He did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes; he didn't depart from the the wrongdoings that Yarob'am ben Nebat
caused Yisra'el to commit. [25]Peqah ben Remalyahu, his adjutant, conspired against him and struck him down in Shomron in the
citadel of the king's house (with Argob and with Aryeh, so along with him were fifty men from the Gil'adites). He put him to
death and began to reign in place of him.
[26]The rest of the things about Peqahyah, all that he did, there they are, written on the document about things of the time
regarding the kings of Yisra'el.

Land begins to be lost

[27]It was in the fifty-second year of Azaryah king of Yehudah that Peqah ben Remalyahu began to reign over Yisra'el in
Shomron, for twenty years. [28]He did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes; he didn't depart from the wrongdoings that Yarob'am ben
Nebat caused Yisra'el to commit. [29]In the days of Peqah king of Yisra'el, Tiglat-pil'eser king of Ashshur came and took Iyyon,
Bet-ma'akah Meadow, Yanoah, Qedesh, Hatsor, Gil'ad, and the Galilee, the entire region of Naphtali, and exiled them to
Ashshur.
[30]Hoshea ben Elah formed a conspiracy against Peqah ben Remalyahu, and struck him down. He put him to death and began to
reign in place of him, in the twentieth year of Yotam ben Uzziyyah. [31]The rest of the things about Peqah and all that he did, there
they are, written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Yisra'el.
[32]It was in the second year of Peqah ben Remalyahu king of Yisra'el that Yotam ben Uzziyyahu king of Yehudah began to
reign. [33]He was a man of twenty-five years when he began to reign and he reigned sixteen years in Yerushalaim. His mother's
name was Yerusha bat Tsadoq. [34]He did what was upright in Yahweh's eyes; in accordance with all that Uzziyyahu his father had
done, he did. [35]Only, the shrines did not disappear; the people were still sacrificing and burning incense at the shrines. It was he
who built up the Upper Gate of Yahweh's house.
[36]The rest of the things about Yotam that he did are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of
Yehudah, aren't they. [37]During that time Yahweh began to send Retsin king of Aram and Peqah ben Remalyahu against Yehudah.
[38]Yotam lay down with his ancestors and was buried with his ancestors in David his ancestor's town, and Ahaz his son began to
reign in place of him.

How not to render to Caesar

16 It was in the seventeenth year of Peqah ben Remalyahu that Ahaz ben Yotam king of Yehudah began to reign. [2]Ahaz was a
man of twenty years when he began to reign and he reigned sixteen years in Yerushalaim. He did not do what was upright in
the eyes of Yahweh his God like David his ancestor [3]but walked in the way of the kings of Yisra'el. Further, his own son he
passed through the fire in accordance with the offensive practices of the nations that Yahweh dispossessed from before the
Yisra'elites. [4]He sacrificed and burned incense at the shrines, on the hills and under every verdant tree.
[5]Then Retsin king of Aram and Peqah ben Remalyahu king of Yisra'el went up to Yerushalaim for battle. They besieged Ahaz
but couldn't win the battle. [6]At that time Retsin king of Aram took back Elat for Aram. He cleared out the Yehudahites from Elot,
and Edomites came to Elat and have lived there until this day.
[7]Ahaz sent envoys to Tiglat-pileser king of Ashshur saying, 'I am your servant and your son. Go up and deliver me from the fist
of the king of Aram and from the fist of the king of Yisra'el, who are rising up against me.' [8]Ahaz got the silver and the gold that
could be found in Yahweh's house and in the treasuries of the king's house and sent them to the king of Ashshur as a bribe, [9]and
the king of Ashshur listened to him. The king of Ashshur went up to Dammeseq, captured it, exiled it to Qir and put Retsin to
death.
[10]King Ahaz went to meet Tiglat-pileser king of Ashshur at Dammeseq, and saw the altar at Dammeseq. King Ahaz sent
Uriyyah the priest a picture of the altar and a plan of it, for every aspect of making it, [11]and Uriyyah the priest built the altar. In
accordance with all that King Ahaz had sent from Dammeseq, so Uriyyah the priest did, before King Ahaz came from Dammeseq.

A new altar

[12]The king came from Dammeseq and the king saw the altar. The king drew near the altar, went up on it, [13]and turned into
smoke his burnt offering and his grain offering, poured his libation, and tossed the blood of the well-being offerings that he had,
on the altar.
[14]The copper altar that was before Yahweh, he brought near from the front of the house (between his altar and Yahweh's house)
and put it by the side of his altar, to the north. [15]King Ahaz ordered Uriyyah the priest, 'On the big altar, turn into smoke the
morning burnt offering and the evening grain offering, the king's burnt offering and his grain offering, the burnt offering of the

entire people of the country, their grain offering and their libations. All the blood of the burnt offering and all the blood of the sacrifice you're to toss on it. The copper altar will be for me to consult at.' [16]Uriyyah the priest acted in accordance with all that King Ahaz ordered.

[17]King Ahaz cut off the stands' rims and removed the basin from on them, took down the sea from on the copper cattle that were beneath it and put it on a pavement of stones, [18]and the sabbath covered-way that they had built in the house and the king's outside entrance he moved round to Yahweh's house, on account of the king of Ashshur.

[19]The rest of the things about Ahaz that he did are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Yehudah, aren't they. [20]Ahaz lay down with his ancestors and was buried with his ancestors in David's Town, and Hizqiyyahu [Hezekiah] his son began to reign in place of him.

The fall of the northern kingdom

17 It was in the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Yehudah that Hoshea ben Elah began to reign over Yisra'el in Shomron, for nine years. [2]He did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes, only not like the kings of Yisra'el who were before him.

[3]Shalman'eser king of Ashshur went up against him, and Hoshea became his servant and gave back an offering to him. [4]But the king of Ashshur found a conspiracy in Hoshea, when he sent envoys to So king of Misrayim and did not take up an offering to the king of Ashshur, as he did year by year. So the king of Ashshur detained him, and confined him in the cells.

[5]Then the king of Ashshur went up against the entire country. He went up to Shomron and besieged it for three years. [6]In the third year of Hoshea, the king of Ashshur took Shomron. He exiled Yisra'el to Ashshur and made them live at Halah and at Habor, the River Gozan and the towns of Maday [Media].

[7]It happened because the Yisra'elites did wrong in relation to Yahweh their God who had got them up from the country of Misrayim, from under the hand of Par'oh king of Misrayim [Pharaoh king of Egypt]. They had lived in awe of other gods [8]and had walked by the decrees of the nations that Yahweh had dispossessed from before the Yisra'elites, and the kings of Yisra'el that they made.

[9]The Yisra'elites had imputed things that were not so to Yahweh their God and built for themselves shrines in all their towns, from a keepers' tower to a fortified town. [10]They put up columns and totem poles for themselves on every lofty hill and under every verdant tree. [11]They burned incense there in all the shrines, like the nations that Yahweh exiled from before them. They undertook bad things so as to provoke Yahweh. [12]They served idols, of which Yahweh had said to them, 'You will not do this thing.'

By means of every prophet

[13]Yahweh had testified against Yisra'el (and against Yehudah) by means of every prophet of his, every seer, saying, 'Turn back from your bad ways, keep my orders and my decrees in accordance with the entire instruction that I ordered your ancestors and that I sent to you by means of my servants the prophets.' [14]They didn't listen. They toughened their neck, like the neck of their ancestors who didn't trust in Yahweh their God. [15]They rejected his decrees, his pact which he solemnized with their ancestors, and his affirmations which he testified against them. They followed hollowness and became hollow, followed the nations that were round them, ones that Yahweh had ordered them not to act like them.

[16]They abandoned all the orders of Yahweh their God, and made a cast image (two bullocks) for themselves, made a totem pole, bowed low to the entire heavenly army and served the Master. [17]They made their sons and their daughters pass through fire, engaged in divination and practised augury, and sold themselves to do what was bad in Yahweh's eyes so as to provoke him.

[18]Yahweh showed himself very angry with Yisra'el and he removed them from before his face; only the clan of Yehudah remained, alone, [19]though Yehudah, too, did not keep the orders of Yahweh their God but walked by the decrees of Yisra'el that they made.

[20]So Yahweh rejected all Yisra'el's offspring and humbled them. He gave them into the hand of pillagers until he threw them out from his presence. [21]When he tore Yisra'el from David's household, they made Yarob'am ben Nabat king, and Yarob'am drove Yisra'el away from following Yahweh and caused them to commit great wrong. [22]The Yisra'elites walked in all the wrongdoings of Yarob'am that he committed; they did not depart from them, [23]until Yahweh turned Yisra'el aside from his presence, as he spoke by means of all his servants the prophets. So Yisra'el went into exile from upon its soil to Ashshur, until this day.

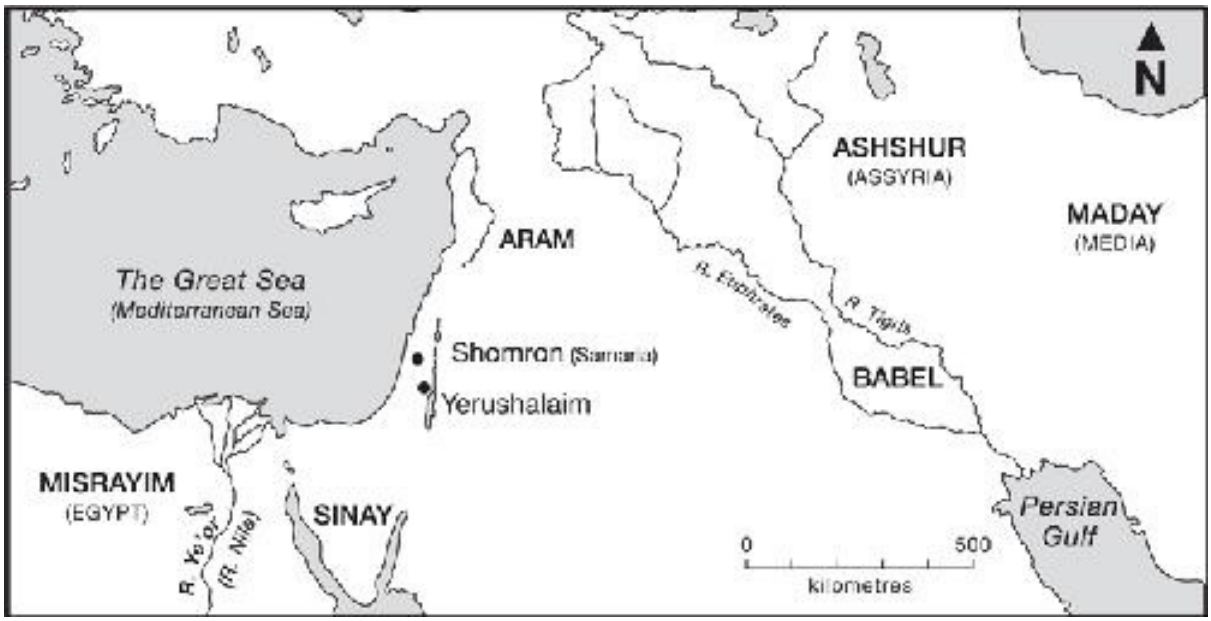
The forced immigrants

[24]The king of Ashshur brought people from Babel, from Kutah, from Avva, and from Hamat and Sepharvayim, and made them live in the towns of Shomron in place of the Yisra'elites. They took possession of Shomron and lived in its towns. [25]When they first lived there, they didn't live in awe of Yahweh, and Yahweh sent lions against them; they became killers among them. [26]They said to the king of Ashshur, 'The nations that you exiled and made to live in the towns of Shomron don't know the ruling of the country's god, and he's sent lions against them, and there, they are putting them to death, because they don't know the ruling of the country's god.'

[27]So the king of Ashshur ordered, 'Make one of the priests go there that you exiled from there. They're to go and live there and instruct them in the ruling of the god of the land.' [28]So one of the priests that they exiled from Shomron came and lived in Bet-el and was instructing them in how they were to live in awe of Yahweh. [29]But they were making nation by nation its own god, and they set them down in the house at the shrines that the Shomronites had made, nation by nation in their towns where they were living. [30]The people from Babel made Sukkot-benot, the people from Kut made Nergal, the people from Hamat made Ashima,

[31]the Avvites made Nibhaz and Tartaq, the Sepharvites were burning their children in fire for Adrammelek and Anammelek, the gods of Sepharvayim. [32]They were living in awe of Yahweh, but they made themselves shrine priests from their sections. They were acting for them in the houses at the shrines.

[33]So they were living in awe of Yahweh and they were serving their gods in accordance with the ruling of the nations from which they had exiled them. [34]Until this day they are acting in accordance with the previous rulings. They are not living in awe of Yahweh and they are not acting in accordance with their decrees, with their rulings, with the instruction and with the order that Yahweh gave the sons of Ya'aqob, whose name he made into Yisra'el.



2 Kings 17: The fall of Ephrayim and Yehudah (Ephraim and Judah)

The copper snake

[35]Yahweh had solemnized a pact with them and ordered them, 'You will not live in awe of other gods; you will not bow low to them, you will not serve them and you will not sacrifice to them. [36]Rather, Yahweh who got you up from the country of Misrayim by great energy and by an outstretched arm: you are to live in awe of him, bow low to him and sacrifice to him. [37]The decrees, the rulings, the instruction and the order that he wrote for you, you're to keep by acting on it, always. You will not live in awe of other gods. [38]The pact that I've solemnized with you, you will not put out of mind. You will not live in awe of other gods. [39]Rather you will live in awe of Yahweh your God, and it's he who will rescue you from the hand of all your enemies.' [40]But they hadn't listened. Rather they'd been acting in accordance with their previous ruling.

[41]And these nations became people who were in awe of Yahweh but were also serving their sculptures. Their children and grandchildren are also acting as their ancestors acted, until this day.

18 It was in the third year of Hoshea ben Elah king of Yisra'el that Hizqiyyah ben Ahaz began to reign as king of Yehudah. [2]He was a man of twenty-five years when he began to reign and he reigned twenty-nine years in Yerushalaim. His mother's name was Abi bat Zekaryah. [3]He did what was upright in Yahweh's eyes in accordance with all that David his ancestor did. [4]It was he who removed the shrines, broke up the columns, cut down the totem pole, and crushed the copper snake that Mosheh had made, because until that time the Yisra'elites had been burning incense to it (it was called 'The Copper').

The faithfulness and the rebellion of Hizqiyyahu

[5]It was on Yahweh the God of Yisra'el that he relied. After him there was no one like him among all the kings of Yehudah, or that were before him. [6]He stuck to Yahweh. He did not depart from following him but kept his orders, which Yahweh had given Mosheh, [7]and Yahweh was with him. Wherever he went out, he thrived.

But he rebelled against the king of Ashshur and didn't serve him, [8]and he himself struck down the Pelishtites as far as Azzah [Gaza] and its borders, from the keepers' tower to the fortified town.

[9]In the fourth year of King Hizqiyyahu (i.e. the seventh year of Hoshea ben Elah king of Yisra'el) Shalman'eser king of Ashshur went up against Shomron and besieged it. [10]They captured it at the end of three years; in the sixth year of Hizqiyyah (i.e. the ninth year of Hoshea king of Yisra'el) Shomron was captured, [11]and the king of Ashshur exiled the Yisra'elites to Ashshur and settled them in Halah and in Habor, the River Gozan and the towns of Maday, [12]because of the fact that they didn't listen to the voice of Yahweh their God but transgressed his pact, all that Mosheh Yahweh's servant had ordered. They didn't listen and they didn't act.

[13]In the fourteenth year of King Hizqiyyahu, Sanherib [Sennacherib] king of Ashshur went up against all the fortified towns of Yehudah and captured them. [14]Hizqiyyah king of Yehudah sent to the king of Ashshur at Lakish saying, 'I have done wrong. Turn back from me. What you put upon me, I will carry.' The king of Ashshur placed on Hizqiyyah king of Yehudah 300 talents of

silver and thirty talents of gold. [15]Hizqiyyah gave him all the silver that could be found in Yahweh's house and in the treasuries of the king's house. [16]At that time Hizqiyyah cut down the doors of Yahweh's palace and the posts that Hizqiyyah king of Yehudah had overlaid, and gave them to the king of Ashshur.

Shut up like a bird in a cage (as Sanherib put it)

[17]The king of Ashshur sent the Tartan, the Rab-saris and the Rab-shaqeh from Lakish to King Hizqiyyahu in Yerushalaim with a heavy force. They went up, and came to Yerushalaim and stood at the Upper Pool channel, which is by the Washer's Field causeway. [18]They called to the king, and Elyaqim ben Hilqiyyahu who was in charge of the household, Shebna the secretary and Yo'ah ben Asaph the recorder went out to them.

[19]The Rab-shaqeh said to them, 'Say to Hizqiyyahu, please, "The Great King, the king of Ashshur, has said this: 'What is this reliance that you have? [20]You've said, "Just the word on some lips are counsel and strength for the battle." Now, on whom have you relied, that you've rebelled against me? [21]Now, there, you've relied for yourself on the support of this broken reed, on Misrayim, which when someone leans on it, comes into his palm and pierces it. Such is Par'oh king of Misrayim to all the people who rely on him. [22]But when you say to me, "On Yahweh our God – we've relied on him", he's the one whose shrines and whose altars Hizqiyyahu has removed, isn't he, and who's said to Yehudah and to Yerushalaim, "Before this altar you're to bow low in Yerushalaim."

[23]But now, please make a wager with my lord the king of Ashshur. I'll give you 2,000 horses if you can put riders on them for yourself. [24]So how could you turn back the face of the governor of one of my lord's lesser servants and rely on Misrayim for chariotry and for cavalry for yourself? [25]Is it now without Yahweh that I've gone up to this place to devastate it? It was Yahweh who said to me, "Go up to this country and devastate it."'"'

Don't speak in their language

[26]Elyaqim ben Hilqiyyahu, Shebna and Yo'ah said to the Rab-shaqeh, 'Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, because we're listening. Don't speak to us in Yehudahite in the ears of the people, which is on the wall.' [27]The Rab-shaqeh said to them, 'Was it to your lord and to you that my lord sent me to speak these words? Wasn't it to the individuals who are sitting on the wall, to eat their faeces and to drink the water between their legs with you?'

[28]The Rab-shaqeh stood and called in a loud voice in Yehudahite, and spoke: 'Listen to the word of the Great King, the king of Ashshur. [29]The king has said this: "Hizqiyyahu must not deceive you", because he won't be able to rescue you from his hand. [30]And Hizqiyyahu must not get you to rely on Yahweh, saying "Yahweh will definitely rescue us; this town won't be given into the hand of the king of Ashshur." [31]Don't listen to Hizqiyyahu.

Because the king of Ashshur has said this: "Make a blessing [agreement]with me. Go out to me, and eat each one his vine and each one his fig tree, and drink each one the water from his cistern, [32]until I come and take you to a country like your country, a country of grain and new wine, a country of bread and vineyards, a country of fresh olive oil and syrup, and you will live and not die. Don't listen to Hizqiyyahu when he incites you, saying, 'Yahweh will rescue us.' [33]Have the gods of the nations actually rescued, one of them, his country from the hand of the king of Ashshur? [34]Where were the gods of Hamat and Arpad? Where were the gods of Sepharvayim, Hena and Ivvah? Indeed did they rescue Shomron from my hand? [35]Who was it among all the gods of the countries that rescued their country from my hand, that Yahweh should rescue Yerushalaim from my hand?"'

Perhaps Yahweh will listen

[36]They were silent. They didn't answer him a word, because it was the king's order, 'Don't answer him.' [37]But Elyaqim ben Hilqiyyah who was in charge of the household, Shebna the secretary and Yo'ah ben Asaph the recorder came to Hizqiyyahu, their clothes torn, and told him the Rab-shaqeh's words.

19 When King Hizqiyyahu heard, he tore his clothes and covered himself in sack. He came into Yahweh's house [2]but he sent Elyaqim, who was in charge of the household, Shebna the secretary and the priestly elders, covering themselves in sack, to Yesha'yahu [Isaiah] ben Amots the prophet. [3]They said to him, 'Hizqiyyahu has said this: "This is a day of pressure, reproof and disdain, because 'children have come to breaking but there's no energy to give birth'. [4]Perhaps Yahweh your God will listen to all the words of the Rab-shaqeh, whom the king of Ashshur his lord sent to revile the living God, and will issue a reproof for the words that Yahweh your God heard, and you will lift up a plea on behalf of the remains that are to be found here."'

[5]King Hizqiyyahu's servants came to Yesha'yahu, [6]and Yesha'yahu said to them, 'You're to say this to your lord: "Yahweh has said this: 'Don't be afraid before the words you've heard with which the king of Ashshur's boys have insulted me. [7]Here, I'm going to put a spirit in him, and he'll hear a report and go back to his country, and I shall cause him to fall by the sword in his country.'"'

[8]The Rab-shaqeh went back and found the king of Ashshur battling against Libnah, because he heard that he had moved on from Lakish, [9a]and he heard about Tirhaqah king of Kush [Sudan], 'There, he's gone out to battle with you.'

What to do with tricky mail

[9b]He again sent envoys to Hizqiyyahu, saying [10]'You're to say this to Hizqiyyahu king of Yehudah: "Your God on whom you're relying mustn't deceive you, saying, 'Yerushalaim won't be given into the hand of the king of Ashshur.' [11]Here, you yourself have heard what the kings of Ashshur have done to all the countries, devoting them, and are you the one who'll be rescued? [12]Did the gods of the nations that my ancestors devastated rescue them – Gozan, Harran, Retseph, and the Edenites who

were in Tela'ssar? [13]Where is the king of Hamat, the king of Arpad, the king of La'ir, Sepharvayim, Hena and Yivvah?"'
[14]Hizqiyyahu took the documents from the envoys' hand, read them out and went up to Yahweh's house. Hizqiyyahu spread it before Yahweh, [15]and Hizqiyyahu pleaded before Yahweh: 'Yahweh, Yisra'el's God, sitting above the sphinxes: you are God, you alone, for all the kingdoms of the earth. You are the one who made the heavens and the earth. [16]Yahweh, bend your ear and listen. Yahweh, open your eyes and see. Listen to the words of Sanherib that he has sent to revile the living God.
[17]Truly, Yahweh, the kings of Ashshur have put to the sword the nations, and their own country, [18]and put their gods into the fire, because they were not gods but rather the making of human hands, wood and stone, and they obliterated them. [19]But now, Yahweh our God, please deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may acknowledge that you alone are Yahweh God.'
[20]Yesha'yahu ben Amots sent to Hizqiyyahu saying, 'Yahweh, Yisra'el's God, with whom you pleaded concerning Sanherib king of Ashshur, has said this: "I have heard." [21a]This is the word that Yahweh has spoken about him.

Yahweh's own ridicule

[21b]Maiden Miss Tsiyyon
despises you, she ridicules you.
Behind you Miss Yerushalaim
has shaken her head.
[22]Whom have you reviled and insulted,
against whom have you lifted your voice?
You've raised your eyes on high
against Yisra'el's sacred one.
[23]By the hand of your envoys
you've reviled the Lord, and said:
'With the large number of my chariotry
I'm the one who's gone up
to the mountains' height,
Lebanon's farthest parts.
I've cut down the highest of its cedars,
the choicest of its junipers.
I've come to its ultimate lodge,
its forest of farmland.
[24]I'm the one who's dug
and drunk foreign water.
I've dried with the sole of my feet
all Misrayim's streams.'

[25]Haven't you heard?
– long ago I did it.
In days of old I formed it;
now I've made it come about.
It's happened, crashing fortified towns
into wasted heaps.
[26]Their inhabitants, short of ability,
are scared and shamed.
They were vegetation of the fields,
green herbage,
Grass on the roofs,
blasted before it grows up.
[27]Your staying, your going out, and your coming I know,
and your raging at me.
[28]Since you raged at me,
and your din came up into my ears,
I shall put my hook in your nose,
my bit in your mouth,
I shall make you go back
by the way that you came.

The promise for Hizqiyyahu

[29]This will be the sign for you:

This year, eat the natural growth;
in the second year, the secondary growth.
In the third year sow and reap,
plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

[30]An escape group from Yehudah's household that remains
will add root downwards and produce fruit above.

[31]Because a remainder will go out from Yerushalaim,
and an escape group from Mount Tsiyyon.
The passion of Yahweh of Armies
will do this.

[32]Therefore Yahweh has said this concerning the king of Ashshur:

He will not come into this town;
he will not shoot an arrow there.
He will not approach it with a shield;
he will not heap up a ramp against it.
[33]By the way that he comes he will go back;
into this city he will not come
(Yahweh's declaration).
[34]I will shield this town so as to deliver it,
for my sake and for the sake of David my servant.

[35]That night Yahweh's envoy went out and struck down 185,000 in the Ashshurites' camp. People started early in the morning – there, all of them were dead corpses.
[36]Sanherib king of Ashshur moved on and went, and returned and lived in Nineveh. [37]He was bowing low in the house of Nisrok his god when Adrammelek and Sar'etser his sons struck him down with the sword. While they escaped to the country of Ararat, Esar-haddon his son began to reign in place of him.

How to gain God's sympathy

20 In those days Hizqiyyahu became deathly ill. Yesha'yahu ben Amots the prophet came to him and said to him, 'Yahweh has said this: "Give orders to your household, because you're dying. You won't live on."' [2]He turned his face round to the wall and pleaded with Yahweh, [3]'Oh, Yahweh, please be mindful of how I've walked about before you in truth and with a perfect mind, and done what is good in your eyes.' Hizqiyyahu cried and cried much.
[4]Yesha'yahu had not gone out of the middle courtyard when Yahweh's word came to him: [5]'Go back and say to Hizqiyyahu, the chief of my people, "Yahweh, the God of David your ancestor, has said this: 'I have listened to your plea, I've seen your tears. Here, I'm going to heal you. On the third day you'll go up to Yahweh's house. [6]I shall add fifteen years to your time. From the fist of the king of Ashshur I shall rescue you and this town, and I shall shield this town for my sake and for David my servant's sake.'"' [7]Yesha'yahu said, 'Get a block of figs.' They got one and put it on the inflammation and he lived on.
[8]Hizqiyyahu had said to Yesha'yahu, 'What will be the sign that Yahweh will heal me and I shall go up to Yahweh's house on the third day?' [9]Yesha'yahu said, 'This will be the sign for you from Yahweh that Yahweh will do the thing that he has spoken of. The shadow has gone ten steps. Can it go back ten steps?' [10]Yehizqiyyahu said, 'It's a slight thing for the shadow to extend ten steps, not that the shadow should turn back ten steps.' [11]So Yesha'yahu the prophet called to Yahweh and he made the shadow go back ten steps on the steps where it had gone down, on the steps of Ahaz.

How to lose God's sympathy

[12]At that time Ber'odak Bal'adan ben Bal'adan king of Babel sent documents and an offering to Hizqiyyahu because he had heard that Hizqiyyahu was ill. [13]Hizqiyyahu heard about them and let them see his entire repository house, the silver, the gold, the spices and the fine oil, and his equipment house and everything that was to be found in his storehouses. There was not a thing that Hizqiyyahu didn't let them see in his house and in his entire realm.
[14]Yesha'yahu the prophet came to King Hizqiyyahu and said to him, 'What did these men say? Where did they come from to you?' Hizqiyyahu said, 'From a far country; they came from Babel.' [15]He said, 'What did they see in your house?' Hizqiyyahu said, 'They saw everything that's in my house. There wasn't a thing that I didn't let them see in my storehouses.'
[16]Yesha'yahu said to Hizqiyyahu, 'Listen to Yahweh's word: [17]"There, days are going to come when everything that's in your house, and that your ancestors have stored up until this day, will be carried to Babel. Not a thing will be left", Yahweh has said. [18]"Some of your descendants who will issue from you, whom you will father, will be taken and will become courtiers in the palace of the king of Babel."' [19]Hizqiyyahu said to Yesha'yahu, 'The word of Yahweh that you have spoken is good.' He said, 'Isn't it so, if there'll be well-being and truthfulness in my days?'
[20]The rest of the things about Hizqiyyahu and all his strength, and how he made the pool and the channel and brought the water into the town, are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Yehudah. [21]Hizqiyyahu lay down with his ancestors and Menashsheh his son began to reign in place of him.

How to be the bad guy

21 Menashsheh was twelve years of age when he began to reign and he reigned fifty-five years in Yerushalaim. His mother's

name was Hephtsibah. [2]He did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes in accordance with the offensive practices of the nations that Yahweh dispossessed from before the Yisra'elites. [3]He rebuilt the shrines that Hizqiyyahu his father obliterated, and set up altars for the Master and made a totem pole, as Ah'ab king of Yisra'el had done. He bowed low to all the heavenly army and served them. [4]He built altars in Yahweh's house of which Yahweh had said, 'In Yerushalaim I will put my name.' [5]He built altars for all the heavenly army in the two courtyards of Yahweh's house. [6]He made his son pass through fire and practised augury and divination and dealt with ghosts and spirits. He did much that was bad in Yahweh's eyes, so as to provoke him.

[7]He put a sculpture of Asherah that he made in the house of which Yahweh said to David and to Shelomoh [Solomon] his son, 'In this house and in Yerushalaim, which I chose from all Yisra'el's clans, I will put my name permanently. [8]And I shall not continue to make Yisra'el's foot wander from the land that I gave their ancestors, only if they keep watch to act in accordance with all that I ordered them, and regarding the entire instruction that my servant Mosheh ordered them.' [9]But they didn't listen, and Menashsheh got them to wander so as to deal badly more than the nations that Yahweh annihilated from before the Yisra'elites.

[10]Yahweh spoke by means of his servants the prophets: [11]'Since Menashsheh king of Yehudah has done these offensive things (he has dealt badly more than all that the Amorites did who were before him) and has also caused Yehudah to do wrong with his idols, [12]therefore Yahweh the God of Yisra'el has said this: "Here, I am going to bring bad fortune on Yerushalaim and Yehudah such that everyone who hears it – both his ears will screech.

Wiping the dish clean

[13]Over Yerushalaim I will stretch Shomron's measuring line and the household of Ah'ab's scale. I will wipe Yerushalaim clean as one wipes a dish clean, wipe it and turn it on its face. [14]I will leave the remains of my domain and give them into the hand of their enemies. They will be plunder and spoil for all their enemies, [15]since they've done what is bad in my eyes and they've been provoking me from the day that I got their ancestors out of Misrayim until this day."'

[16]Further, Menashsheh poured out very much blood of people who were free of guilt, until he filled Yerushalaim end to end, beside the wrong that he caused Yehudah to commit in doing what was bad in Yahweh's eyes. [17]The rest of the things about Menashsheh, all that he did and the wrongdoing that he committed, are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Yehudah, aren't they. [18]Menashsheh lay down with his ancestors and was buried in the garden of his house, in Uzza's Garden, and Amon his son began to reign in place of him.

[19]Amon was a man of twenty-two years when he began to reign and he reigned two years in Yerushalaim. His mother's name was Meshullemet bat Haruts, from Yotbah. [20]He did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes, as Menashsheh his father did. [21]He walked in all the way that his father walked, and served the idols that his father served and bowed low to them. [22]He abandoned Yahweh, his ancestors' God, and did not walk in Yahweh's way. [23]Amon's servants conspired against him and put the king to death in his house, [24]but the people of the country struck down all those who had conspired against King Amon. The people of the country made Yo'shiyyahu [Josiah] king in place of him.

[25]The rest of the things about Amon that he did are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Yehudah, aren't they. [26]They buried him in his grave in Uzza's Garden, and his son Yo'shiyyahu began to reign in place of him.

Last chance to take the Torah and the Prophets seriously

22 Yo'shiyyahu was eight years of age when he began to reign and he reigned thirty-one years in Yerushalaim. His mother's name was Yedidah bat Adayah, from Botsqat. [2]He did what was upright in Yahweh's eyes and walked in the entire way of David his ancestor. He did not depart right or left.

[3]In the eighteenth year of King Yo'shiyyahu, the king sent Shaphan ben Atsalyahu son of Meshullam to Yahweh's house, saying [4]'Go up to Hilqiyyahu the big priest so he may weigh the silver that's been brought to Yahweh's house, which the people keeping watch over the threshold have gathered from the people. [5]They're to put it into the hand of the people doing the work who were appointed to Yahweh's house, so they may give it to the people doing the work who are in Yahweh's house, to strengthen the defects in the house, [6]to the craftsmen, to the builders, to the masons, and for the acquiring of wood and hewn stones to strengthen the house. [7]Only there will be no reckoning made with them of the silver given into their hand, because they're acting with trustworthiness.'

[8]Hilqiyyahu, the big priest, said to Shaphan, the secretary, 'I've found an instruction document in Yahweh's house.' Hilqiyyahu gave the document to Shaphan and he read it out. [9]Shaphan the secretary came to the king and took back word to the king: 'Your servants have melted down the silver that was found in the house and they've given it into the hand of the people doing the work who were appointed to Yahweh's house.' [10]And Shaphan the secretary told the king, 'Hilqiyyah the priest gave me a document.' Shaphan read it out before the king.

The tough and gentle prophetess

[11]When the king heard the words in the instruction document, he tore his clothes. [12]The king ordered Hilqiyyah the priest, Ahiqam ben Shaphan, Akbor ben Mikayah, Shaphan the secretary and Asayah the king's servant, [13]'Go enquire of Yahweh on my behalf and on behalf of the people and on behalf of all Yehudah about the words in this document that's been found, because great is Yahweh's wrath that has set on fire against us because our ancestors didn't listen to the words in this document by acting in accordance with everything that's written for us.'

[14]Hilqiyyahu the priest went, with Ahiqam, Akbor, Shaphan and Asayah, to Huldah the prophetess, wife of Shallum ben Tikvah son of Harhas, keeper of the robes; she was living in Yerushalaim in the Second Quarter. They spoke to her.

[15]She said to them, ‘Yahweh the God of Yisra’el has said this: “Say to the man who sent you to me: [16]‘Yahweh has said this: “Here, I’m going to bring bad fortune to this place and to its inhabitants, all the things in the document that the king of Yehudah read out, [17]because of the fact that they abandoned me and burned incense to other gods in order to provoke me with all the actions of their hands. My wrath will set on fire against this place and it will not douse.”’”
[18]But to the king of Yehudah who sent you to enquire of Yahweh, you’re to say this to him: “Yahweh the God of Yisra’el has said this: ‘The words that you have heard: [19]since your mind softened and you bowed down before Yahweh when you heard what I had spoken against this place and against its inhabitants (becoming a desolation and a slighting) and you tore your clothes and cried before me, I for my part have also listened (Yahweh’s declaration). [20]Therefore, here, I am going to gather you to your ancestors and you will gather yourself to your great grave with things being well. Your eyes will not see all the bad fortune that I am going to bring on this place.’”’ They took the word back to the king.

The covenant and the clean-up

23 The king sent and gathered to him all the elders of Yehudah and Yerushalaim, [2]and the king went up to Yahweh’s house, with everyone in Yehudah and all the inhabitants of Yerushalaim with him, and the priests and the prophets, and the entire people, young and old. He read out in their ears all the words in the pact document found in Yahweh’s house. [3]The king stood by the pillar and solemnized a pact before Yahweh, to follow Yahweh and keep his orders, his affirmations and his decrees with their entire mind and with their entire being, by setting up the words of this pact that were written on this document. The entire people stood by the pact.
[4]The king ordered Hilqiyyahu the big priest, the priests of the second order, and the people keeping watch over the threshold to take out from Yahweh’s palace all the articles made for the Master and for Asherah and for the entire heavenly army, and he burned them outside Yerushalaim in the Qidron Fields, and carried their dust to Bet-el. [5]He did away with the clergy whom the kings of Yehudah had made to burn incense in the shrines in the towns of Yehudah and the areas round Yerushalaim, and the people who burned incense for the Master, for the sun, for the moon, for the constellations and for the entire heavenly army. [6]He took the totem pole out of Yahweh’s house, outside of Yerushalaim, to Wadi Qidron, and burned it in Wadi Qidron, crushed it to dust and threw its dust over the grave of the ordinary people. [7]He demolished the houses of the hierodules that were in Yahweh’s house, where the women were weaving ‘houses’ for the totem pole.
[8]He brought all the priests from the towns of Yehudah and defiled the shrines where the priests burned incense, from Geba as far as Be’er-sheba. He demolished the shrines at the gateways, which were at the entrance of the gateway of Yehoshua, the official over the town, which were on one’s left at the town gateway. [9]Yet the priests of the shrines did not go up to Yahweh’s altar in Yerushalaim; rather, they ate flatbread among their brothers.

Honouring the long-ago prophets

[10]He defiled the Hearth which is in the Ben-hinnom Ravine so that no one would make his son or his daughter pass through fire to the Shameful King. [11]He did away with the horses that the kings of Yehudah gave for the sun, from the entrance of Yahweh’s house, near the hall of Natan-melek the courtier, which was in the precincts. He burned the sun chariots in fire. [12]The altars that were on the roof of Ahaz’s upper quarters, which the kings of Yehudah had made, and the altars that Menashsheh had made in the two courtyards of Yahweh’s house, the king demolished. He ran from there and threw their dust into Wadi Qidron.
[13]The shrines that were facing Yerushalaim, which were south of Destroyer Mountain, which Shelomoh king of Yisra’el had built for Shameful Ashtar the abomination of the Tsidonites, for Kemosh the abomination of Mo’ab and for Milkom the offence of the Ammonites, the king defiled. [14]He broke up the columns and cut up the totem poles and filled their site with human bones.
[15]Also the altar which was at Bet-el (the shrine that Yarob’am ben Nebat, who caused Yisra’el to do wrong, made) – also that altar and the shrine, he demolished. He burned the shrine and beat it to dust, and burned the totem pole.
[16]Yo’shiyyahu turned his face and saw the graves that were there on the mountain. He sent and got the bones from the graves and burned them on the altar, and defiled it in accordance with Yahweh’s word that the supernatural man called out, who called out these things. [17]He said, ‘What’s that sign that I’m looking at?’ The people of the town said to him, ‘The grave of the supernatural man who came from Yehudah and called out these things that you have done to the Bet-el altar.’ [18]He said, ‘Let him be. No one is to disturb his bones.’ So they saved his bones, and the bones of the prophet who came from Shomron.

The incomparable reformer

[19]All the houses at the shrines that were in the towns of Shomron, which the kings of Yisra’el had made so as to provoke, Yo’shiyyahu also removed. He acted towards them in accordance with the actions that he undertook at Bet’el. [20]He sacrificed all the priests of the shrines who were there, on the altars, and burned human bones on them, and went back to Yerushalaim.
[21]The king ordered the entire people: ‘Make Pesah [Passover] for Yahweh your God as is written on this pact document.’ [22]Because it had not been made like this Pesah since the days of the leaders who had led Yisra’el or all the days of the kings of Yisra’el and the kings of Yehudah. [23]Rather, in the eighteenth year of King Yo’shiyyahu this Pesah was made for Yahweh in Yerushalaim.
[24]The ghosts, the spirits, the effigies, the idols and all the abominations that were to be seen in the country of Yehudah and in Yerushalaim, Yo’shiyyahu also burned away, in order to implement the things in the instruction that were written on the document that Hilqiyyahu the priest had found in Yahweh’s house.
[25]Before him there was no king like him who turned back to Yahweh with his entire mind, with his entire being and with his entire might in accordance with Mosheh’s entire instruction, and after him none rose up like him. [26]Yet Yahweh did not turn back

from the great angry rage with which his anger raged against Yehudah because of all the provocative acts with which Menashsheh had provoked him. [27]Yahweh said, 'Yehudah, too, I shall remove from before my face, as I removed Yisra'el. I shall reject this town that I chose, Yerushalaim, and the house of which I said, "My name will be there."'

The loss of Yo'shiyyahu

[28]The rest of the things about Yo'shiyyahu and all that he did are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Yehudah, aren't they. [29]In his days Par'oh Neko king of Misrayim went up against the king of Ashshur at the River Euphrates. King Yo'shiyyahu went to meet him, but he put him to death at Megiddo when he saw him. [30]His servants transported him dead from Megiddo and brought him to Yerushalaim, and buried him in his grave.

The people of the country got Yeho'ahaz ben Yo'shiyyahu, and anointed him and made him king in place of his father. [31]Yeho'ahaz was a man of twenty-three years when he began to reign and he reigned three months in Yerushalaim. His mother's name was Hamutal bat Yirmeyahu, from Libnah. [32]He did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes in accordance with all that his ancestors had done. [33]Par'oh Neko confined him at Riblah in the region of Hamat to stop him reigning in Yerushalaim, and put a levy on the country of a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold.

[34]Par'oh Neko made Elyaqim ben Yo'shiyyahu king in place of his father, but turned his name into Yehoyaqim. He took Yeho'ahaz, and he came to Misrayim and died there. [35]The silver and the gold Yehoyaqim gave to Par'oh, only he assessed the country so as to give the silver in accordance with Par'oh's bidding. Each person according to his assessment, he exacted the silver and the gold from the people of the country so as to give it to Par'oh Neko.

[36]Yehoyaqim was a man of twenty-five years when he began to reign and he reigned eleven years in Yerushalaim. His mother's name was Zebudah bat Pedayah, from Rumah. [37]He did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes, in accordance with all that his ancestors did.

How things start to collapse

24 In his days Nebukadne'tstsar king of Babel went up and Yehoyaqim became his servant for three years, but he turned back and rebelled against him. [2]Yahweh sent against him raiding gangs of the Kasdites [Babylonians], raiding gangs from Aram, raiding gangs from Mo'ab and raiding gangs of the Ammonites. He sent them against Yehudah to obliterate it, in accordance with Yahweh's word which he spoke by means of his servants the prophets. [3]Indeed, it was at Yahweh's bidding that it happened to Yehudah, to remove them from before his face because of Menashsheh's wrongdoings, in accordance with all that he did, [4]and also the blood of people who were free of guilt that he had shed. He had filled Yerushalaim with the blood of people free of guilt, and Yahweh was not willing to pardon.

[5]The rest of the things about Yehoyaqim and all that he did are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Yehudah, aren't they. [6]Yehoyaqim lay down with his ancestors and his son Yehoyakin began to reign in place of him. [7]The king of Misrayim did not go out of his country again, because the king of Babel had taken all that had belonged to the king of Misrayim from the Misrayimite Wadi as far as the River Euphrates.

[8]Yehoyakin was eighteen years of age when he began to reign and he reigned three months in Yerushalaim. His mother's name was Nehushta bat Elnatan, from Yerushalaim. [9]He did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes, in accordance with all that his father did. [10]At that time the servants of Nebukadne'tstsar king of Babel went up to Yerushalaim and the town came under siege. [11]Nebukadne'tstsar king of Babel came against the town while his servants were besieging it, [12]and Yehoyakin king of Yehudah went out to the king of Babel, he, his mother, his servants, his officials and his courtiers. The king of Babel took him in the eighth year of his reign.

The first Yehudahite exile and the final siege

[13]He took away from there the treasures of Yahweh's house and the treasures of the king's house, and cut off all the gold objects that Shelomoh had made in Yahweh's palace, as Yahweh had said. [14]He exiled all Yerushalaim, all the officials and all the forceful strong men, 10,000 exiles, and every craftsman and smith. No one remained apart from the poorest element of the people in the country. [15]He exiled Yehoyakin to Babel, and the king's mother, the king's wives, his courtiers and the country's leaders he made go as exiles from Yerushalaim to Babel, [16]with all the forceful men, 7,000 (and craftsman and smith, 1,000), all of them the strong men doing battle. The king of Babel made them come as exiles to Babel.

[17]The king of Babel made Mattanyah, his uncle, king in place of him, and turned his name to Tsidqiyyahu [Zedekiah]. [18]Tsidqiyyahu was twenty-one years of age when he began to reign and he reigned eleven years in Yerushalaim. His mother's name was Hamutal bat Yirmeyahu, from Libnah. [19]He did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes in accordance with all that Yehoyaqim had done, [20]because of the fact that Yahweh's anger was against Yerushalaim and against Yehudah until he threw them out of his presence.

Tsidqiyyahu rebelled against the king of Babel,

25 and in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth of the month, Nebukadne'tstsar king of Babel came against Yerushalaim, he and his entire force. He camped against it and built blockades all round. [2]The town came under siege until the eleventh year of King Tsidqiyyahu. [3]On the ninth of the month the famine had become overwhelming in the town and there was no bread for the people of the country. [4a]The town broke open, and all the men of battle [left] in the night by way of the gateway between the double wall which was by the king's garden, while the Kasdites were all round the town.

The destruction and the second Yehudahite exile

[4b]He went by the steppe road, [5]but the Kasdite force pursued after the king. They overtook him in the Yeriho steppes when his entire force had scattered from him. [6]They captured the king and took him up to the king of Babel at Riblah, and he pronounced a decision about him. [7]Tsidqiyyahu's sons they slaughtered before his eyes, Tsidqiyyahu's eyes he gouged out, and he bound him with copper chains and brought him to Babel.

[8]In the fifth month, on the seventh of the month (i.e. the nineteenth year of King Nebukadne'tstsar king of Babel), Nebuzar'adan the chief of the guards, servant of the king of Babel, came to Yerushalaim [9]and burned Yahweh's house, the king's house and all the houses in Yerushalaim. Every house of a big person he burned in fire. [10]The walls round Yerushalaim, the entire Kasdite force that was with the chief of the guards demolished. [11]The rest of the people who remained in the town and the people who had submitted (who had submitted to the king of Babel) and the rest of the horde, Nebuzar'adan the chief of the guards took into exile, [12]but some of the poorest elements in the country the chief of the guards let remain as vinedressers and farm workers.

[13]The copper pillars that were in Yahweh's house, and the stands and the copper sea that were in Yahweh's house, the Kasdites broke up and carried their copper to Babel. [14]The buckets, the shovels, the snuffers, the ladles and all the copper articles with which they ministered, they took. [15]The pans and the sprinklers, whatever was of gold and whatever was of silver, the chief of the guards took. [16]The two pillars, the one sea and the stands that Shelomoh made for Yahweh's house – there was no weighing the copper in all these articles. [17]The height of the one pillar was nine metres, with a copper capital on it; the height of the capital was one and a half metres, with a net with pomegranates on the capital all round, all of it copper, and like these was the second pillar with the net.

Is it the end or is there hope?

[18]The chief of the guards took Serayah the head priest, Tsephanyahu the number two priest and the three keepers of the threshold, [19]and from the town he took a courtier who was appointee over the men of battle, and five people from the heads who were before the king, who were found in the town, the secretary of the army officer who mustered the people of the country, and sixty individuals from the people of the country who were found in the town. [20]Nebuzar'adan the chief of the guards took them and made them go to the king of Babel at Riblah. [21]The king of Babel struck them down and put them to death at Riblah, in the region of Hamat.

So Yehudah went into exile from upon its land, [22]while the people that remained in the country of Yehudah whom Nebukadne'tstsar king of Babel allowed to remain – he appointed over them Gedalyahu ben Ahiqam son of Shaphan. [23]All the officers of the forces, they and their men, heard that the king of Babel had appointed Gedalyahu, and they came to Gedalyahu at The Watchtower, with Yishma'e'l ben Netanyah, Yohanan ben Qareah, Serayah ben Tanhumet the Netophatite and Ya'azanyahu son of the Ma'akatite, and their men. [24]Gedalyahu swore to them and to their men, and said, 'Don't be afraid of the Kasdites' servants. Stay in the country. Serve the king of Babel. Things will be good for you.'

[25]But in the seventh month Yishma'e'l ben Netanyah son of Elishama, of royal descent, came with ten men with him, and struck down Gedalyahu and put him to death, him and the Yehudahites and the Kasdites who were with him at The Watchtower. [26]And all the people, young and old, and the officers over the forces, set off and came to Misrayim, because they were afraid of the Kasdites.

[27]But in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Yehoyakin king of Yehudah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh of the month, Ewil-merodak king of Babel, in the year he began to reign, lifted up the head of Yehoyakin king of Yehudah from the cells. [28]He spoke of good things with him, gave him a seat above the seat of the kings who were with him in Babel [29]and changed his prison clothes. He ate bread before him regularly for his entire life. [30]His provision was given him as a regular provision from the king, a day's allocation on its day, for his entire life.

1 Chronicles

The first book of Chronicles retells the entire story from Adam to David which is told in Genesis to Samuel. Why does it do so, and why does the Bible include two versions of the story? One could compare the fact that the New Testament includes four versions of the Jesus story. It would be less confusing to have just one. But a good story can be told from different angles, and the more you tell it, the more illuminating it becomes. You get a different take on it, you get a different author's angle on what it means and you look at it from the perspective of a different audience.

The first thing that strikes you when you start reading Chronicles is that the opening third is just lists of names. In part, that's the way it summarizes the entire story from Adam to David. It's a bit like the opening frames of an episode in a TV serial that provide a lightning reminder of the story so far. This 'series' as a whole is going to focus on David, but the audience needs to see David in his context in the entire story of Israel – indeed, the entire story of the world. This entire story leads up to him. But the chapters also preserve lots of other information that helps the readers know where they came from. The coverage is uneven; perhaps it simply preserves what was available.

The lists of names include references to people living much later than David's day, and Book One of Chronicles as a whole leads into Book Two which takes the story on through another five centuries after David, up to the time when people from Judah are taken off into exile and are then encouraged to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. So Chronicles was not written in David's day, which makes that focus striking. Chronicles is a version of Israel's story told by someone living in Jerusalem in the time of the Second Temple and told for people living in that context. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah and the visions in Daniel give us some insight into events during those times.

Why does Chronicles focus on David? The answer emerges when we consider the book's angle on its hero. Its interest lies not in the great warrior or the smart operator of 1 and 2 Samuel, nor is he the intriguing human being with clay feet that those books also portray. Those books also relate how David set going the process whereby the first temple was built, and it's this aspect of David's achievement that interests Chronicles.

Its angle would be significant for people living in Second Temple times. They were hard times. The community in Judah that centred on Jerusalem was a shadow of its former self. Geographically it was the size of a county, not a country. Politically it was a colony of the Persian Empire. Its faith and its life were often under pressure from neighbouring peoples. When things are like that, how do you hold on?

The Old Testament gives people several complementary answers. The prophets' answer is that you look to the future and tell yourself that things are going to get better. Judah was not just whistling in the wind when it lived by such hopes. God had made a commitment to David that God could not get out of, and people could live in the light of promises that God would one day send them a new David.

A complementary answer is that you look to the past, to what God has done in the past, and it is this answer that attracts Chronicles. Its interest in the past doesn't focus on creation, Abraham, the exodus, or Joshua, but on David. It does so from this angle, David as founder of the temple worship. Telling that story encourages people in Jerusalem to live in the present, because for all the limitations of present experience, one great privilege they do have is the daily round of temple worship. Some of the lists in the first third of the book, and the lists in the last third, relate to the actual arrangements for worship and other aspects of community life in David's day, and in the time of the book's readers.

That daily worship is also significant for people who don't live in Jerusalem. The priest in an English church used to ring the church bell before going into church morning and evening. People who could not respond to the summons could know that the priest was conducting the prayers and could join in at a distance. Elsewhere in Judah, people could know that temple worship was being offered and could associate themselves with it. They could even do so from many miles away, as Daniel did.

In the beginning

1 Adam, Seth, Enosh, [2]Kenan, Mahalalel, Yared, [3]Hanok [Enoch], Methuselah, Lamek, [4]Noah, Shem, Ham and Yaphet.
[5]Yaphet's sons: Gomer, Magog, Maday, Yavan [Greece], Tubal, Meshek and Tiras.
[6]Gomer's sons: Ashkenaz, Diphat and Togarmah.
[7]Yavan's sons: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittites and Rodanites.
[8]Ham's sons: Kush [Sudan], Misrayim [Egypt], Put and Kena'an [Canaan].
[9]Kush's sons: Seba, Havilah, Sabta, Ra'ama and Sabteka.
Ra'ama's sons: Sheba and Dedan.
[10]Kush fathered Nimrod; he was the first to be a strong man on the earth.
[11]Misrayim fathered Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, [12]Patrusites, Kasluhites (Pelishtites [Philistines] came out from there) and Kaphtorites.
[13]Kena'an fathered Tsidon (his firstborn), Het, [14]the Yebusite, the Amorite, the Girgashite, [15]the Hivvite, the Arkite, the Sinite, [16]the Arvadite, the Tsemarite and the Hamatite.
[17]Shem's sons: Elam, Ashshur, Arpakshad, Lud, Aram, Uts, Hul, Geter and Meshek.
[18]Arpakshad fathered Shelah and Shelah fathered Eber.
[19]To Eber two sons were born:
The name of the one was Peleg ['Division'] because in his days the earth divided.
His brother's name was Yoktan.
[20]Yoktan fathered Almodad, Sheleph, Hatsarmavet, Yerah, [21]Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, [22]Ebal, Abima'el, Sheba, [23]Ophir, Havilah and Yobab; all these were Yoktan's sons.
[24]Shem, Arpakshad, Shelah, [25]Eber, Peleg, Re'u, [26]Serug, Nahor, Terah, [27]Abram (i.e. Abraham).

[28]Abraham's sons: Yitshaq [Isaac] and Yishma'e'l; [29]these are their lines of descent:
Yishma'el's firstborn, Nebayot, Qedar, Adbe'el, Mibsam, [30]Mishma, Dumah, Massa, [31]Hadad, Tema, Yetur, Naphish and Qedemah; these are Yishma'e'l's sons.
[32]The sons of Qeturah, Abraham's secondary wife: she gave birth to Zimran, Yoqshan, Medan, Midyan, Yishbaq and Shuah.
Yoqshan's sons: Sheba and Dedan.
[33]Midyan's sons: Ephah, Epher, Hanok, Abida and Elda'ah; all these were Qeturah's sons.

Esaw's line

[34]Abraham fathered Yitshaq.
Yitshaq's sons: Esaw and Yisra'el.
[35]Esaw's sons: Eliphaz, Re'u'el, Ye'ush, Ya'lam and Qorah.
[36]Eliphaz's sons: Teman, Omar, Tsephi, Ga'tam, Qenaz, Timna, and Amaleq;
[37]Re'u'el's sons: Nahat, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah;
[38]Se'ir's sons: Lotan, Shobal, Tsib'on, Anah, Dishon, Etser and Dishan;
[39]Lotan's sons: Hori and Homam; and Timna was Lotan's sister;
[40]Shobal's sons: Alyan, Manahat, Ebal, Shephi and Onam;
Tsib'on's sons: Ayyah and Anah;
[41]Anah's sons: Dishon;
Dishon's sons: Hamran, Eshban, Yitran and Keran;
[42]Etser's sons: Bilhan, Za'avan, Ya'aqan;
Dishan's sons: Uts and Aran.
[43]These are the kings who reigned in the country of Edom before a king reigned among the Yisra'elites:
Bela ben Be'or; his town's name was Dinhabah.
[44]Bela died, and Yobab ben Zerah from Botsrah began to reign in place of him.
[45]Yobab died, and Husham from the Temanites' country began to reign in place of him.
[46]Husham died, and Hadad ben Bedad, who struck down Midyan in Mo'ab's area, began to reign in place of him; his town's name was Avit.
[47]Hadad died, and Samlah from Masrekah began to reign in place of him.
[48]Samlah died, and Sha'ul from Broads-on-the-River began to reign in place of him.
[49]Sha'ul died, and Ba'al Hanan ben Akbor began to reign in place of him.
[50]Ba'al Hanan died, and Hadad began to reign in place of him; his town's name was Pa'i, and his wife's name was Mehetabel bat Matred, the daughter of Gold Water.
[51]Hadad died.
The Edomite clans were:
the Timna clan;
the Alvah clan;
the Yetet clan;
[52]the Oholibamah clan;
the Elah clan;
the Pinon clan;
[53]the Qenaz clan;
the Teman clan;
the Mibtsar clan;
[54]the Magdi'el clan;
the Iram clan.
These were the Edomite clans.

The beginning of Yehudah's line

2 These are Yisra'el's sons:
Re'uben, Shim'on, Levi, Yehudah, Yissakar, Zebulun, [2]Dan, Yoseph, Binyamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.
[3]Yehudah's sons: Er, Onan and Shelah (the three were born to him from Bat-shua the Kena'anite); Er, Yehudah's firstborn, was bad in Yahweh's eyes, and he put him to death; [4]since Tamar his daughter-in-law gave birth to Perets and Zerah for him, altogether Yehudah's sons were five.
[5]Perets's sons: Hezron and Hamul;
[6]Zerah's sons: Zimri, Etan, Heman, Kalkol and Dara – five altogether;
[7]Karmi's sons: Akar ['Trouble'], the troubler of Yisra'el, who trespassed on something devoted;
[8]Etan's sons: Azaryah;
[9]Hezron's sons, who were born to him: Yerahme'el, Ram and Kelubay;
[10]Ram fathered Amminadab, Amminadab fathered Nahshon, a leader of the Yehudahites, [11]Nahshon fathered Salma, Salma fathered Bo'az, [12]Bo'az fathered Obed, and Obed fathered Yishay.
[13]Yishay fathered Eli'ab as his firstborn, Abinadab the second, Shim'a the third, [14]Netan'el the fourth, Radday the fifth,

[15]Otsem the sixth, David the seventh.
[16]Their sisters were Tseruyah and Abigayil.
Tseruyah's sons: Abshay, Yo'ab and Asah'el – three.
[17]Abigayil gave birth to Amasa; Amasa's father was Yeter the Yishma'e'lite.
[18]Kaleb ben Hezron fathered children with Azubah his wife, and with Yeri'ot; these were her sons: Yesher, Shobab and Ardon.
[19]Azubah died and Kaleb took himself Ephrat, who gave birth to Hur for him.
[20]Hur fathered Uri and Uri fathered Betsal'el.
[21]Afterwards, Hezron had sex with a daughter of Makir, father of Gil'ad; he had taken her when he was a man of sixty years and she gave birth to Segub for him.
[22]Segub fathered Ya'ir; he had twenty-three towns in the region of Gil'ad, [23]but Geshur and Aram took from them the Villages of Ya'ir, Qenat and its daughter-towns, sixty towns; all these were sons of Makir, father of Gil'ad.
[24]After Hezron's death in Kaleb Ephratah, Hezron's wife Abiyyah gave birth to Ashhur, father of Teqoa, for him.

Yehudah's line

[25]The sons of Yerahme'el, Hezron's firstborn, were: the firstborn Ram, Bunah, Oren, Ozem and Ahiyyah.
[26]Yerahme'el had another wife and her name was Atarah; she was the mother of Onam.
[27]The sons of Ram, Yerahme'el's firstborn, were: Ma'ats, Yamin and Eqer.
[28]Onam's sons were: Shammay and Yada.
Shammay's sons: Nadab and Abishur.
[29]The name of Abishur's wife was Abihayil; she gave birth to Ahban and Molid for him.
[30]Nadab's sons: Seled and Appayim.
Seled died without sons.
[31]Appayim's sons: Yish'i;
Yish'i's sons: Sheshan;
Sheshan's sons: Ahlay.
[32]The sons of Yada, Shammay's brother: Yeter and Yonatan.
Yeter died without sons.
[33]Yonatan's sons: Pelet and Zaza.
These were Yerahme'el's sons.
[34]Sheshan did not have sons, but rather daughters, but Sheshan had a Misrayimite servant and his name was Yarha; [35]Sheshan gave his daughter to Yarha his servant as wife, and she gave birth to Attay for him.
[36]Attay fathered Natan, Natan fathered Zabad, [37]Zabad fathered Ephlal, Ephlal fathered Obed, [38]Obed fathered Yehu, Yehu fathered Azaryah, [39]Azaryah fathered Helets, Helets fathered El'asah, [40]El'asah fathered Sismay, Sismay fathered Shallum, [41]Shallum fathered Yeqamyah and Yeqamyah fathered Elishama.

Kaleb's line

[42]The sons of Kaleb, Yerahme'el's brother:
Mesha his firstborn; he was the father of Ziph.
The sons of Mareshah, father of Hebron.
[43]Hebron's sons: Qorah, Tappuah, Reqem, and Shema.
[44]Shema fathered Raham the father of Yorqo'am.
Reqem fathered Shammay.
[45]Shammay's son was Ma'on; Ma'on was the father of Bet-tsur.
[46]Ephah, Kaleb's secondary wife, gave birth to Haran, Motsa and Gazez.
Haran fathered Gazez.
[47]Yahday's sons: Regem, Yotam, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah and Sha'aph.
[48]Kaleb's secondary wife Ma'akah gave birth to Sheber and Tirhanah, [49]she gave birth to Sha'aph the father of Madmannah, Sheva the father of Makbenah, and the father of Gib'a, and Kaleb's daughter was Aksah; [50]these were Kaleb's children.
The son of Hur, Ephratah's firstborn: Shobal father of Ye'arim Township, [51]Salma father of Bet-lehem, Hareph father of Bet-gader.
[52]Shobal father of Ye'arim Township had sons, Haro'eh, half of the Menuhot, [53]and the kin-groups of Ye'arim Township: the Itrites, the Putites, the Shumatites and the Mishra'ites (from these the Tsor'atites and the Eshta'olites came).
[54]Salma's sons: Bet Lehem, Netophatites, Atrot Bet Yo'ab, half the Manahatites (the Tsor'ites), [55]and the kin-groups of the secretaries living in Ya'bets, Tir'atites, Shim'atites, Sukatites; these are the Qenites who come from Hamat, father of Rekab's household.

David's line

3 These were David's sons who were born to him in Hebron:
the firstborn Amnon, by Ahino'am the Yizre'e'lite;
the second Daniyye'l, by Abigayil the Carmelite;
[2]the third Abshalom, the son of Ma'akah the daughter of Talmay king of Geshur;

the fourth Adoniyyah, the son of Haggit;
[3]the fifth Shephatyah, by Abital;
the sixth Yitre'am, by Eglah his wife.
[4]Six were born to him in Hebron; he reigned there seven years and six months, in Yerushalaim he reigned thirty-three years, [5]and these were born to him in Yerushalaim:
Shim'a, Shobab, Natan and Shelomoh [Solomon] – four by Bat-shua bat Ammi'el;
[6]Yibhar, Elishama, Eliphelet, [7]Nogah, Nepheg, Yaphia, [8]Elishama, Elyada and Eliphelet – nine.
[9]All were David's sons, besides the secondary wives' sons; and Tamar was their sister.

[10]Shelomoh's son: Rehab'am [Rehoboam]; his son Abiyyah; his son Asa; his son Yehoshaphat; [11]his son Yoram; his son Ahazyahu; his son Yo'ash; [12]his son Amatsyahu; his son Azaryah; his son Yotam; [13]his son Ahaz; his son Hizqiyyahu; his son Menashsheh; [14]his son Amon; his son Yo'shiyyahu.

[15]Yo'shiyyahu 's sons: the first-born Yohanan, the second Yehoyaqim, the third Tsidqiyyahu, the fourth Shallum.
[16]Yehoyaqim's sons: his son Yekonyah, his son Tsidqiyyahyu.
[17]The sons of Yekonyah, the captive: She'alti'el his son, [18]Malkiram, Pedayah, Shen'atstsar, Yeqamyah, Hoshama and Nedabyah.
[19]Pedayah's sons: Zerubbabel and Shim'i.
Zerubbabel's sons: Meshullam and Hananyah; and Shelomit was their sister.
[20]Hashubah, Ohel, Berekyah, Hasadyah, Yushab Hesed – five;
[21]Hananyah's son: Pelatyah and Yesha'yah;
Rephayah's sons, Arnan's sons, Obadyah's sons, Shekanyah's sons;
[22]Shekanyah's sons: Shemayah;
Shemayah's sons: Hattush, Yig'al, Bariah, Ne'aryah and Shaphat – six;
[23]Ne'aryah's son: Elyo'enay, Hizqiyyah and Azriqam – three;
[24]Elyo'enay's sons: Hodavyah, Elyashib, Pelayah, Aqqub, Yohanan, Delayah and Anani – seven.

The prayer of Ya'bets

4 Yehudah's sons: Perets, Hezron, Karmi, Hur and Shobal.
[2]Re'ayah ben Shobal fathered Yahat; Yahat fathered Ahumay and Lahad; these were the kin-groups of the Tsor'atites.
[3]The father of Etam, these: Yizre'e'l, Yishma and Yidbash, and their sister's name was Hatslelponi.
[4]Penu'el was the father of Gedor and Ezer was the father of Hushah.
These were the sons of Hur, the firstborn of Ephratah, the father of Bet Lehem.
[5]Asshur the father of Teqoa had two wives, Hel'ah and Na'arah.
[6]Na'arah gave birth to Ahuzzam, Hepher, Temeni and Ha'ahashtari for him; these were Na'arah's sons.
[7]Helah's sons: Tseret, Tsohar and Etnan.
[8]Qots fathered Anub, Hatstsobebah and the kin-groups of Aharhel ben Harum.
[9]Ya'bets was more honourable than his brothers. His mother had named him Ya'bets 'Because I gave birth to him in suffering pain [*otseb*]'. [10]Ya'bets called to the God of Yisra'el, 'If only you will really bless me and enlarge my territory and your hand will be with me and you will act against bad fortune so that I don't suffer pain'. God brought about what he asked.
[11]Kelub, Shuhah's brother, fathered Mehir; he was father of Eshton.
[12]Eshton fathered Bet Rapha, Paseah, and Tehinnah, father of Ir Nahash; these were the people of Rekah.

More Yehudahites

[13]Qenaz's sons: Otni'el and Seryah;
Otni'el's sons: Hatat [14]and Me'onotay; he fathered Ophrah.
Seryah fathered Yo'ab, father of Craftsmen's Ravine (because they were craftsmen).
[15]The sons of Kaleb ben Yephunneh: Iru, Elah and Na'am, the sons of Elah, and Qenaz.
[16]Yehallel'el's sons: Ziph, Ziphah, Tirya and Asar'el.
[17]Ezrah's sons: Yeter, Mered, Epher and Yalon.
She got pregnant with Miryam, Shammay and Yishbah father of Eshtemoa; [18]his Yehudahite wife gave birth to Yered father of Gedor, Heber father of Soko, and Yequti'el father of Zanoah; these were the sons of Bityah, daughter of Par'oh [Pharaoh], whom Mered took.
[19]The sons of Hodiyyah's wife, Naham's sister: the father of Qe'ilah the Garmite and Eshtemoa the Ma'akatite.
[20]Shimon's sons: Amnon, Rinnah, Ben-hanan and Tilon.
Yishi's sons: Zohat and Ben-zohet.
[21]The sons of Shelah son of Yehudah: Er father of Lekah, La'addah father of Mareshah, the kin-groups of the linen service household at Bet Ashbea, [22]Yoqim, the people of Kozeba, Yo'ash and Saraph who ruled in Mo'ab, and Yashubi Lehem (the words are ancient). [23]They were the potters and the people who lived at Neta'im and Gederah; they lived there with the king, in working for him.

Descendants of Shim'on

[24]Shim'on's sons: Nemu'el, Yamin, Yarib, Zerah, Sha'ul;
[25]Shallum his son, Mibsam his son, Mishma his son;
[26]Mishma's sons: Hammu'el his son, Zakkur his son, Shim'i his son;
[27]Shim'i had sixteen sons and six daughters, but his brothers didn't have many sons.
Their entire kin-group did not produce as many as the Yehudahites. [28]They lived

in Be'er-sheba
in Moladah
in Hatsar Shu'a,
[29]in Bilhah
in Etsem
in Tolad
[30]in Betu'el
in Hormah
in Tsiqlag,
[31]in Bet Markabot
in Hatsar Susim
in Bet Bir'i
and in Sha'arayim.

These were their towns until David began to reign; [32]and their villages, Etam, Ayin, Rimmon, Token and Ashan (five towns), [33]and all their villages that were round these towns as far as Ba'al. These were their settlements.
They had their enrolment by genealogy:

[34]Meshobab
Yamlek
Yoshah ben
Amatsyah
[35]Yo'el
Yehu ben Yoshibyah son of Serayah son of Asi'el
[36]Elyo'enay
Ya'aqobah
Yeshohayah
Asayah
Adi'el
Yesimi'el
Benayah
[37]Ziza ben Shiph'I son of Allon son of Yedayah son of Shimri son of Shema'yah

[38]These who come by name were leaders in their kin-groups.
Their ancestral households broke out so as to become a large number [39]and went to the approaches to Gedor on the east of the ravine to look for pasture for their flock. [40]They found rich, good pasture and the region was wide on both sides, calm and peaceful, because the people who lived there before had been from Ham, [41]but these people who are written down by name came in the days of Hizqiyyahu king of Yehudah and struck down their tents, and the Me'unites who were found there devoted them until this day, and settled in place of them, because there was pasture for their flock there. [42]Of them, some of the Shim'onites went to Mount Se'ir – 500 people, with Pelatyah, Ne'aryah, Rephayah and Uzzi'el, the sons of Yishi, at their head. [43]They struck down the remaining escapees of Amaleq, and they have lived there until this day.

Re'uben

5 The sons of Re'uben, Yisra'el's firstborn (because he was the firstborn, but when he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Yoseph, the son of Yisra'el, and he was not for enrolment by genealogy on the basis of the birthright, [2]because Yehudah was strong among his brothers and a chief came from him, but the birthright belonged to Yoseph) – [3]the sons of Re'uben, Yisra'el's firstborn: Hanok, Pallu, Hezron and Karmi.
[4]The sons of Yo'el: Shema'yah his son, Gog his son, Shim'i his son, [5]Mikah his son, Re'ayah his son, Ba'al his son, [6]and Be'erah his son, whom Tillegat Pilne'eser king of Ashshur exiled; he was leader of the Re'ubenites.
[7]His brothers by his kin-groups according to the enrolment by genealogy, by their lines of descent: the head, Ye'i'el, Zekaryahu [8]and Bela ben Azaz son of Shema son of Yo'el. He lived in Aro'er and as far as Nebo and Ba'al Me'on, [9]and to the east he lived as far as when you come to the wilderness this side of the River Euphrates, because their cattle became many in Gil'ad. [10]In the days of Sha'ul [Saul] they did battle with the Hagri'tes, and they fell by their hand. So they lived in their tents over the entire face of east of Gil'ad.
[11]Gad's sons lived opposite them in the region of Bashan as far as Salkah: [12]Yo'el the head, Shapham the second, Ya'nay and Shaphat, in Bashan. [13]Their brothers by their ancestral households: Mika'el, Meshullam, Sheba, Yoray, Ya'akan, Zia and Eber – seven. [14]These were the sons of Abihayil ben Huri son of Gil'ad son of Mika'el son of Yeshishay son of Yahdo son of Buz. [15]Ahi ben Abdi'el son of Guni was head of their ancestral household. [16]They lived in Gil'ad, in Bashan, in its daughter-towns, and in all the Sharon pasturelands, to their farthest extent. [17]All of them were enrolled by genealogy in the days of Yotam king of Yehudah and in the days of Yarob'am [Jeroboam] king of Yisra'el.

1 Chronicles 5: The twelve clans

The warriors

[18]Re'uben's sons, the Gadites and the half-clan of Menashsheh: of the forceful men carrying shield and sword, drawing the bow
and trained in battle, 44,760 able to go out in the army, [19]did battle with the Hagri'tes, Yetur, Naphish and Nodab, [20]and sought
help against them. The Hagri'tes and all the people who were with them were given into their hand, because they cried out to God
in the battle and he let himself be entreated by them because they relied on him. [21]They captured their livestock, 50,000 camels,
250,000 sheep, 2,000 donkeys and 100,000 people, [22]because many fell, run through, because the battle was God's. They lived in

place of them until the exile.
[23]The people in the half-clan of Menashsheh lived in the region. They were numerous from Bashan as far as Ba'al Hermon, Senir and Mount Hermon. [24]These were the heads of their ancestral households: Epher, Yish'i, Eli'el, Azri'el, Yirmeyah, Hodavyah and Yahdi'el, forceful strong men, men with names, heads of their ancestral households.
[25]But they trespassed against their ancestors' God and whored after the gods of the peoples of the country, whom God had annihilated from before them. [26]And the God of Yisra'el stirred the spirit of Pul king of Ashshur (the spirit of Tillegat Pilneser king of Ashshur) and he took them into exile – the Re'ubenites, the Gadites and the half-clan of Menashsheh. He brought them to Halah, Habor, and the River Gozan, until this day.

Levi's sons

6 Levi's sons: Gershon, Qehat and Merari.

[2]Qehat's sons: Amram, Yitshar, Hezron and Uzzi'el;
[3]Amram's sons: Aharon [Aaron], Mosheh [Moses] and Miryam;
Aharon's sons: Nadab and Abihu, El'azar and It'amar.

[4]El'azar fathered Pinhas
Pinhas fathered Abishua
[5]Abishua fathered Buqqi
Buqqi fathered Uzzi
[6]Uzzi fathered Zerahyah
Zerahyah fathered Merayot
[7]Merayot fathered Amaryah
Amaryah fathered Ahitub
[8]Ahitub fathered Tsadoq
Tsadoq fathered Ahima'ats
[9]Ahima'ats fathered Azaryah
Azaryah fathered Yohanan
[10]Yohanan fathered Azaryah (it was he who acted as priest in the house that Shelomoh built in Yerushalaim)
[11]Azaryah fathered Amaryah
Amaryah fathered Ahitub
[12]Ahitub fathered Tsadoq
Tsadoq fathered Shallum
[13]Shallum fathered Hilqiyyah
Hilqiyyah fathered Azaryah
[14]Azaryah fathered Serayah
Serayah fathered Yehotsadaq
[15]Yehotsadaq went when Yahweh exiled Yehudah and Yerushalaim by the hand of Nebukadne'tstsar

[16]Levi's sons: Gershom, Qehat and Merari.

[17]These are the names of Gershom's sons: Libni and Shim'i.
[18]Qehat's sons: Amram, Yitshar, Hebron and Uzzi'el.
[19]Merari's sons: Mahli and Mushi.

These are the kin-groups of Levi by their ancestors:
[20]Gershom's: Libni his son, Yahat his son, Zimmah his son, [21]Yo'ah his son, Iddo his son, Zerah his son, Ye'ateray his son;
[22]Qehat's sons: Amminadab his son, Qorah his son, Assir his son, [23]Elqanah his son, Ebyasaph his son, Assir his son, [24]Tahat his son, Uri'el his son, Uzziyyah his son and Sha'ul his son;
[25]Elqanah's sons: Amasay and Ahimot; [26]Elqanah;
Elqanah's sons: Tsopay his son, Nahat his son, [27]Eli'ab his son, Yeroham his son, Elqanah his son;
[28] Shemu'el's [Samuel's] sons: the firstborn and the second (Abiyyah);
[29]Merari's sons: Mahli, Libni his son, Shim'i his son, Uzzah his son, [30]Shim'a his son, Haggiah his son, Asayah his son.

The singers

[31]These whom David put in place over the singing in Yahweh's house, from when the chest was set down, [32]were ministering before the dwelling, the appointment tent, with singing, until Shelomoh built Yahweh's house in Yerushalaim. They stood in connection with their service in accordance with the ruling given to them. [33]These were the people who stood, with their sons:
Of the Qehatites:
Heman the singer, son of Yo'el son of Shemu'el [34]son of Elqanah son of Yeroham son of Eli'el son of Toah [35]son of Tsuph son of Elqanah son of Mahat son of Amasay [36]son of Elqanah son of Yo'el son of Azaryah son of Tsephanyah [37]son of Tahat son of Assir son of Ebyasaph son of Qorah [38]son of Yitshar son of Qehat son of Levi son of Yisra'el.

[39]His brother Asaph who stood at his right – Asaph ben Berekyahu son of Shim'a [40]son of Mika'el son of Ba'aseyah son of Malkiyyah [41]son of Etni son of Zerah son of Adayah [42]son of Etan son of Zimmah son of Shim'i [43]son of Yahat son of Gershom son of Levi.
[44]The Merarites, their brothers, were on the left: Etan ben Qishi son of Abdi son of Malluk [45]son of Hashabyah son of Amatsyah son of Hilqiyyah [46]son of Amtsi son of Bani son of Shemer [47]son of Mahli son of Mushi son of Merari son of Levi.
[48]Their brother Levites were given to all the service at the dwelling, God's house, [49]while Aharon and his sons were burning incense on the burnt-offering altar and on the incense altar in connection with all the work in the very sacred place and in connection with making expiation for Yisra'el in accordance with all that Mosheh, God's servant, ordered.

Aharon's family's settlements

[50]These are the sons of Aharon: El'azar his son, Pinhas his son, Abishua his son, [51]Buqqi his son, Uzzi his son, Zerahyah his son, [52]Merayot his son, Amaryah his son, Ahitub his son, [53]Tsadoq his son, Ahima'ats his son. [54]These are their settlements, by their enclosures, in their territory:
To Aharon's sons, the Qehatite kin-group (because theirs was the lot), [55]they gave them Hebron in the region of Yehudah and its surrounding pasturelands, [56]but the town's fields and its villages they gave to Kaleb ben Yephunneh. [57]To Aharon's sons they gave the asylum towns, Hebron, Libnah and its pasturelands, Yattir, Eshtemoa and its pasturelands, [58]Hilen and its pasturelands, Debir and its pasturelands, [59]Ashan and its pasturelands, and Bet Shemesh and its pasturelands. [60]From the clan of Binyamin, Geba and its pasturelands, Alemet and its pasturelands, and Anatot and its pasturelands. All their towns thirteen among their kin-groups.
[61]To the remaining sons of Qehat from the clan kin-group, from the half-clan, the half of Menashsheh by lot, ten towns.
[62]To the sons of Gershom by their kin-groups, from the clan of Yissakar, from the clan of Asher, from the clan of Naphtali and from the clan of Menashsheh in Bashan, thirteen towns.
[63]To the sons of Merari by their kin-groups, from the clan of Re'uben, from the clan of Gad and from the clan of Zebulun, by lot twelve towns.
[64]So the Yisra'elites gave the Levites the towns and their pasturelands. [65]They gave them by lot from the clan of the Yehudahites and from the clan of the Shim'onites and from the clan of the Binyaminites these towns that they call by their names.

The Qehatites, the Gershomites and the Merarites

[66]Some of the kin-groups of the Qehatites: there were towns in their territory from the clan of Ephrayim. [67]They gave them the asylum towns;
Shekem and its pasturelands in the highland of Ephrayim;
Gezer and its pasturelands;
[68]Yoqme'am and its pasturelands;
Bet Horon and its pasturelands;
[69]Ayyalon and its pasturelands;
Gat-rimmon and its pasturelands;
[70]and from the half-clan of Menashsheh Aner and its pasturelands;
Bil'am and its pasturelands for the remaining kin-group of the Qehatites who remained.
[71]To the Gershomites:
from the half-clan of Menashsheh, Golan in Bashan and its pasturelands and Ashtarot and its pasturelands;
[72]from the clan of Yissakar, Qedesh and its pasturelands, Dobrat and its pasturelands, [73]Heights and its pasturelands, Anem and its pasturelands;
[74]from the clan of Asher, Mashal and its pasturelands, Abdon and its pasturelands, [75]Huqoq and its pasturelands, and Rehob and its pasturelands;
[76] from the clan of Naphtali, Qedesh-in-Galilee and its pasturelands, Hammon and its pasturelands, and Qiryatayim and its pasturelands.
[77]To the Merarites, those who remain:
from the clan of Zebulun, Rimmono and its pasturelands, Tabor and its pasturelands;
[78]across the Yarden [Jordan] at Yeriho [Jericho], on the east of the Yarden: from the clan of Re'uben, Betser in the wilderness and its pasturelands, Yahtsah and its pasturelands, [79]Qedemot and its pasturelands, and Mepha'at and its pasturelands;
[80]and from the clan of Gad, Heights-in-Gil'ad and its pasturelands, Mahanayim and its pasturelands, [81]Heshbon and its pasturelands, and Ya'zer and its pasturelands.

Down to our own day: Yissakar, Binyamin, Naphtali, Menashsheh

7 Yissakar's sons: Tola, Pu'ah, Yashub and Shimron – four.
[2]Tola's sons: Uzzi, Rephayah, Yeri'el, Yahmay, Yibsam and Shemu'el, heads of their ancestral households belonging to Tola, forceful strong men; by their lines of descent, their number in David's days, 22,600.
[3]Uzzi's sons: Yizrahyah; Yizrahyah's sons: Mika'el, Obadyah, Yo'el and Yishshiyyah – five, all of them heads; [4]with them, by their lines of descent, by their kin-groups, army raiding gangs ready for battle, 36,000, because they had many wives and children.

[5]Their brothers in all the kin-groups of Yissakar, forceful strong men, their enrolment by genealogy, 87,000, all of them.
[6]Binyamin: Bela, Beker and Yedi'a'el – three.
[7]Bela's sons: Etsbon, Uzzi, Uzzi'el, Yerimot and Iri – five, heads of ancestral households, forceful strong men, their enrolment by genealogy, 22,034.
[8]Beker's sons: Zemirah, Yo'ash, El'ezer, Eli'onay, Omri, Yeremot, Abiyyah, Anatot, and Alemet, all these sons of Beker, [9]their enrolment by genealogy by their lines of descent, heads of their ancestral households, forceful strong men, 20,200.
[10]Yedi'a'el's sons: Bilhan; Bilhan's sons: Ye'ush, Binyamin, Ehud, Kena'anah, Zetan, Tarshish and Ahishahar, [11]all these sons of Yedi'a'el, ancestral heads, forceful strong men, 17,200 able to go out in the army to battle.
([12]And Shuppim and Huppim, Ir's sons; Hushim; Aher's sons.)
[13]Naphtali's sons: Yahtsi'el, Guni, Yetser and Shallum, sons of Bilhah.
[14]Menashsheh's sons: Asri'el, to whom his Aramite secondary wife gave birth; she gave birth to Makir, father of Gil'ad.
[15]Makir took a wife for Huppim and for Shuppim; his sister's name was Ma'akah.
The name of the second was Tselophhad; Tselophhad had daughters.
[16]Ma'akah, Makir's wife, gave birth to a son and named him Peresh; his brother's name: Sheresh; his sons: Ulam and Reqem.
[17]Ulam's sons: Bedan.
These were the sons of Gil'ad ben Makir son of Menashsheh; [18]his sister Hammoleket gave birth to Ishhod, Abi'ezer and Mahlah.
[19]Shemida's sons were Ahyan, Shekem, Liqhi and Ani'am.

Down to our own day: Ephrayim, Asher

[20]Ephrayim's sons: Shutelah, Bered his son, Tahat his son, Ele'adah his son, Tahat his son, [21]Zabad his son, Shutelah his son, and Ezer and Ele'ad. The men of Gat who were born in the region killed them, because they went down to take their cattle. [22]Ephrayim their father grieved for many days, and his brothers came to comfort him. [23]He had sex with his wife and she got pregnant and gave birth to a son. He named him Beri'ah because there had been actual bad fortune [*bera'ah*] in his household. [24]His daughter was She'erah. She built up Bet-horon (Lower and Upper) and Uzzen She'erah.
[25]Rephah his son, Resheph, Telah his son, Tahan his son, [26]La'dan his son, Ammihud his son, Elishama his son, [27]Non his son, Yehoshua his son: [28]their holding and their settlements were Bet-el and its daughter-towns, and on the east Na'aran, and on the west Gezer and its daughter-towns, Shekem and its daughter-towns, as far as Ayyah and its daughter- towns, [29]and alongside the Menashshites Bet-she'an and its daughter-towns, Ta'anak and its daughter-towns, Megiddo and its daughter-towns, Do'r and its daughter-towns. The sons of Yoseph the son of Yisra'el lived in these.
[30]Asher's sons: Yimnah, Yishvah, Yishvi and Beri'ah, and Serah their sister.
[31]Beriah's sons: Heber and Malki'el.
He was Birzayit's father.
[32]Heber fathered Yaphlet, Shomer, Hotam and Shua their sister.
[33]Yaphlet's sons: Pasak, Bimhal and Ashvat; these were Yaphlet's sons.
[34]Shemer's sons: Ahi, Rohgah, Hubbah and Aram.
[35]The son of Helem his brother: Tsophah, Yimna, Shelesh and Amal.
[36]Tsophah's sons: Suah, Harnepher, Shu'al, Beri, Yimrah, [37]Betser, Hod, Shamma, Shilshah, Yitran and Be'era.
[38]Yeter's sons: Yephunneh, Pispah and Ara.
[39]Ulla's sons: Arah, Hanni'el and Ritsya.
[40]All these sons of Asher, heads of the ancestral households, proven men, forceful strong men, heads among the leaders. Their enrolment by genealogy in the army in battle: their number, 26,000 men.

Down to our own day: Binyamin

8 Binyamin fathered Bela his firstborn, Ashbel the second, Aharah the third, [2]Nohah the fourth and Rapha the fifth.
[3]Bela had sons: Addar, Gera, Abihud, [4]Abishua, Na'aman, Ahoah, [5]Gera, Shephupham and Huram.
[6]These are Ehud's sons, ancestral heads of the inhabitants of Geba, but they exiled them to Manahat: [7]Na'aman, Ahiyyah and Gera; he exiled them and fathered Uzza and Ahihud.
[8]Shaharayim fathered sons in the open country in Mo'ab after he had sent them away (Husham and Ba'ara were his wives); [9]by Hodesh his wife he fathered Yobab, Tsibya, Mesha, Malkam, [10]Ye'uts, Sakeyah and Mirmah; these were his sons, ancestral heads; [11]by Hushim he fathered Ahitub and Elpa'al.
[12]The sons of Elpa'al: Eber, Misham, Shemed (he built Ono and Lod and its daughter-towns), [13]Beri'ah and Shema (they were ancestral heads of the inhabitants of Ayyalon – they put to flight the inhabitants of Gat), [14]Ahyo, Shashaq and Yeremot.
[15]Zebadyah, Arad, Eder, [16]Mika'el, Yishpah and Yoha were Beri'ah's sons.
[17]Zebadyah, Meshullam, Hizqi, Heber, [18]Yishmeray, Yizliah and Yobab were Elpa'al's sons.
[19]Yaqim, Zikri, Zabdi, [20]Eli'enay, Zilletay, Eli'el, [21]Adayah, Bera'yah and Shimrat were Shim'i's sons.
[22]Yishpan, Eber, Eli'el, [23]Abdon, Zikri, Hanan, [24]Hananyah, Elam, Antotiyyah, [25]Yiphdeyah and Penu'el were Shashaq's sons.
[26]Shamsheray, Sheharyah, Atalyah, [27]Ya'areshyah, Eliyyah and Zikri were Yeroham's sons.
[28]These were the ancestral heads by their lines of descent. These heads lived in Yerushalaim.

Sha'ul's family

[29]Gib'on's father lived in Gib'on. His wife's name was Ma'akah. [30]His firstborn son Abdon, Tsur, Qish, Ba'al, Nadab,
[31]Gedor, Ahyo and Zeker. [32]Miklot fathered Shim'ah. They also lived opposite their brothers in Yerushalaim, with their brothers.
[33]Ner fathered Qish, Qish fathered Sha'ul, and Sha'ul fathered Yehonatan, Malki-shua, Abinadab and Eshba'al. [34]Yehonatan's son was Merib Ba'al. Merib Ba'al fathered Mikah.
[35]Mikah's sons: Piton, Melek, Ta'area and Ahaz.
[36]Ahaz fathered Yeho'addah; Yeho'addah fathered Alemet, Azmavet and Zimri.
Zimri fathered Motsa.
[37]Motsa fathered Bin'a, Rapha his son, El'asah his son, Atsel his son.
[38]Atsel had six sons; these are their names: Azriqam, Bokeru, Yishma'e'l, She'aryah, Obadyah and Hanan; all these were Atsel's sons.
[39]The sons of Esheq his brother: Ulam his firstborn, Ye'ush the second and Eliphelet the third.
[40]Ulam's sons were forceful strong men, drawing the bow, and they produced a large number of children and grandchildren, 150, all these Binyaminites.

9 All Yisra'el was enrolled by genealogy: there, they are written down on the document about the kings of Yisra'el. But Yehudah was taken into exile to Babel because of their trespass.

The returners

[2]The first people settling who were on their holding in their towns were Yisra'el, priests, Levites and assistants, [3]while some Yehudahites, some Binyaminites, some Ephrayimites and some Menashshehites settled in Yerushalaim:
[4]Utay ben Ammihud son of Omri son of Imri son of Bani, from the sons of Perets son of Yehudah.
[5]Of the Shilonites: Asayah the firstborn and his sons.
[6]Of the sons of Zerah: Ye'u'el and his brothers – 690.
[7]Of the Binyaminites: Sallu ben Meshullam son of Hodavyah son of Hassenu'ah, [8]Yibneyah ben Yeroham, Elah ben Uzzi son of Mikri, and Meshullam ben Shephatyah son of Re'u'el son of Yibneyah, [9]and their brothers, by their lines of descent – 956. All these people were ancestral heads of their ancestral households.
[10]Of the priests: Yedayah, Yehoyarib, Yakin, [11]and Azaryah ben Hilqiyyah son of Meshullam son of Tsadoq son of Merayot son of Ahitub, chief over God's house, [12]and Adayah ben Yeroham son of Pashhur son of Malkiyyah, and Ma'asay ben Adi'el son of Yahzerah son of Meshullam son of Meshillemit son of Immer, [13]and their brothers, heads of their ancestral households – 1,760, forceful strong men for the work in the service of God's house.
[14]Of the Levites: Shema'yah ben Hashshub son of Azriqam son of Hashabyah, of the Merarites; [15]and Baqbaqqer, Heresh, Galal, and Mattanyah ben Mika son of Zikri son of Asaph; [16]and Obadyah ben Shemayah son of Galal son of Yedutun; and Berekyah ben Asa son of Elqanah who lived in the villages of the Netophatites.

The gatemen

[17]The gatemen: Shallum, Aqqub, Talmon, Ahiman, with their brother Shallum the head. [18]Until now they have been at the King's Gate on the east, gatemen for the Levites' camp. [19]Shallum ben Qore son of Ebyasaph son of Qorah and his brothers belonging to his ancestral household, the Qorahites, were in charge of the work involved in the service, keeping watch over the tent thresholds; their ancestors had been in charge of Yahweh's camp as people keeping watch over the entrance. [20]Pinhas ben El'azar was chief over them before; Yahweh was with him. [21]Zekaryah ben Meshelemyah was gateman at the door of the appointment tent. [22]All of them, people proven as gatemen at the thresholds – 212. They were in their villages enrolled by genealogy. David and Shemu'el the seer had established them in their position of trust.
[23]They and their sons were in charge of the gateways of Yahweh's house (of the tent house) by watches. [24]The gatemen were on the four sides, east, west, north and south. [25]Their brothers in the villages were to come every seven days on a schedule, with these men, [26]because the four strongest gatemen (they were Levites) were in the position of trust; they were in charge of the halls and of the treasuries in God's house. [27]They stayed the night round God's house because the watch was their responsibility and they were in charge of the opening morning by morning.

Sha'ul's family background

[28]Some of them were in charge of the articles used in the service, because they would bring them in with a count and take them out with a count. [29]Some of them were put in charge of the articles, both all the sacred articles and the flour, the wine, the oil, the incense and the spices [30](some of the priests were the people who made the blend of the spices). [31]Mattityah of the Levites (he was the firstborn of Shallum the Qorahite) was in the position of trust in charge of the making of the griddle cakes. [32]Some of the Qehatites from among their brothers were in charge of the row bread, to prepare it sabbath by sabbath.
[33]These are the singers, the ancestral heads of the Levites, in the halls, free, because responsibility was upon them day and night in the work. [34]These were the ancestral heads of the Levites by their lines of descent. These heads lived in Yerushalaim.
[35]Gib'on's father Ye'i'el lived in Gib'on (his wife's name was Ma'akah) [36]with his firstborn son Abdon, Tsur, Qish, Ba'al, Ner, Nadab, [37]Gedor, Ahyo, Zekaryah and Miklot.
[38]Miklot fathered Shim'am, and they too lived in Yerushalaim opposite their brothers, with their brothers.

[39]Ner fathered Qish, Qish fathered Sha'ul, Sha'ul fathered Yehonatan, Malki-shua, Abinadab and Eshba'al; [40]Yehonatan's son was Merib Ba'al; Meri-ba'al fathered Mikah.
[41]Mikah's sons: Piton, Melek and Ta'area.
[42]Ahaz fathered Yarah; Yarah fathered Alemet, Azmavet and Zimri; Zimri fathered Motsa.
[43]Motsa fathered Bin'a, Raphayah his son, El'asah his son, Atsel his son.
[44]Atsel had six sons; these are their names: Azriqam, Bokeru, Yishma'e'l, She'aryah, Obadyah and Hanan; these were Atsel's sons.

The end of Sha'ul

10 Now the Pelishtites battled against Yisra'el. The Yisra'elites fled from before the Pelishtites and fell, run through, on Mount Gilboa, [2]and the Pelishtites caught up with Sha'ul and with his sons. The Pelishtites struck down Yonatan, Abinadab and Malki-shua, Sha'ul's sons. [3]The battle was hard against Sha'ul, and the archers found him with an arrow; he was run through by the archers.
[4]Sha'ul said to his equipment-bearer, 'Draw your sword and thrust me through with it, so these foreskinned men don't come and deal abusively with me.' But his equipment-bearer wasn't willing, because he was very fearful. So Sha'ul took the sword and fell on it. [5]His equipment-bearer saw that Sha'ul was dead and he too fell on his sword and died. [6]So Sha'ul died, with his three sons; his entire household died, all together. [7]All the Yisra'elites who were in the vale saw that people had fled and that Sha'ul and his sons were dead, and they abandoned their towns and fled (the Pelishtites came and lived in them).
[8]Next day the Pelishtites came to strip the people who had been run through. They found Sha'ul and his sons fallen on Mount Gilboa, [9]stripped him, took up his head and his equipment, and sent them off through the Pelishtites' country all round, to announce the news to their idols and their people. [10]They put his equipment in the house of their gods, and his skull they fastened to the house of Dagan.
[11]All Yabesh-in-Gil'ad heard all that the Pelishtites had done to Sha'ul, [12]and they set off, every forceful man, took up the corpse of Sha'ul and the corpses of his sons, and brought them to Yabesh. They buried their bones under the oak at Yabesh and fasted for seven days.
[13]Sha'ul died because of his trespass, which he committed against Yahweh in regard to Yahweh's word which he had not kept, and also in asking something of a spirit, so as to make enquiry;[14]he didn't enquire of Yahweh. So he put him to death and turned the kingship over to David ben Yishay.

David anointed

11 All Yisra'el collected to David at Hebron, saying, 'Here, we are your flesh and blood. [2]Further, in previous days, even when Sha'ul was king, you were the one who took Yisra'el out and brought Yisra'el in. Yahweh your God said to you, "You're the one who'll shepherd my people Yisra'el. You're the one who'll be chief over my people Yisra'el."'
[3]So all Yisra'el's elders came to the king at Hebron, David solemnized a pact towards them at Hebron before Yahweh, and they anointed David as king over Yisra'el in accordance with Yahweh's word by means of Shemu'el.
[4]David and all Yisra'el went to Yerushalaim (i.e. Yebus); the Yebusites were there as inhabitants of the region. [5]The inhabitants of Yebus said to David, 'You won't come in here', but David captured the Zion stronghold (i.e. David's Town). [6]David said, 'Anyone striking down the Yebusites first will be head and officer.' Yo'ab ben Tseruyah went up first and became head.
[7]David lived in the stronghold; that's why they named it 'David's Town'. [8]He built up the town all round, from the Fill all round, while Yo'ab brought to life the remainder of the town. [9]David went on getting bigger and bigger, as Yahweh of Armies was with him.
[10]These are the heads of the strong men that David had, the people who asserted their strength with him in his kingship, with all Yisra'el, in making him king in accordance with Yahweh's word concerning Yisra'el, [11]and these are the number of the strong men that David had.
Yashob'am the Hakmonite was head of the adjutants. He was wielding his lance against 300, run through on one occasion.
[12]After him was El'azar ben Dodo, the Ahohite; he was one of the Three Strong Men, [13]and he was with David at Pas Dammim when the Pelishtites gathered there for battle. A plot of field was full of barley. Whereas the company fled from before the Pelishtites [14]they made a stand in the middle of the plot, defended it and struck down the Pelishtites. Yahweh brought about a great deliverance.

Some spectacular exploits

[15]Three of the Thirty Heads went down to the crag to David at the Adullam Cave. The Pelishtite camp was camped in Repha'ites Vale. [16]David was then in the stronghold, and an outpost of Pelishtites was then at Bet Lehem. [17]David had a longing and said, 'If only someone could give me a drink of water from the Bet-lehem cistern that's at the gateway!' [18]The Three broke through the Pelishtites' camp, drew water from the Bet-lehem cistern that's at the gateway, and carried it and brought it to David. But David was unwilling to drink it. He poured it out for Yahweh [19]and said, 'Far be it from me by God that I should do this. Am I to drink the blood of these men, at the cost of their lives?' – because they had brought it at the cost of their lives. So he was unwilling to drink it. These are things that the Three Strong Men did.
[20]Abshay, the brother of Yo'ab, was head of a Three. He was wielding his lance against 300, run through. He had a name among the Three. [21]Of the Three, he was doubly honoured, and he became officer for them, but he didn't come to the [other] Three.

[22]Benayah ben Yehoyada was a forceful man, prolific in deeds, from Qabtse'el. He struck down the two of Ari'el from Mo'ab.
It was he who went down and struck down a lion inside a cistern on a snowy day, [23]and it was he who struck down a Misrayimite
man, a huge man of two metres. In the Misrayimite's hand there was a lance like a weavers' rod, but he went down to him with a
club, seized the lance from the Misrayimite's hand and killed him with his lance. [24]These things Benayah ben Yehoyada did, and
he had a name among the Three Strong Men. [25]Of the Thirty, there he is, most honoured, but he didn't come to the Three. David
put him in charge of his guard.

The forceful strong men

[26]The forceful strong men:

Asah-el, Yo'ab's brother
Elhanan ben Dodo from Bet Lehem
[27]Shammot the Harorite
Helets the Palonite
[28]Ira ben Iqqesh the Teqo'ite
Abi'ezer the Anatotite
[29]Sibbekay the Hushatite
Ilay the Ahohite
[30]Mahray the Netophatite
Heled ben Ba'anah the Netophatite
[31]Ittay ben Ribay from Gib'ah-of-the-Binyaminites
Benayah the Pir'atonite
[32]Huray from the Ga'ash Wadis
Abi'el the Arbatite
[33]Azmavet the Bahrumite
Elyahba the Sha'albonite
[34]The sons of Hashem the Gizonite
Yonatan ben Shageh the Hararite
[35]Ahi'am ben Sakar the Hararite
Eliphal ben Ur
[36]Hepher the Mekeratite
Ahiyyah the Pelonite
[37]Hetsro the Carmelite
Na'aray ben Ezbay
[38]Yo'el, Natan's brother
Mibhar ben Hagri
[39]Tseleq the Ammonite
Nahray the Berotite, equipment-bearer for Yo'ab ben Tseruyah
[40]Ira the Yitrite
Gareb the Yitrite
[41]Uriyyah the Hittite
Zabad ben Ahlay
[42]Adina ben Shiza, the Re'ubenite, head of the Re'ubenites, and thirty with him
[43]Hanan ben Ma'akah
Yoshaphat the Mitnite
[44]Uzziyya the Ashteratite
Shama and Ye'i'el sons of Hotam the Aro'erite
[45]Yedi'a'el ben Shimri and Yoha his brother the Titsite
[46]Eli'el the Mahavite
Yeribay and Yoshavyah sons of Elna'am
Yitmah the Mo'abite
[47]Eli'el, Obed and Ya'asi'el the Metsobayite

A time of encouragement

12 These are the people who came to David at Tsiqlag when he was still held back because of Sha'ul ben Qish. They were among the strong men helping in battle, [2]able to wield the bow, right-handed and left-handed with stones and with arrows from the bow, from among Sha'ul's brothers from Binyamin.

[3]The head, Ahi'ezer, and Yo'ash, the sons of Shema'ah the Gib'atite
Yezi'el and Pelet, the sons of Azmavet
Berakah
Yehu the Anatotite
[4]Yishma'yah the Gib'onite, a strong man among the Thirty, and in charge of the Thirty
Yirmeyah
Yahazi'el
Yohanan
Yozabad the Gederatite
[5]Eluzay
Yerimot
Be'alyah
Shemaryahu
Shephatyahu the Haruphite
[6]Elqanah, Yishsheyahu, Azar'el, Yo'ezer and Yashob'am, the Qorahites
[7]Yo'e'lah and Zebahyah, sons of Yeroham from Gedor

[8]Forceful strong men from the Gadites made themselves distinct to join David at the stronghold in the wilderness, forceful
strong men in the army, ready for battle, able to wield shield and spear, with their face the face of a lion, and making speed like
gazelles on the mountains:

[9]Ezer the head
Obadyah the second
Eli'ab the third
[10]Mishmannah the fourth
Yirmeyah the fifth
[11]Attay the sixth
Eli'el the seventh
[12]Yohanan the eighth
Elzabad the ninth
[13]Yirmeyahu the tenth
Makbannay the eleventh

[14]These of the Gadites were army heads, the smallest for a hundred, the biggest for a thousand. [15]These were those people who
crossed the Yarden in the first month when it was filling up over all its banks, and put to flight all the vale people to the east and
to the west.

A time for caution

[16]Some Binyaminites and Yehudahites came as far as the stronghold to David, [17]and David went out before them. He avowed to them, ‘If you’ve come to me so that things may go well, to help me, my mind will be one with you, but if it’s to beguile me in relation to my attackers when there is no violence in my fists, may our ancestors’ God see and reprove.’ [18]And a spirit put on Amasay, head of the Thirty:

For you, David, and with you, ben Yishay, may things be well;

May things be well for you, and things be well for the person who helps you,

Because your God has helped you.

So David received them and made them into the heads of his raiding gangs.
[19]Some of Menashsheh submitted to David when he came with the Pelishtites for battle against Sha’ul, but they didn’t help them because the Pelishtites’ lords in council sent him off, saying, ‘He’ll submit to his lord, Sha’ul, at the cost of our heads.’ [20]When he went to Tsiqlag, some Menashshites submitted to him, Adnah, Yozabad, Yedi’a’el, Mika’el, Yozabad, Elihu and Tsillethay, chiliarchs belonging to Menashsheh. [21]It was those people who helped David against the raiding gang, because all of them were forceful strong men. They became officers in the army, [22]because day by day people were coming to David to help him, until the camp was as big as God’s camp.

1 Chronicles 12: David

Time for celebration

[23]These are the numbers of the heads of the people equipped for the army who came to David at Hebron to turn over Sha'ul's kingship to him in accordance with Yahweh's bidding:

[24]Yehudahites carrying shield and spear – 6,800 equipped for the army.

[25]Of the Shim'onites, forceful strong men for the army – 7,100.

[26]Of the Levites – 4,600; [27]Yehoyada, the chief of Aharon, and with him 3,700; [28]and Tsadoq, a boy, a forceful strong man, and his ancestral household, 22 officers.

[29]Of the Binyaminites, Sha'ul's brothers, 3,000 (until now the majority of them were keeping watch for Sha'ul's household).
[30]Of the Ephrayimites, 20,800 forceful strong men, people with names in their ancestral household.
[31]Of the half-clan of Menashsheh, 18,000, who were designated by their names to come to make David king.
[32]Of the Yissakarites, people who had understanding of the times so as to know what Yisra'el should do – their heads 200, and all their brothers at their bidding.
[33]Of Zebulun, people able to go out in the army, lining up for battle with all battle equipment – 50,000 to help, without a double mind.
[34]From Naphtali, 1,000 officers, and with them, with shield and lance – 37,000.
[35]From the Danites, people lining up for battle – 28,600.
[36]From Asher, people able to go out in the army to line up for battle – 40,000.
[37]From across the Yarden, from the Re'ubenites, the Gadites and the half-clan of Menashsheh, with all battle army equipment – 120,000.
[38]All these men of battle, assisting the line-up, with a perfect mind, came to Hebron to make David king over all Yisra'el, while all the remainder of Yisra'el also were of one mind in making David king. [39]They were there with David for three days eating and drinking, because their brothers had prepared it for them. [40]People who were near to them as far as Yissakar, Zebulun and Naphtali were also bringing food on donkeys, on camels, on mules and on cattle, edibles of flour, fig blocks, raisin blocks, wine, oil, cattle and sheep in quantity, because there was rejoicing in Yisra'el.

A frightening outburst

13 David took counsel with the chiliarchs and centurions, every chief, [2]and David said to the entire Yisra'elite congregation, 'If it seems good to you and it's from Yahweh our God, let's break out and send to our remaining brothers in all the regions of Yisra'el, and with them the priests and the Levites in their pastureland towns, so they may collect to us [3]and we may turn our God's chest over to us, because we didn't enquire of him in Sha'ul's days.' [4]The entire congregation said to do so, because the thing was upright in the eyes of the entire people.
[5]So David congregated all Yisra'el from Shihor in Misrayim as far as Lebo Hamat, to bring God's chest from Ye'arim Township. [6]David and all Yisra'el went up to Ba'alah (to Ye'arim Township which belongs to Yehudah) to take up from there the chest of God, Yahweh who sits above the sphinxes, which is called by the name. [7]They transported God's chest on a new wagon from Abinadab's house, with Uzza and Ahyo driving the wagon [8]and David and all Yisra'el making fun before God with all their vigour, with songs, with guitars, with mandolins, with tambourines, with cymbals and with trumpets. [9]But they came as far as Kidon's threshing floor and Uzza put out his hand to grasp the chest, because the cattle had stumbled. [10]Yahweh's anger raged at Uzza and he struck him down on account of the fact that he had put out his hand to the chest. He died there before God. [11]It enraged David that Yahweh had broken out at Uzza. He called that place Perets Uzza ['Breakout at Uzza'], until this day.
[12]David was afraid of God that day, saying, 'How can I bring God's chest to me?' [13]So David did not move the chest to him, to David's Town. He got it to turn aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. [14]God's chest stayed with Obed Edom's household in his house for three months, and Yahweh blessed the household of Obed-edom and everything he had.

When you need to know what to do

14 Hiram king of Tsor [Tyre] sent envoys to David, with cedar wood, craftsmen in walls and craftsmen in wood, to build him a house. [2]David acknowledged that Yahweh had established him as king over Yisra'el, because his kingship had been exalted exceptionally high for the sake of his people Yisra'el.
[3]David took more wives in Yerushalaim and David fathered more sons and daughters. [4]These are the names of the ones born, who were his in Yerushalaim: Shammua, Shobab, Natan, Shelomoh, [5]Yibhar, Elishua, Elpelet, [6]Nogah, Nepheg, Yaphia, [7]Elishama, Be'elyada and Eliphelet.
[8]The Pelishtites heard that David had been anointed as king over all Yisra'el, and all the Pelishtites went up to look for David. David heard, and went out before them. [9]When the Pelishtites came, they raided Repha'ites Vale. [10]David asked of God, 'Shall I go up against the Pelishtites? Will you give them into my hand?' Yahweh said to him, 'Go up, and I shall give them into your hand.' [11]So they went up to Ba'al Peratsim, and David struck them down there. David said, 'God has broken out on my enemies by my hand like a breakout of water.' That's why they named that place Ba'al Peratsim ['Master of Breakouts']. [12]They abandoned their gods there. David said it, and they were burned in fire.
[13]The Pelishtites again raided the vale. [14]David again asked of God, but God said to him, 'You will not go up after them. Make a turn away from them and come to them from the direction of the weeper trees. [15]When you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the weeper trees, then you're to go out in battle, because God will have gone out before you to strike down the Pelishtite camp.' [16]David did as God ordered him, and they struck down the Pelishtite camp from Gib'on as far as Gezer.
[17]David's name went out through all the countries as Yahweh put a dread of him on all the nations.

Preparations for taking the chest

15 He made houses for himself in David's Town, and prepared a place for God's chest and pitched a tent for it. [2]Then David said no one was to carry God's chest but only the Levites, because Yahweh chose them to carry Yahweh's chest and to minister to him permanently. [3]David congregated all Yisra'el to Yerushalaim to take up Yahweh's chest to its place which he had prepared for it. [4]David gathered the Aharonites and the Levites:

[5]of the Qehatites, Uri'el the official and his brothers – 120;
[6]of the Merarites, Asayah the official and his brothers – 220;
[7]of the Gershomites, Yo'el the official and his brothers – 130;
[8]of the Elitsaphanites, Shemayah the official and his brothers – 200;
[9]of the Hebronites, Eli'el the official and his brothers – 80;
[10]of the Uzzi'elites, Amminadab the official and his brothers – 112.

[11]David called for Tsadoq and for Ebyatar the priests, and of the Levites for Uri'el, for Asayah, for Yo'el, for Shemayah, for Eli'el and for Amminadab. [12]He said to them, 'You are the Levites' ancestral heads. Make yourselves sacred, you and your brothers, so that you may take up the chest of Yahweh, the God of Yisra'el, to where I have prepared for it. [13]Because you were not there the first time, Yahweh our God broke out on us, because we did not enquire of him in accordance with the ruling.'
[14]The priests and the Levites made themselves sacred for taking up the chest of Yahweh, the God of Yisra'el. [15]The Levites carried God's chest as Mosheh had ordered in accordance with Yahweh's word, on their shoulder, with poles on them. [16]David said to the Levites' officials to get their brothers, the singers, with musical instruments, guitars, mandolins and cymbals, to stand, making things heard by raising their voice in rejoicing.

The great celebration

[17]So the Levites got to stand:
Heman ben Yo'el;
of his brothers Asaph ben Berekyahu;
of the Merarites, their brothers, Etan ben Qushayahu;
[18]with them their brothers as number two Zekaryahu, son, Ya'azi'el, Shemiramot, Yehi'el, Unni, Eli'ab, Benayahu, Ma'aseyahu, Mattityahu, Eliphalehu, Miqneyahu, Obed Edom and Ye'i'el, the gatemen;
[19]the singers Heman, Asaph and Etan making things heard on copper cymbals;
[20]Zekaryah, Azi'el, Shemiramot, Yehi'el, Unni, Eli'ab, Ma'aseyahu and Benayah with guitars, on 'Eternal Things';
[21]Mattityahu, Eliphelehu, Miqneyahu, Obed Edom, Ye'i'el and Azazyahu with mandolins, on 'The Eighth';
[22]Kenanyahu, the Levites' official, with prophecy, to exercise discipline with prophecy because he was discerning;
[23]Berekyah and Elqanah, the chest's gatemen;
[24]Shebanyahu, Yoshaphat, Netan'el, Amasay, Zekaryahu, Benayah and Eli'ezer the priests, sounding on the trumpets before God's chest;
Obed Edom and Yehiyyah the chest's gatemen.
[25]David, Yisra'el's elders and the chiliarchs went to take up Yahweh's pact chest from Obed-edom's house with rejoicing. [26]As God helped the Levites carrying Yahweh's pact chest, they sacrificed seven bulls and seven rams, [27]with David clad in a robe of Misrayimite linen, and all the Levites who were carrying the chest, and the singers, and Kenanyah the singers' prophetic officer, and on David a linen chasuble, [28]as all Yisra'el were taking up Yahweh's pact chest with a shout, with the sound of a horn, with trumpets and with cymbals, making things heard with guitars and mandolins.
[29]Yahweh's pact chest was coming into David's Town as Mikal, Sha'ul's daughter, was looking out through the window. She saw King David jumping and having fun, and she despised him inside.
16 They brought in God's chest and put it inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and presented burnt offerings and well-being sacrifices before God. [2]David finished offering up the burnt offering and the well-being sacrifices, blessed the people in Yahweh's name, [3]and shared out to each person in Yisra'el, man and woman, to each individual a round of bread, a date block and a raisin block.

Sing to Yahweh, all the earth!

[4]He put some of the Levites before Yahweh's chest as ministers, to make mention, to confess and to praise Yahweh the God of Yisra'el:
[5]Asaph the head;
number two to him, Zekaryah;
Ye'i'el, Shemiramot, Yehi'el, Mattityah, Eli'ab, Benayahu, Obed Edom and Ye'i'el, with guitars as instruments and with mandolins;
Asaph making things heard with the cymbals;
[6]Benayahu and Yahazi'el the priests with trumpets regularly before God's pact chest.
[7]Then on that day David first put confession of Yahweh into the hand of Asaph and his brothers:

[8]Confess Yahweh, call out in his name,
get his deeds acknowledged among the peoples.
[9]Sing for him, make music for him,
talk of all his extraordinary deeds.
[10]Take pride in his sacred name;
the heart of those who seek Yahweh should rejoice.
[11]Enquire of Yahweh and his vigour;
seek his face continually.

[12]Be mindful of his extraordinary deeds, which he has done,
his signs and the rulings of his mouth,
[13]Offspring of Yisra'el his servant,
descendants of Ya'aqob [Jacob], his chosen ones.
[14]He is Yahweh our God;
his rulings are in all the earth.
[15]Be mindful of his pact permanently,
the word he ordered for a thousand generations,
[16]Which he solemnized with Abraham,
his oath to Yitshaq,
[17]Made to stand for Ya'aqob as a decree,
for Yisra'el as a lasting pact,
[18]Saying, 'To you I will give the country of Kena'an
as an allocation and as your domain.'
[19]When you were few in number,
a tiny group, and sojourning in it,
[20]And they went about from nation to nation,
from a kingdom to another people.
[21]He didn't leave be anyone to oppress them,
but reproved kings on account of them:
[22]'Don't touch my anointed ones,
don't deal badly towards my prophets.'

All the people said, 'Yes!'

[23]Sing for Yahweh all the earth,
announce the news of his deliverance, from day to day.
[24]Recount his splendour among the nations,
among all the peoples his extraordinary deeds.
[25]Because Yahweh is great and much to be praised;
he is to be held in awe above all gods.
[26]Because all the gods of the peoples are non-entities,
whereas Yahweh made the heavens.
[27]Grandeur and magnificence are before him,
vigour and glory at his site.
[28]Kin-groups of the peoples, give Yahweh,
give Yahweh splendour and vigour.
[29]Give Yahweh the splendour due to his name,
take up an offering and come before him.
Bow low to Yahweh in his sacred glory;
[30]tremble before him, all the earth.
Yes, the world stands firm, it does not slip;
[31]the heavens should rejoice, the earth be glad.
They should say among the nations,
'Yahweh has become king.'
[32]The sea should roar and everything that fills it,
the open country should triumph and all that's in it.
[33]Then the trees in the forest should resound before Yahweh,
because he is coming to exercise authority over the earth.
[34]Confess Yahweh, because he is good,
because his commitment lasts permanently.
[35]Say, 'Deliver us, our God who delivers,
collect us and rescue us from the nations,
To confess your sacred name,
to glory in your praise.'
[36]Blessed be Yahweh the God of Yisra'el
from age to age.

All the people said 'Yes' and 'Praise Yahweh.' [37]And he abandoned before Yahweh's pact chest there:
Asaph and his brothers to minister before the chest regularly in connection with each day's requirement in its day;
[38]Obed Edom and their brothers – sixty-eight;
Obed Edom ben Yeditun and Hosah as gatemen;
[39]Tsadoq the priest and his brothers, the priests, before Yahweh's dwelling at the shrine which was at Gib'on, [40]to offer up
burnt offerings for Yahweh on the burnt-offering altar regularly, morning and evening, in connection with all that is written

in Yahweh's instruction with which he ordered Yisra'el;
[41]with them Heman, Yedutun and the remainder of the proven men who were designated by their names to confess Yahweh 'because his commitment is permanent';
[42]with them (Heman and Yedutun) trumpets and cymbals for the people who make things heard, and instruments for a song to God;
the sons of Yedutun at the gateway.
[43]The entire people went each one to his house and David turned to bless his household.

Who builds a house, and what kind?

17 When David had gone to live in his house, David said to Natan the prophet, 'Here am I living in a cedar house and Yahweh's pact chest is under tent cloths.' [2]Natan said to David, 'Do everything that's in your mind, because God is with you.'
[3]But that night God's word came to Natan: [4]'Go and say to David my servant, "Yahweh has said this: 'It's not you who will build me a house to live in. [5]Because I haven't lived in a house from the day that I brought Yisra'el up, until this day. I've been from tent to tent, and from a dwelling. [6]Everywhere I went about in all Yisra'el, did I speak a word to one of the people exercising authority in Yisra'el whom I ordered to shepherd my people, saying "Why have you not built me a cedar house?"'"
[7]So now you're to say this to my servant, to David: "Yahweh of Armies has said this: 'I myself took you from the pasture, from following the flock, to be chief over my people Yisra'el, [8]and I've been with you everywhere you've gone. I've cut off all your enemies from before you and I shall make for you a name like the name of the big people who are on the earth. [9]I shall make a place for my people Yisra'el and plant it. It will dwell in its place and not tremble again. Evil people will not wear it down again as they did previously, [10]from the days when I ordered leaders over my people Yisra'el. I shall make all your enemies bow down.
And I tell you: Yahweh will build a house(hold) for you. [11]When your days are full for going to be with your ancestors, I shall set up your offspring after you, who will be one of your sons, and I shall establish his kingship. [12]He is the one who will build me a house. I shall establish his throne permanently. [13]I myself will become a father to him and he will become a son to me. I shall not remove my commitment from him as I removed it from the one who was before you. [14]I shall let him stand in my house and in my kingship permanently. His throne will become established permanently.'"

There is no one like Yahweh

[15]In accordance with all these words and in accordance with this entire vision, so Natan spoke to David.
[16]King David came and sat before Yahweh and said, 'Who am I, Yahweh God, and who are my household, that you have brought me as far as this? [17]And this has been small in your eyes, God. You've spoken about your servant's household for the distant future. You've seen me as one of lofty human form, Yahweh God. [18]What more can David add regarding your servant's honour? You yourself have acknowledged your servant. [19]Yahweh, for your servant's sake and in accordance with your own mind you are doing this entire big thing, making known all the big things.
[20]Yahweh, there is no one like you, no God except you, in all that we've heard with our ears. [21]And who is like your people Yisra'el, a nation on the earth that God went to redeem for himself as a people, to make yourself a name for big and awe-inspiring deeds, in driving nations out from before your people that you redeemed from Misrayim. [22]You made your people Yisra'el into a people for yourself permanently, and you Yahweh became God for them.
[23]Now, Yahweh, the word that you have spoken about your servant and about his household – may it be trustworthy permanently. Do as you have spoken. [24]May it be trustworthy so that your name may be great permanently: "Yahweh of Armies, the God of Yisra'el, is God for Yisra'el". May your servant David's household be established before you. [25]Because you, my God, have opened your servant's ear about building him a household. That's why your servant has found it to plead before you.
[26]Now, Yahweh, you are God. You've spoken this good thing about your servant. [27]Now you've resolved to bless your servant's household so it will be before you permanently, because you, Yahweh, have blessed, and it is blessed permanently.'

Wars and rumours of wars

18 Subsequently, David struck down the Pelishtites and made them bow down; David took Gat and its daughter-towns from the hand of the Pelishtites. [2]He struck down the Mo'abites, and the Mo'abites became David's servants, bringing offerings.
[3]David struck down Hadad'ezer king of Tsobah Hamat, when he was going to put up his monument at the River Euphrates.
[4]David captured from him 1,000 chariotry, 7,000 cavalry and 20,000 men on foot. David hamstrung all the chariotry, but of them left 100 chariotry.
[5]Aramites from Dammeseq [Damascus] came to help Hadad'ezer king of Tsobah, and David struck down the Aramites, 22,000 men. [6]David put men in Aram of Dammeseq, and the Aramites became David's servants, bringing offerings. Yahweh delivered David in every place where he went. [7]David took the gold quivers that were with Hadad'ezer's servants and brought them to Yerushalaim, [8]and from Tibhat and from Kun, Hadad'ezer's towns, David took very much copper with which Shelomoh made the copper sea, the columns and the copper articles.
[9]To'u king of Hamat heard that David had struck down the entire force of Hadad'ezer king of Tsobah, [10]and he sent Hadoram his son to King David to ask him about whether things were well and to bless him, on account of the fact that he had battled against Hadad'ezer and had struck him down, on account of the fact that Hadad'ezer had been involved in battles with To'u.
All the gold, silver and copper objects – [11]David also made them sacred for Yahweh, with the silver and the gold that he took up from all the nations, from Edom, from Mo'ab, from the Ammonites, from the Pelishtites and from Amaleq. [12]When Abishay

ben Tseruyah struck down Edom in Salt Ravine, 18,000, [13a]he put outposts in Edom; all Edom became David's servants.

Suspicion and humiliation

[13b]Yahweh delivered David wherever he went. [14]David reigned over all Yisra'el, and he was exercising authority in a faithful way for his entire people.

[15]Yo'ab ben Tseruyah was over the army.
Yehoshaphat ben Ahihud was recorder.
[16]Tsadoq ben Ahitub and Abimelek ben Ebyatar were priests.
Shavsha was secretary.
[17]Benayah ben Yehoyada was over the Keretites and the Peletites.
David's sons were the first people at the king's right hand.

19 Subsequently, Nahash king of the Ammonites died, and his son began to reign in place of him. [2]David said, 'I will act in commitment with Hanun ben Nahash, because his father acted in commitment with me.' So David sent envoys to console him about his father. David's servants came to the Ammonites' country to Hanun, to console him, [3]but the Ammonites' officials said to Hanun, 'Is David honouring your father, in your eyes, because he sent you people offering consolation? It's for the sake of searching out and overthrowing, investigating the country, that his servants have come to you, isn't it.'
[4]So Hanun got David's servants, clipped them and cut their clothes in half up to their behinds, and sent them off. [5]People went and told David about the men and he sent to meet them, because the men were very ashamed. The king said, 'Stay in Yeriho until your beard grows and you can come back.' [6]The Ammonites saw that they stank with David. So Hanun and the Ammonites sent a thousand silver talents to hire themselves chariotry and cavalry from Aram-of-the-Two-Rivers, Aram Ma'akah and Tsobah. [7]They hired themselves 32,000 chariotry, the king of Ma'akah and his company, and came and camped before Medeba, while the Ammonites gathered from their towns and came for battle. [8]David heard and sent Yo'ab and the entire army, the strong men.

Be strong and show yourself strong

[9]The Ammonites went out and lined up for battle at the entrance to the town, with the kings who came in the open country on their own. [10]Yo'ab saw that the face of the battle was against him in front and behind. He picked some of all the picked men in Yisra'el and lined them up to meet the Aramites, [11]while he gave the rest of the company into the hand of Abshay his brother and they lined up to meet the Ammonites. [12]He said, 'If the Aramites are too strong for me, you'll be my deliverance, and if the Ammonites are too strong for you, I'll deliver you. [13]Be strong, and let's assert our strength on behalf of our people and on behalf of our God's towns, as Yahweh does what is good in his eyes.'
[14]So Yo'ab went up before the Aramites for the battle, he and his company who were with him, and they fled from before him. [15]When the Ammonites saw that the Aramites had fled, they too fled from before Abishay his brother and came into the town. So Yo'ab came to Yerushalaim.
[16]The Aramites saw that they had taken a beating before Yisra'el, and they sent envoys and got the Aramites who were from across the River to go out, with Shophak, Hadad'ezer's army officer, at their head. [17]It was told David, and he gathered all Yisra'el, crossed the Yarden, came to them and lined up against them.
So David lined up to meet the Aramites in battle, and they did battle with him. [18]The Aramites fled from before Yisra'el and David killed 7,000 of the Aramite chariotry and 40,000 men on foot, and put to death Shophak the army officer. [19]The servants of Hadad'ezer saw that they had taken a beating before Yisra'el and they made peace with David and served him. The Aramites were not willing to deliver the Ammonites any more.

Giants of men

20 At the time of the turn of the year, at the time when the kings go out, Yo'ab led out the army force, devastated the Ammonites' country, and came and besieged Rabbah, while David was staying in Yerushalaim. Yo'ab struck down Rabbah and tore it down. [2]David got their king's crown from on his head and found its weight a talent of gold, with precious stones in it. It came on to David's head, as he took out very much spoil from the town. [3]The people that was in it he took out and submitted to saws, iron harrows and axes. So David would do to all the towns of the Ammonites. Then David and the entire company went back to Yerushalaim.
[4]Subsequently, a battle started at Gezer with the Pelishtites. Then Sibbekay the Hushatite struck down Sippay, one of the descendants of the Repha'ites. So they bowed down. [5]There was again a battle with the Pelishtites. Elhanan ben Ya'ir struck down Lahmi, brother of Golyat [Goliath] the Gittite; the wood of his lance was like a weavers' rod. [6]There was again a battle at Gat, and there was a man of stature with twenty-four fingers and toes, six on each. [7]He reviled Yisra'el, and Yehonatan ben Shim'a, David's brother, struck him down. [8]These had descended from the Healer in Gat. They fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

Temptation and fall

21 An adversary stood up against Yisra'el and incited David to count Yisra'el. [2]So David said to Yo'ab and to the company's officers, 'Go number Yisra'el, from Be'er Sheba as far as Dan, and bring it to me so I may know their number.' [3]Yo'ab said,

‘May Yahweh add to his people a hundred times as many as they are. My lord king, all of them are my lord’s servants, aren’t they.
Why does my lord seek this? Why should it bring liability on Yisra’el?’ [4]But when the king’s word was strong over Yo’ab, Yo’ab
went out and went about in all Yisra’el, then came to Yerushalaim. [5]Yo’ab gave David the number for the registration of the
people. All Yisra’el was 1,100,000 men drawing the sword; Yehudah was 470,000 men drawing the sword; [6]Levi and Binyamin
he did not register among them because the king’s word was offensive to Yo’ab.

[7]This thing was bad in God’s eyes, and he struck Yisra’el down. [8]David said to God, ‘I’ve acted very wrongly in that I have
done this thing. But now, please make your servant’s waywardness pass away, because I’ve been very idiotic.’

[9]Yahweh spoke to Gad, David’s seer: [10]‘Go and speak to David: “Yahweh has said this: ‘I’m holding out three things to you.
Choose one of these for yourself and I shall do it for you.’”’ [11]Gad came to David and said to him, ‘Yahweh has said this: “Accept
for yourself [12]either three years of famine, or three months of being swept away before your adversaries, with your enemies’
sword overtaking, or three days of Yahweh’s sword and epidemic in the country and Yahweh’s envoy causing devastation in the
entire territory of Yisra’el.” So now see what word I am to take back to the one who sent me.’

[13]David said to Gad, ‘It’s very pressurizing for me. I shall fall into Yahweh’s hand, please, because his compassion is very
great. Into a human hand I will not fall.’

No cost-free offerings

[14]So Yahweh put an epidemic on Yisra’el and 70,000 individuals from Yisra’el fell. [15]God sent an envoy to Yerushalaim to
devastate it, but as he was devastating it, Yahweh saw and relented over the bad thing and said to the devastating envoy, ‘So
much! Now slacken your hand.’

Yahweh’s envoy was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Yebusite. [16]David lifted his eyes and saw Yahweh’s envoy
standing between the earth and the heavens with his drawn sword in his hand extended over Yerushalaim. David and the elders,
covered in sack, fell on their faces. [17]David said to God, ‘I’m the one who said to number the people, aren’t I. I’m the one who did
wrong and did what was definitely bad. These people are the flock; what did they do? Yahweh my God, your hand should please
be against me and against my ancestral household, not as an epidemic against your people.’

[18]Now Yahweh’s envoy said to Gad to say to David that David should go up to set up an altar for Yahweh at the threshing floor
of Ornan the Yebusite. [19]David went up at Gad’s word which he spoke in Yahweh’s name. [20]Ornan came back and saw the envoy
(his four sons with him were hiding; Ornan was threshing wheat). [21]David came to Ornan and Ornan looked and saw David, went
out of the threshing floor and bowed low to David, face to the ground.

[22]David said to Ornan, ‘Give me the threshing-floor site so I can build an altar for Yahweh on it. Give it to me at the full price
so that the epidemic may hold back from the people.’ [23]Ornan said to David, ‘Take it for yourself. My lord the king may do what
is good in his eyes. See, I’m giving the cattle as the burnt offerings and the threshing boards as wood and the wheat as the grain
offering. All of it, I’m giving.’ [24]But King David said to Ornan, ‘No, because I will definitely acquire them at the full price,
because I won’t lift up to Yahweh what belongs to you. I won’t offer up a burnt offering that cost nothing.’

Preparations begin

[25]So David gave Ornan 600 gold sheqels in weight for the site. [26]David built an altar there for Yahweh and offered up burnt
offerings and well-being sacrifices. He called to Yahweh, and he answered him with fire from the heavens on the burnt-offering
altar. [27]Yahweh said it to the envoy and he put his sword back into its sheath.

[28]At that time, when David saw that Yahweh had answered him at the threshing floor of Ornan the Yebusite, he sacrificed
there. [29]Yahweh’s dwelling which Mosheh made in the wilderness, and the burnt-offering altar, were at the shrine at Gib’on at
that time, [30]and David could not go before it to enquire of God because he was terrified before the sword of Yahweh’s envoy.

22 David said, ‘This is the house of Yahweh God. This is the burnt-offering altar for Yisra’el.’

[2]David said to assemble the resident aliens who were in the country of Yisra’el, and he got them to stand as hewers to hew
dressed stones for building God’s house. [3]David prepared iron in quantity for the nails for the doors of the gateways and for the
clasps, copper in quantity, beyond weighing, [4]and cedar logs beyond numbering (because the Tsidonites and the Tsorites brought
cedar logs in quantity to David). [5]David said, ‘Shelomoh my son is a boy and green, and the house to build for Yahweh is to be
exceptionally big so as to have a name and glory in all the countries. I should please prepare for him.’ So David prepared in
quantity before he died.

[6]He called Shelomoh his son, and ordered him to build a house for Yahweh the God of Yisra’el.

The man of peace for a time of peace and a place of peace

[7]David said to Shelomoh his son, ‘I myself – it was in my mind to build a house for the name of Yahweh my God, [8]but
Yahweh’s word came to me: “You’ve shed blood in quantity and fought big battles. You will not build a house for my name,
because you’ve shed much blood on the earth before me. [9]Here, a son has been born to you. He’ll be a settled man. I’ll enable him
to settle down from all his enemies all round, because his name will be Shelomoh and I’ll give peace [*shalom*] and calm upon
Yisra’el in his days. [10]It’s he who will build a house for my name. He’ll become a son to me and I’ll become a father to him. I’ll
establish his kingly throne over Yisra’el permanently.”

[11]Now, son, may Yahweh be with you, and may you succeed and build the house of Yahweh your God, as he spoke concerning
you. [12]Yet may Yahweh give you insight and understanding and may he order you over Yisra’el, and so that you keep the
instruction of Yahweh your God. [13]Then you will succeed, if you keep watch over acting on the decrees and the rulings that
Yahweh ordered Mosheh for Yisra’el.

Be strong and stand firm. Don't be afraid, don't be scared. [14]Here, by my restraint I've prepared for Yahweh's house 100,000
talents of gold, 1,000,000 talents of silver, and copper and iron beyond weighing (because it was in quantity). I've prepared logs
and stones, but you can add to them. [15]With you in large numbers are workmen (hewers, craftsmen in stone and wood, and every
kind of smart person in all work), [16]the gold, the silver, the copper and the iron, beyond numbering. Set to and do it. May Yahweh
be with you.'
[17]David ordered all Yisra'el's officials to help Shelomoh his son: [18]'Yahweh your God is with you, isn't he, and he's enabled
you to settle all round, because he's given into my hand the inhabitants of the country, and the country is in subjection before
Yahweh and before his people. [19]Now give your mind and your being to enquiring of Yahweh your God, and set to and build
Yahweh your God's sanctuary so as to bring Yahweh's pact chest and God's sacred articles to the house that's built for Yahweh's
name.'

The Levites' divisions

23 When David was old and full of years, he made Shelomoh his son king over Yisra'el. [2]David gathered all the officials of
Yisra'el, and the priests and the Levites. [3]The Levites were numbered, from age thirty and upwards; their head count for the
males was 38,000. [4]Of these, in charge of the work in Yahweh's house were 24,000; overseers and authorities, 6,000; [5]4,000
gatemen; and 4,000 praising Yahweh 'with instruments that I made for praising'. [6]David allocated them to divisions:

The sons of Levi: Gershon, Qehat and Merari.
[7]The Gershonites: La'dan and Shim'i.
[8]La'dan's sons: the head Yehi'el, Zetam and Yo'el – three.
[9]Shim'i's sons: Shelomit, Hazi'el and Haran – three.
These were La'dan's ancestral heads.
[10]Shim'i's sons: Yahat, Zina, Ye'ush and Beri'ah; these were Shim'i's sons – four.
[11]Yahat was the head, Zina the second, and Ye'ush and Beri'ah did not have many sons so they became an ancestral
household with one appointment.
[12]Qehat's sons: Amram, Yitshar, Hebron and Uzzi'el – four.
[13]Amram's sons: Aharon and Mosheh.
Aharon was distinguished to make sacred the very sacred things, he and his sons permanently, to burn incense before
Yahweh, to minister to him and to bless in his name, permanently.
[14]Mosheh, the supernatural man: his sons were named after the clan of Levi.
[15]Mosheh's sons: Gershom and Eli'ezer.
[16]Gershom's sons: Shebu'el the head.
[17]Eli'ezer's sons were Rehabyah the head; Eli'ezer didn't have other sons but Rehabyah's sons were exceptionally
numerous.
[18]Yitshar's sons: Shelomit the head.
[19]Hebron's sons: Yeriyyahu the head, Amaryah the second, Yahazi'el the third and Yeqam'am the fourth.
[20]Uzzi'el's sons: Mikah the head and Yishshiyyah the second.
[21]Merari's sons: Mahli and Mushi.
Mahli's sons: El'azar and Qish.
[22]El'azar died and didn't have sons, but rather daughters, and the sons of Qish, their brothers, took them.
[23]Mushi's sons: Mahli, Eder and Yeremot – three.

The Levites' roles

[24]These are the Levites by their ancestral households – the ancestral heads as they were registered by a headcount of names, the
people doing the work in connection with the service of Yahweh's house, from age twenty and upwards. [25]Because David said,
'Yahweh the God of Yisra'el has settled his people down and come to dwell in Yerushalaim permanently, [26]so also for the Levites
there's no carrying the dwelling and all its articles, for its service.' [27]Because by the last words of David, those are the number of
the Levites from the age of twenty and upwards. [28]Because their standing was at the side of the Aharonites for the service of
Yahweh's house:
over the courtyards and over the halls;
over the purity of everything that was sacred, and the work involved in the service of God's house;
[29]the row bread, the fine flour for a grain offering, the flatbread wafers, the griddle loaves, the mixed loaves, and every weight
and measure;
[30]standing morning by morning to confess and praise Yahweh, and similarly in the evening;
[31]all offering up of burnt offerings for Yahweh for the sabbaths, for the new months and for the appointed festivals by number,
in accordance with the ruling for them, regularly, before Yahweh.
[32]So they would keep watch over the appointment tent, over what was sacred, and over the Aharonites, their brothers, for the
service of Yahweh's house.
24 The divisions of the Aharonites.
Aharon's sons: Nadab and Abihu, El'azar and Itamar. [2]Nadab and Abihu died before their father and they had no sons, so
El'azar and Itamar acted as priests. [3]David, Tsadoq of the sons of El'azar, and Ahimelek of the sons of Itamar allocated them to

their appointment by their service. [4]El'azar's sons were found to be more numerous by male heads than Itamar's sons, so they allocated El'azar's sons as sixteen heads of ancestral households and Itamar's sons as eight heads of ancestral households. [5]They allocated them by lots, both of them, because they were the sacred place's officials and God's officials, from El'azar's sons and from Itamar's sons.

The Aharonites' divisions

[6]Shema'yah ben Netan'el the secretary, of the Levites, wrote them down before the king, the officials, Tsadoq the priest, Ahimelek ben Ebyatar, and the ancestral heads of the priests and of the Levites – an ancestral household taken for El'azar, then one taken for Itamar.

[7]The first lot came out for Yehoyarib
the second for Yeda'yah
[8]the third for Harim
the fourth for Se'orim
[9]the fifth for Malkiyyah
the sixth for Miyyamin
[10]the seventh for Haqqots
the eighth for Abiyyah
[11]the ninth for Yeshua
the tenth for Shekanyahu
[12]the eleventh for Eliyashib
the twelfth for Yaqim
[13]the thirteenth for Huppah
the fourteenth for Yeshebe'ab
[14]the fifteenth for Bilgah
the sixteenth for Immer
[15]the seventeenth for Hezir
the eighteenth for Happitstsets
[16]the nineteenth for Petahyah
the twentieth for Yehezqe'l
[17]the twenty-first for Yakin
the twenty-second for Gamul
[18]the twenty-third for Delayahu
the twenty-fourth for Ma'azyahu

[19]These were their appointment, in relation to their service, for coming into Yahweh's house in accordance with the ruling for them by means of Aharon their father, as Yahweh the God of Yisra'el had ordered him.
[20]Of the Levites who were left:

Of Amram's sons: Shuba'el;
Shuba'el's sons: Yehdeyahu;
[21]of Rehabyahu – of Rehabyahu's sons: the head Yishshiyyah.
[22]Of the Yitsharites: Shelomot;
of Shelomot's sons: Yahat.
[23]Yeriyyahu's sons: Amaryahu the second, Yahazi'el the third, Yeqam'am the fourth.
[24]Uzzi'el's sons: Mikah;
of Mikah's sons: Shamir;
[25]Mikah's brother: Yishshiyyah;
of Yishshiyyah's sons: Zekaryahu.
[26]Merari's sons: Mahli and Mushi;
the sons of Ya'aziyyahu, his son ([27]Merari's sons by Ya'aziyyahu, his son): Shoham, Zakkur, and Ibri;
[28]of Mahli: El'azar (he did not have sons);
[29]of Qish – Qish's sons: Yerahme'el;
[30]Mushi's sons: Mahli, Eder and Yerimot.

These were the sons of the Levites by the ancestral households.
[31]They also let lots fall, along with their Aharonite brothers, before David the king, Tsadoq, Ahimelek, and the ancestral heads of the priests and the Levites, the ancestral head along with his younger brother.

25 And David and the army officers made distinct for the service the sons of Asaph, Heman and Yedutun, who prophesied with guitars, mandolins and tambourines.

The watches

The number of them (the people fulfilling the work in connection with their service) was:
[2]Asaph's sons: Zakkur, Yoseph, Netanyah and Asar'elah, Asaph's sons at the side of Asaph, who prophesied at the side of the king;
[3]Yedutun – Yedutun's sons: Gedalyah, Tseri, Yeshayahu, Hashabyahu, Mattityahu, six, at the side of Yedutun their father with the mandolin, who prophesied in confessing and praising Yahweh;
[4]Heman – Heman's sons: Buqqiyyahu, Mattanyahu, Uzzi'el, Shebu'el, Yerimot, Hananyah, Hanani, Eli'atah, Giddalti, Romamti Ezer, Yoshbeqashah, Malloti, Hotir and Mahazi'ot. [5]All these sons of Heman the king's seer with God's words, to lift up his horn. God gave Heman fourteen sons and three daughters, [6]all these by their father's side in singing in Yahweh's house with cymbals, mandolins and guitars, for the service of God's house.
Asaph, Yedutun and Heman were by the king's side. [7]Their number with their brothers, trained in singing for Yahweh, every one discerning: 288. [8]They let lots fall for the watch, the big man along with the young man, discerning man with learner.

[9]The first lot (Asaph's) came out for Yoseph;
Gedalyah, the second, he, his brothers and his sons – 12;
[10]the third Zakkur, his sons and his brothers – 12;
[11]the fourth for Yitsri, his sons and his brothers – 12;
[12]the fifth Netanyah, his sons and his brothers – 12;
[13]the sixth Buqqiyyah, his sons and his brothers – 12;
[14]the seventh Yesar'elah, his sons and his brothers – 12;
[15]the eighth Yesha'yahu, his sons and his brothers – 12;
[16]the ninth Mattanyahu, his sons and his brothers – 12;
[17]the tenth Shim'i, his sons and his brothers – 12;
[18]eleventh Azar'el, his sons and his brothers – 12;
[19]the twelfth for Hashabyah, his sons and his brothers – 12;
[20]for the thirteenth Shuba'el, his sons and his brothers – 12;
[21]for the fourteenth Mattityahu, his sons and his brothers – 12;
[22]for the fifteenth for Yeremot, his sons and his brothers – 12;
[23]for the sixteenth for Hananyahu, his sons and his brothers – 12;
[24]for the seventeenth for Yoshbeqashah, his sons and his brothers – 12;
[25]for the eighteenth for Hanani, his sons and his brothers – 12;
[26]for the nineteenth for Malloti, his sons and his brothers – 12;
[27]for the twentieth for Eli'atah, his sons and his brothers – 12;
[28]for the twenty-first for Hotir, his sons and his brothers – 12;
[29]for the twenty-second for Giddalti, his sons and his brothers – 12;
[30]for the twenty-third for Mahazi'ot, his sons and his brothers – 12;
[31]for the twenty-fourth for Romamti Ezer, his sons and his brothers – 12.

The gatemen

26 The divisions of the gatemen:
Qorahites: Meshelemeyahu ben Qore of the sons of Asaph;
[2]of Meshelemeyahu, sons: Zekaryahu the firstborn, Yedi'a'el the second, Zebadyahu the third, Yatni'el the fourth, [3]Elam the fifth, Yehohanan the sixth, Elyeho'enay the seventh.
[4]Of Obed Edom, sons: Shema'yah the firstborn, Yehozabad the second, Yo'ah the third, Sakar the fourth, Netan'el the fifth,
[5]Ammi'el the sixth, Yissakar the seventh, Pe'ulletay the eighth (because God blessed him);
[6]to Shema'yah his son sons were born who ruled for their ancestral households because they were forceful strong men;
[7]Shema'yah's sons: Otni, Repha'el, Obed, Elzabad;
his brothers, forceful men: Elihu and Semakyahu;
[8]all these of the sons of Obed Edom, they, their sons and their brothers, people forceful in their energy for the service – of Obed Edom, sixty-two.
[9]Meshelemeyahu had sons and brothers, forceful men – eighteen.
[10]Hosah of the Merarites had sons: Shimri the head (because he was not the firstborn but his father made him head),
[11]Hilqiyyahu the second, Tebalyahu the third, Zekaryahu the fourth; all sons and brothers of Hoseh – thirteen.

[12]These are the gatemen's divisions by the strong men who were the heads, in watches along with their brothers, to minister in Yahweh's house. [13]They let lots fall, small and big alike, gateway by gateway:
[14]the lots to the east fell to Shelemyahu;
Zekaryahu his son, a counsellor with insight: they let lots fall and his lot came out to the north;
[15]for Obed Edom, to the south, and for his sons, the stores;
[16]for Suppim and for Hosah, to the west, with the Shalleket Gate on the upper causeway.
Watch along with watch:
[17]to the east, six Levites;
to the north, four daily;
to the south, four daily;
for the stores, two by two;
[18]at the colonnade to the west, four at the causeway, two at the colonnade.
[19]These are the divisions of the gatemen belonging to the Qorahites and the Merarites.

The Levites' responsibilities

[20]The Levites:
Ahiyyah in charge of the treasuries of God's house and the treasuries of the sacred things.
[21]La'dan's sons, the sons of the Gershonites belonging to La'dan, the ancestral heads of La'dan the Gershonite: Yehi'eli.
[22]Yehi'eli's sons: Zetam and Yo'el his brother, in charge of the treasuries of Yahweh's house;

[23]of the Amramites, the Yitsharites, the Hebronites and the Uzzi'elites:
[24]Shebu'el ben Gershom, the son of Mosheh, chief over the treasuries.
[25]His brothers by Eli'azar: Rehabyahu his son, Yesha'yahu his son, Yoram his son, Zikri his son and Shelomit his son.
[26]That Shelomit and his brothers were in charge of all the treasuries of the sacred things that David the king made sacred, with the ancestral heads, for the chiliarchs, the centurions and the army officers; [27]some of the spoil from battles they made sacred for strengthening Yahweh's house; [28]everything that Shemu'el the seer, Sha'ul ben Qish, Abner ben Ner and Yo'ab ben Tseruyah made sacred (anyone who made something sacred) was in the control of Shelomit and his brothers.
[29]Of the Yitsharites: Kenanyahu and his sons – in connection with work outside, in charge of Yisra'el as overseers and authorities.
[30]Of the Hebronites: Hashabyahu and his brothers, forceful men, 1,700, with an appointment over Yisra'el across the Yarden westward regarding all Yahweh's work and regarding the king's service.
[31]Of the Hebronites, Yeriyyah the head of the Hebronites by his lines of descent, by his ancestors: in the fortieth year of David's reign they were enquired after, and forceful strong men were found among them in Ya'zir-in-Gil'ad; [32]his brothers, forceful men, 2,700, ancestral heads – David the king appointed them in charge of the Re'ubenites, the Gadites and the half-clan of Menashsheh in connection with everything of God's and everything of the king's.

The army roster

27 The Yisra'elites by their number (the ancestral heads, the chiliarchs, the centurions and their overseers who ministered to the king in everything concerning the divisions that came in and went out month by month, all the months of the year); each division was 24,000:
[2]in charge of the first division, for the first month: Yashob'am ben Zabdi'el, in charge of his division of 24,000 – [3]of the sons of Perets, the head over all the army officers, for the first month;
[4]in charge of the second month's division: Doday the Ahohite in charge of his division with Miqlot the chief, in charge of his division of 24,000;
[5]the third army officer, for the third month: Benayah ben Yehoyada, the head priest, in charge of his division of 24,000; [6]that was Benayah the strongest man among the Thirty and in charge of the Thirty and his division, Ammizabad his son;
[7]the fourth, for the fourth month: Asah-el, Yo'ab's brother, and Zebadyah his son after him, in charge of his division of 24,000;
[8]the fifth, for the fifth month: the officer Shamhut the Yizrahite, in charge of his division of 24,000;
[9]the sixth, for the sixth month: Ira ben Iqqesh, the Teqo'ite, in charge of his division, 24,000;
[10]the seventh, for the seventh month: Helets the Pelonite, from the Ephrayimites, in charge of his division of 24,000;
[11]the eighth, for the eighth month: Sibbekay, the Hushatite of the Zerahites, in charge of his division of 24,000;
[12]the ninth, for the ninth month: Abi'ezer, the Anatotite of Binyamin, in charge of his division of 24,000;
[13]the tenth, for the tenth month: Mahray, the Netophatite of the Zerahites, in charge of his division of 24,000;
[14]the eleventh, for the eleventh month: Benayah, the Peratonite from the Ephrayimites, in charge of his division of 24,000;
[15]the twelfth, for the twelfth month: Helday the Netophatite of Otni'el, in charge of his division of 24,000.

The administration

[16]In charge of the Yisra'elite clans:

for the Re'ubenites: chief, Eli'ezer ben Zikri;
for the Shim'onites: Shephatyahu ben Ma'akah;
[17]for the Levites: Hashabyah ben Qemu'el;
for Aharon: Tsadoq;
[18]for Yehudah: Elihu, from David's brothers;
for Yissakar: Omri ben Mika'el;
[19]for Zebulun: Yishma'yahu ben Obadyahu;
for Naphtali: Yerimot ben Azri'el;
[20]for the Ephrayimites: Hoshea ben Azizyahu;
for the half-clan of Menashsheh: Yo'el ben Pedayah;
[21]for the half of Menashsheh in Gil'ad: Yiddo ben Zekaryahu;
for Binyamin: Ya'asi'el ben Abner;
[22]for Dan: Azar'el ben Yeroham.

These were the officers of the Yisra'elite clans. [23]David did not take their number for the people of twenty years or less, because Yahweh had said he would make Yisra'el as numerous as the stars in the heavens, [24]though Yo'ab ben Tseruyyah began to count, but he did not finish; at this, fury came on Yisra'el and the number did not go into the number of the things concerning King David.
[25]In charge of the king's treasuries: Azmavet ben Adi'el;
in charge of the treasuries in the open country (in the towns, in the hamlets and in the towers): Yehonatan ben Uzziyyahu;
[26]in charge of the people doing work in the open country, in the service of the ground: Ezri ben Kelub;
[27]in charge of the vineyards: Shim'i the Ramatite;

in charge of what was in the vineyards for the wine treasuries: Zabdi the Shiphmite;
[28]in charge of the olive trees and the wild fig trees that were in the foothills: Ba'al Hanan the Gederite;
in charge of the oil treasuries: Yo'ash;
[29]in charge of the cattle pasturing in Sharon: Shirtay the Sharonite;
in charge of the cattle in the vales: Shaphat ben Adlay;
[30]in charge of the camels: Obil the Ishma'elite;
in charge of the she-donkeys: Yehdeyahu the Meronotite;
[31]in charge of the flocks: Yaziz the Hagrite.
All these were officials over the property that belonged to King David.
[32]Yehonatan, David's uncle, was a counsellor; he was a discerning person and a secretary.
Yehi'el ben Hackmoni was with the king's sons.
[33]Ahitophel was counsellor to the king.
Hushay the Arkite was the king's friend.
[34]After Ahitophel were Yehoyada ben Benayah and Ebyatar.
Yo'ab was the king's army officer.

David's commission

28 David congregated in Yerushalaim all Yisra'el's officials, the clan officials, the divisional officials who ministered to the king, the chiliarchs, the centurions, and the officials over all the property and cattle belonging to the king and to his sons, with the courtiers and the strong men, every forceful strong man. [2]David the king rose to his feet and said, 'Listen to me, my brothers, my people. I – it was in my mind to build a place to settle down for Yahweh's pact chest, for our God's footstool, and I have prepared for building it. [3]But God said to me, "You aren't the one to build a house for my name because you're a man of battles; you've shed blood."
[4]Yahweh the God of Yisra'el chose me from my father's entire household to be king over Yisra'el permanently, because he chose Yehudah as chief, and in Yehudah's household, my father's household and from my father's sons he accepted me to make me king over all Yisra'el. [5]And from all my sons (because Yahweh has given me many sons) he chose Shelomoh my son to sit on Yahweh's kingly throne over Yisra'el. [6]He said to me, "Shelomoh your son – he will build my house and my courtyards, because I've chosen him as a son to me, and I myself will become a father to him. [7]I will establish his reign permanently if he is strong in acting on my orders and my rulings this very day."
[8]So now before the eyes of all Yisra'el, Yahweh's congregation, and in the ears of our God: keep and enquire of all the orders of Yahweh our God in order that you may possess the good country and give it to your children as their domain after you permanently.
[9]And you, Shelomoh my son: acknowledge your father's God and serve him with a perfect mind and with a willing being, because Yahweh enquires of all minds and discerns every inclination in people's intentions. If you enquire of him, he will be found by you, but if you abandon him, he will spurn you permanently. [10]See, now, that Yahweh has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary. Be strong and act!'

The plan and the charge

[11]David gave Shelomoh his son the plan for the porch, its houses, its storerooms, its upper quarters, its inside rooms, the house for the expiation cover, [12]the plan for all that was with him by the spirit for the courtyards of Yahweh's house and for all the halls around, for the treasuries in God's house and for the treasuries for sacred things, [13]for the divisions of the priests and the Levites and all the work involved in the service of Yahweh's house, for all the articles involved in the service of Yahweh's house, [14]for the gold with the weight (for the gold for all the articles used service by service), for the silver vessels with the weight (for all the articles used service by service), [15]the weight for the gold candelabra and the gold lamps, with the weight candelabrum by candelabrum and its lamps, and for the silver candelabra, with the weight for the candelabrum and its lamps in accordance with the service of candelabrum by candelabrum, [16]the weighed gold for the tables for the row [of bread] table by table, and silver for the silver tables, [17]the forks, the basins and the pitchers, pure gold, for the gold vessels, with the weight vessel by vessel, and the silver vessels, with the weight vessel by vessel, [18]for the incense altar refined gold, with the weight, and for the plan for the chariot, the gold sphinxes spreading and shielding Yahweh's pact chest, [19]'all of it in writing, through Yahweh's hand upon me. He has given me insight into all the plan's workings.'
[20]David said to Shelomoh his son, 'Be strong and stand firm, and act. Don't be afraid, don't be scared, because Yahweh God, my God, is with you. He won't let go of you, he won't abandon you, until the finishing of all the work in connection with the service of Yahweh's house. [21]Here are the divisions of the priests and the Levites for the service of God's house, and with you in all the work everyone who is free with smartness for every service, and the officials and all the people in connection with all your words.'

David's provision

29 David the king said to the entire congregation, 'Shelomoh my son, the one God chose, is a boy and green, though the work is big, because the castle is not for a human being but for Yahweh God. [2]With all my energy I have prepared for my God's house the gold for the gold things, the silver for the silver, the copper for the copper, the iron for the iron, the logs for the logs, onyx stones and settings, stones of antimony and colour, every precious stone, and alabaster stones, in quantity. [3]And further,

through my acceptance in my God's house, I have gold and silver as personal treasure that I'm giving for my God's house on top of all I have prepared for the sacred house: [4]3,000 talents of gold (Ophir gold), 7,000 talents of refined silver to overlay the houses' walls ([5]the gold for the gold, the silver for the silver), and for all the work in the hand of the craftsmen. So who is going to give freely, commissioning himself to Yahweh today?'

[6]The ancestral officials, the Yisra'elite clans' officials, the chiliarchs, the centurions and the officials over the king's work gave freely. [7]They gave for the service of God's house 5,000 talents of gold, 10,000 darics, 10,000 talents of silver, 18,000 talents of copper and 100,000 talents of iron. [8]The person who had stones to be found with him – they gave them to the treasury of Yahweh's house, into the hand of Yehi'el the Gershonite. [9]The people rejoiced over their free giving because it was with a perfect mind that they had given freely for Yahweh. David the king, too, rejoiced greatly.

Who am I and who is my people?

[10]David blessed Yahweh before the eyes of the entire congregation. David said, 'You are to be blessed, Yahweh, God of Yisra'el our father, from age to age. [11]Yours, Yahweh, is greatness, strength, glory, honour and grandeur, because everything in the heavens and on the earth is yours, Yahweh – the kingship and pre-eminence in relation to everything, as head. [12]Wealth and splendour come from before you. You rule over everything. In your hand are energy and strength. It's in your hand to make anyone big or strong. [13]So now, our God, we confess you and praise your glorious name.

[14]But who am I and who is my people that we hold on to the energy to give freely like this, because everything comes from you, and it's from your hand that we've given you. [15]Because we are resident aliens before you, transients like all our ancestors. Our days are like a shadow on the earth, and without hope. [16]Yahweh our God, all this mass that we have prepared to build a house for you, for your sacred name, is from your hand. Everything is yours.

[17]My God, I acknowledge that you test the mind and that integrity is what you accept. I myself with my integrity of mind have freely given all these things, and now your people who have presented themselves here – I have seen them giving freely to you with rejoicing. [18]Yahweh, God of Abraham, Yitshaq and Yisra'el, our ancestors, keep this permanently as the inclination of the intentions in your people's mind, and establish their mind in relation to you. [19]To Shelomoh my son give a perfect mind to keep your orders, your affirmations and your decrees, and to do it all, and to build the castle for which I have prepared.'

Full of years

[20]David said to the entire congregation, 'Bless Yahweh your God, please.' The entire congregation blessed Yahweh, their ancestors' God. They knelt and bent their heads to Yahweh and to the king [21]and made sacrifices for Yahweh and offered up burnt offerings for Yahweh the next day after that day: 1,000 bulls, 1,000 rams, 1,000 lambs, with their libations, sacrifices in large numbers for all Yisra'el. [22]They ate and drank before Yahweh that day with great rejoicing.

They again made Shelomoh ben David king and anointed him for Yahweh as chief, and Tsadoq as priest. [23]Shelomoh sat on Yahweh's throne as king in place of his father. He was successful and all Yisra'el listened to him. [24]All the officials, the strong men, and also all King David's sons, gave their support to Shelomoh the king. [25]Yahweh made Shelomoh exceptionally big before the eyes of all Yisra'el and gave him a royal grandeur that had not been on any king over Yisra'el before him.

[26]When David ben Yishay reigned over all Yisra'el, [27]the time that he reigned over Yisra'el was forty years. In Hebron he reigned seven years and in Yerushalaim he reigned thirty-three. [28]He died in a good old age full of years, of wealth and of honour, and Shelomoh his son began to reign in place of him. [29]The things about David the king, early and late, there they are, written down in the things of Shemu'el the seer, in the things of Natan the prophet and in the things of Gad the seer, [30]with his entire reign and his might, and the times that passed for him, for Yisra'el and for the kingdoms of the earth.

2 Chronicles

Like 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles is a history of Israel that focuses on the history of the temple and its worship. The first part (chapters 1—9) retells the story of Solomon's reign with a focus on his activity in building the temple, on the basis of the preparation and provision that David completed.

The middle part (chapters 10—28) retells the story of the two centuries when Judah and Ephraim were divided into two nations, but it does so by focusing almost entirely on Judah. By setting up its independent state, Ephraim has cut itself off from Jerusalem and cut itself off from the household of David. In effect it has cut itself off from the real people of God, so its story does not really belong in that story. The book makes clear that it comes from the Second Temple period, when the Persian king has made it possible for Judahites to rebuild the temple but when Judah is merely a Persian colony and an embattled little community whose relationships with surrounding Persian colonies are difficult. The stories of Ezra and Nehemiah open a window into some of that trickiness. One of the most difficult is with the people of Samaria, who are the people now living in the area of what was once Ephraim. The second book of Chronicles encourages Judah to trust in its special relationship with God and not be threatened by or tempted into compromise with Samaria/Ephraim.

One way its stories offer encouragement is the way they relate monumental victories that Judah won over those two centuries when Ephraim and Judah were separate peoples. The battles are told larger than life in a way that enhances their excitement and their encouragement. The numbers are way out of line with the actual size of the peoples of the day, and even more out of line with the size of the peoples for whom Chronicles' version of the stories was written. The stories underline the way that trust in God, not the size of your army, is the key to survival and to success.

The last part of the book (chapters 29—36) returns to giving more focused attention to the temple. It covers the period after the downfall of Ephraim to the Assyrians, though it ignores that event because Ephrayim's story is not really part of the story of Israel. (The use of the word 'Israel' is often confusing in the Old Testament, but especially in 2 Chronicles. On one hand, 'Israel' was the usual political name of the northern kingdom, and it is then set over against 'Judah'. On the other hand, 'Israel' denotes the people that God chose, the people of Abraham and Moses and David. In this sense Chronicles can refer to Judah as 'Israel'. Let the reader beware! I myself refer to the northern kingdom by its other name, Ephraim, to try to reduce the confusion.)

This last part of the book has two heroes, Hezekiah and Josiah, who were both involved in reforming the temple's worship. The odd thing about Josiah is that having acted with great faithfulness to Yahweh, he died quite young. His story contrasts with that of his grandfather, Manasseh, an apostate king who nevertheless reigned for fifty-five years. Chronicles offers implicit explanations of those disparities by describing how Manasseh repented of his wrongdoing while Josiah ignored a word from God in taking on the battle in which he died. Chronicles is thus able to affirm the truth of one of its important themes, that God is faithful and responsive to the people who are faithful and responsive to him but that failing in your faithfulness and responsiveness leads to trouble.

The book almost closes with Judah's own undoing of the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah and with the temple's destruction by the Babylonians. But finally the Persian emperor declares that he has a commission from Yahweh (!) to rebuild the temple, and he encourages Judahites in exile throughout his empire to go back to Jerusalem to do it. That last little paragraph is also the first paragraph in the story in Ezra and Nehemiah, and the order of the books in the English Bible encourages us to read them in this sequence. But in most Hebrew Bibles these books come at the very end, in the order Ezra–Nehemiah–Chronicles, which points to the possibility that Ezra and Nehemiah are not the sequel to Chronicles; Chronicles is the prequel to Ezra–Nehemiah. That overlap between Chronicles and Ezra is the way Chronicles encourages its readers to see it as such a prequel. It offers further encouragement to see the book as speaking to the needs and pressures and questions of the Second Temple period.

What would you like me to give you?

1 Shelomoh [Solomon] ben David showed himself strong over his kingdom; Yahweh his God was with him and made him exceptionally big.

[2]Shelomoh spoke to all Yisra'el (to the chiliarchs and the centurions, to the authorities and to every leader in all Yisra'el, the ancestral heads), [3]and Shelomoh and the entire congregation with him went to the shrine which was at Gib'on, because God's appointment tent, which Mosheh [Moses], Yahweh's servant, made in the wilderness, was there, [4]though God's chest David had taken up from Ye'arim Township when David had prepared for it, because he had pitched a tent for it in Yerushalaim. [5]But the copper altar, which Betsal'el ben Uri the son of Hur had made, was there before Yahweh's dwelling. So Shelomoh and the congregation enquired of it. [6]There Shelomoh went up on the copper altar before Yahweh, which was at the appointment tent, and offered up a thousand burnt offerings on it.

[7]That night God appeared to Shelomoh and said to him, 'Ask for what I should give you.' [8]Shelomoh said to God, 'You yourself acted in great commitment with David my father and you have made me king in place of him. [9]Now, Yahweh God, may your word with David my father prove trustworthy, because you have made me king over a people as numerous as the earth on the ground. [10]Now give me smartness and knowledge so that I may go out and come in before this people. Because who can exercise authority for this great people of yours?'

[11]God said to Shelomoh, 'Since this was in your mind, and you haven't asked for wealth and possessions and honour, or the life of the people hostile to you, nor was it even long life that you asked for, but you've asked for smartness and knowledge so you can exercise authority for my people over which I've made you king, [12]smartness and knowledge are going to be given to you, and wealth and possessions and honour I will give to you, which have not belonged in this way to the kings who have been before you, nor will belong in this way to those after you.'

Shelomoh's flourishing

[13]Shelomoh came, apropos the shrine which was at Gib'on, to Yerushalaim from before the appointment tent, and reigned over Yisra'el.
[14]Shelomoh gathered chariotry and cavalry; he had 1,400 chariotry and 12,000 cavalry. He settled them in chariot towns and with the king in Yerushalaim. [15]The king made the silver and the gold in Yerushalaim like the stones, and made the cedars like the wild fig trees that are in the foothills, in the large number. [16]The origin of the horses that Shelomoh had was from Misrayim [Egypt] and from Qewe. The king's dealers would get them from Qewe at a price; [17]they took up a chariot (they brought it out from Misrayim) for 600 silver pieces, a horse for 150. In this way they would get them out by their own hand to all the kings of the Hittites and to the kings of Aram.

2 Shelomoh said to build a house for Yahweh's name and a house for himself as king. [2]Shelomoh numbered 70,000 carriers, 80,000 hewers in the highland and 3,600 supervisors over them.
[3]Shelomoh sent to Huram king of Tsor [Tyre], saying, 'As you did with David my father when you sent him cedars to build himself a house to live in: [4]here, I'm going to build a house for the name of Yahweh my God, to make sacred for him for burning spiced incense before him, and the regular row [of bread], and burnt offerings morning and evening, for the sabbaths, for the new months and for the appointed occasions of Yahweh our God. This is laid upon Yisra'el permanently. [5]The house that I'm going to build will be big, because our God is bigger than all gods. [6]But who can hold on to the energy to build him a house, because the heavens, even the highest heavens cannot contain him, so who am I that I should build him a house except for burning incense before him?

What's needed for the house of God

[7]But now send me someone who's smart at working in gold, in silver, in copper, in iron, in purple, scarlet and blue, and who knows how to do engraving, with the smart people who're with me in Yehudah and in Yerushalaim whom David my father prepared. [8]And send me cedar, juniper and algum logs from the Lebanon, because I acknowledge that your servants know about cutting Lebanese logs. And there, my servants will be with your servants [9]to prepare logs in large number for me, because the house that I'm going to build will be big, extraordinary. [10]Here, for the choppers, the people who cut the logs, I'm giving: crushed wheat for your servants, 20,000 ten-gallon measures; barley, 20,000 ten-gallon measures; wine, 20,000 five-gallon measures; and oil, 20,000 five-gallon measures.'
[11]Huram king of Tsor said in a written message, and sent to Shelomoh, 'In Yahweh's loyalty to his people he has made you king over them.' [12]Huram said, 'Blessed be Yahweh the God of Yisra'el who made the heavens and the earth, who gave David the king a smart son, who knows about insight and understanding, who will build a house for Yahweh and a house for himself as king. [13]So now I'm sending someone smart who knows about understanding, Huram Abi, [14]the son of one of the Danite women and his father a Tsorite man, who knows about working in gold, in silver, in copper, in iron, in stones, in wood, in purple, in blue, in fine linen and in scarlet, and how to do all engraving and to do any designing that will be given him, with your smart people and the smart people of my lord David your father. [15]And now the wheat, the barley, the oil and the wine that my lord said, he should send them to his servants. [16]We ourselves will cut down trees from the Lebanon in accordance with all your need and we will bring them to you as rafts by sea to Yafo, and you can take them up to Yerushalaim.'

The work begins

[17]Shelomoh numbered all the people who were resident aliens who were in the country of Yisra'el, following on the numbering of them by David his father. They were found to be 153,600. [18]Of them he made 70,000 carriers, 80,000 hewers in the highland and 3,600 supervisors to get the company to serve.

3 And Shelomoh began building Yahweh's house in Yerushalaim on Mount Moriyyah where he had appeared to David his father, at David's site which he had prepared, at the threshing floor of Ornan the Yebusite. [2]He began to build in the second month, on the second, in the fourth year of his reign. [3]These were Shelomoh's foundation for building God's house:
the length 30 metres (by the former measure);
the width 10 metres;
[4]the porch corresponding to the length, corresponding to the width of the house, 10 metres;
the height 60 metres.
He overlaid it on the inside with pure gold. [5]The big house he covered with juniper wood, and he covered it with fine gold. He put on top of it palms and chains. [6]He decorated the house with precious stones for glory; the gold was Parvayim gold. [7]He covered the house (the beams, the thresholds, and its walls and its doors) with gold, and engraved sphinxes on the walls.
[8]He made the very sacred house: its length corresponding to the house's width, ten metres, and its width ten metres. He covered it with fine gold, 600 talents, [9]the weight of the nails fifty sheqels of gold. The upper quarters he covered in gold.
[10]In the very sacred house he made two sphinxes, sculptured work, and they overlaid them with gold. [11]The sphinxes' wings: their length ten metres – the wing of the first two-and-a-half metres touching the wall of the house and the other wing two-and-a-half metres touching the other sphinx's wing, [12]the other sphinx's wing two-and-a-half metres touching the wall of the house and the other wing two-and-a-half metres attaching to the first sphinx's wing, [13]these sphinxes' wings spreading ten metres; they were standing on their feet with their faces to the house.

The features of the house

[14]He made the expiation cover of purple, blue, scarlet and fine linen, and made sphinxes on it. [15]Before the house he made two pillars sixteen metres in length; the capital that was on top of it was two and a half metres. [16]He made chains in the inner room

and put them on top of the pillars, and he made a hundred pomegranates and put them into the chains. [17]He set up the pillars in front of the palace, one on the right and one on the left. He named the right 'He-Establishes' and the left 'In-Him-Is-Strength'.

4 He made a copper altar, ten metres its length, ten metres its width, five metres its height. [2]He made the sea, cast:
[1]five metres from its lip to its lip, circular all round, two and a half metres its height;
a line of fifteen metres would go round it all round;
[3]figures of cattle under it round it, all round, ten metres, encircling the sea all round;
two rows of the cattle, cast along with its casting;
[4]standing on twelve cattle, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south, three facing east, with the sea on them, above, and all their rears inwards;
[5]its thickness a handbreadth;
its lip like the making of the lip of a cup, a lotus petal;
taking strong hold of 10,000 gallons, which it would hold.
[6]He made ten basins and put them five on the right and five on the left, for washing in them. In them they would rinse the work for the burnt offering, while the sea was for the priests' washing in. [7]He made the ten gold candelabra in accordance with the ruling for them and put them in the palace, five on the right and five on the left. [8]He made ten tables and set them in the palace, five on the right and five on the left. He made a hundred gold sprinklers. [9]He made the priests' courtyard and the big enclosure and doors for the enclosure, and their doors he overlaid with copper. [10]He put the sea at the right shoulder, to the east, towards the south.

The work completed

[11]Huram made the basins, the shovels and the bowls. So Huram finished doing all the work that he did for King Shelomoh in God's house:
[12]two pillars;
the two globes and capitals on the top of the pillars;
two nets to cover the two globes for the capitals that were on the top of the pillars;
[13]the 400 pomegranates for the two nets, two rows of pomegranates for each net, to cover the two globes for the capitals that were on the face of the pillars;
[14]he made the stands and he made the basins on the stands;
[15]the one sea and the twelve cattle under it;
[16]the buckets, the shovels, the basins and all their articles that Huram his father made for King Shelomoh for Yahweh's house, polished copper.
[17]The king cast them in the Yarden [Jordan] Plain, in the earthen compactness between Sukkot and Tsaretan. [18]Shelomoh made all these articles, a large number, so that the weight of the copper was not searched out. [19]Shelomoh made all the articles that were in God's house:
the gold altar;
the table on which was the presence bread;
[20]the candelabra and their lamps for burning in accordance with the ruling, before the inner room, beaten gold;
[21]the flowers, the lamps and the tongs, gold (i.e. solid gold);
[22]the snuffers, the sprinklers, the ladles and the pans, beaten gold;
the entrance for the house, its doors, the inside parts for the very sacred place, and the doors of the house for the palace, gold.

5 So all the work that Shelomoh did for Yahweh's house was complete, and Shelomoh brought in the sacred things from David his father; the silver, the gold and all the articles he put in the treasuries of God's house.

When you can tell God is present

[2]Then Shelomoh congregated Yisra'el's elders (all the heads of the clans, the Yisra'elites' ancestral leaders) to Yerushalaim, to take up Yahweh's pact chest from David's Town (i.e. Zion). [3]Every individual in Yisra'el congregated to the king at the festival (i.e. the seventh month). [4]All Yisra'el's elders came and the Levites carried the chest. [5]They took up the chest, the appointment tent and all the sacred articles that were in the tent. The priests, the Levites, took them up [6]while King Shelomoh and the entire assembly of Yisra'el who had assembled to him before the chest were sacrificing sheep and cattle that could not be numbered and could not be counted because of the large number.
[7]The priests brought Yahweh's pact chest to its place, to the inner room of the house, to the very sacred place, under the sphinxes' wings. [8]The sphinxes were spreading their wings over the chest's place; the sphinxes covered the chest and its poles from above. [9]The poles extended and the heads of the poles coming from the chest could be seen in front of the inner room, but they could not be seen outside. It has been there until this day. [10]There was nothing in the chest, only the two tablets that Mosheh put in at Horeb, when Yahweh solemnized things with the Yisra'elites when they got out from Misrayim.
[11]When the priests went out of the sacred place (because all the priests who were to be found had made themselves sacred – there was no keeping to the divisions), [12]the Levite singers, all of them, Asaph, Heman and Yedutun, and their sons and their brothers, dressed in linen, with tambourines and with guitars and mandolins, were standing east of the altar, and with them were 120 priests blowing trumpets. [13]When the trumpeters and the singers as one made one sound to be heard to praise and confess Yahweh and raised a sound on trumpets, on tambourines and on musical instruments, and praised Yahweh 'Because he is good, because his commitment is permanent', the house filled with a cloud – Yahweh's house. [14]The priests could not stand ministering before the cloud because Yahweh's splendour filled God's house.

A thick cloud and a stately house

6 Then Shelomoh said:

Yahweh has said he would dwell in a thundercloud,
[2]but I myself have built you a stately house,
an established place for you to live in to the ages.

[3]The king turned his face round and blessed Yisra'el's entire congregation, as Yisra'el's entire congregation was standing. [4]He said, 'Blessed be Yahweh the God of Yisra'el who spoke by his own mouth with David my father, and by his own hand has fulfilled it: [5]"From the day when I got my people out of the country of Misrayim I didn't choose a town from all Yisra'el's clans to build a house for my name to be there and I didn't choose anyone to be chief over my people Yisra'el. [6]But I have chosen Yerushalaim for my name to be there, and I have chosen David to be in charge of my people Yisra'el."
[7]It was in David my father's mind to build a house for the name of Yahweh the God of Yisra'el, [8]but Yahweh said to David my father, "In that it was in your mind to build a house for my name, you did well that it was in your mind. [9]Only you yourself will not build the house. Rather your son, who is going to come out from your insides, he will build the house for my name."
[10]Yahweh has implemented his word that he spoke. I have arisen in place of David my father, I have sat on Yisra'el's throne as Yahweh spoke and I have built the house for the name of Yahweh the God of Yisra'el. [11]I have set there the chest where Yahweh's pact is, which he solemnized with the Yisra'elites.'

God dwells with humanity on earth!

[12]He stood before Yahweh's altar in front of the entire congregation of Yisra'el and spread out his palms [13](because Shelomoh had made a copper platform and put it in the middle of the enclosure, its length two and a half metres, its width two and a half metres and its height one and a half metres; so he stood on it, and knelt on his knees in front of the entire congregation of Yisra'el, and spread out his palms to the heavens).
[14]He said, 'Yahweh, God of Yisra'el, there is no god like you in the heavens or on the earth, keeping pact and commitment to your servants who walk before you with their entire mind, [15]who has kept for your servant David my father what you spoke to him. You spoke with your own mouth and with your own hand you have fulfilled it, this very day.
[16]So now, Yahweh, God of Yisra'el, keep for your servant David my father what you spoke to him: "There will not be cut off for you someone before me sitting on Yisra'el's throne, if only your sons keep watch over their way in walking by my instruction, as you have walked before me." [17]So now, Yahweh, God of Yisra'el, may your word prove trustworthy that you spoke to your servant David.
[18]Because will God truly live with humanity on the earth? There, the heavens, even the highest heavens, could not contain you, certainly not this house that I've built. [19]But turn your face towards your servant's plea and towards his prayer for grace, Yahweh my God, so as to listen to the resounding cry and the plea that your servant's uttering before you, [20]so that your eyes are opened towards this house day and night, towards the place of which you said you would put your name there, so as to listen to the plea that your servant makes towards this place. [21]May you listen to the prayers for grace by your servant and your people Yisra'el, which they make towards this place. May you yourself listen from the place where you live, from the heavens, listen and pardon.'

Be one who listens to us

[22]If someone does wrong to his neighbour, and he takes up an oath against him to get him to swear, and the oath comes before your altar in this house, [23]may you yourself listen from the heavens and act and exercise authority for your servants, so as to turn it back on the one who is in the wrong, bringing his conduct on his head, and to show the person in the right to be in the right, giving to him in accordance with his being in the right.
[24]If your people Yisra'el take a beating before an enemy because they do wrong in relation to you, but they turn back and confess your name and plead and pray for grace before you in this house, [25]may you yourself listen from the heavens and pardon your people Yisra'el's wrongdoing and take them back to the land that you gave to them and to their ancestors.
[26]When the heavens hold back and there's no rain because they do wrong in relation to you, but they plead towards this place and confess your name, when they turn back from their wrongdoing because you humble them, [27]may you yourself listen in the heavens and pardon the wrongdoing of your servants, your people Yisra'el, when you instruct them in the good way that they should walk in, and give rain on your country that you gave your people as a domain.
[28]When famine happens in the country, when an epidemic happens, blight, mildew, locust or caterpillar, when it happens; when its enemies besiege it in the region of their settlements; any affliction or any illness; [29]any plea, any prayer for grace that any human being may have or your entire people Yisra'el may have, who acknowledge each one his affliction or illness, and he spreads out his palms towards this house, [30]may you yourself listen from the heavens, the established place where you live, and pardon, and give to the individual in accordance with all his ways (in that you know his mind because you alone know the mind of human beings), [31]in order that that they may live in awe of you by walking in your ways all the days that they are alive on the face of the ground that you gave to our ancestors.

No ethnic limits to Yahweh

[32]Further, to the foreigner who is not of your people Yisra'el but comes from a distant country for the sake of your big name, your strong hand and your extended arm, and comes and pleads towards this house, [33]may you yourself listen from the heavens,

from the established place where you live, and act in accordance with everything for which the foreigner calls to you, in order that all earth's peoples may acknowledge your name, and so as to live in awe of you like your people Yisra'el and to acknowledge that your name is called out over this house that I have built.
[34]When your people goes out to battle against its enemies by the way that you send them and they plead to you in the direction of this town that you have chosen and the house that I have built for your name, [35]may you listen from the heavens to their plea and to their prayer for grace, and decide for them.
[36]When they do wrong in relation to you (because there is no human being who doesn't do wrong) and you're angry with them and you give them up before an enemy, and their captors take them off captive to a country far or near, [37]and they turn their mind back in the country where they are captive, and turn back and pray towards you for grace in the country of their captivity, saying, "We've done wrong, we've been wayward, we've been faithless", [38]and they turn back to you with their entire mind and with their entire being in the country of their captivity where people have taken them off captive, and make their plea in the direction of their country that you gave their ancestors, the town that you've chosen, and to the house that I've built for your name, [39]may you listen from the heavens, from the established place where you live, to their plea, their prayers for grace, and decide for them, and pardon your people who have done wrong in relation to you.
[40]Now, my God, may your eyes please be opened and your ears be heeding to a plea from this place.

A committed people can rejoice

[41]So now,

Yahweh God, rise to your settled place,
you and your powerful chest.
May your priests, Yahweh God,
clothe themselves in deliverance.
May your committed people rejoice in good things,
[42]Yahweh God.
Don't turn back the face of your anointed ones;
be mindful of your servant David's acts of commitment.'

7 When Shelomoh had finished pleading, and the fire had come down from the heavens and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and Yahweh's splendour had filled the house, [2]the priests couldn't come into Yahweh's house because Yahweh's splendour filled Yahweh's house. [3]When all the Yisra'elites saw the fire and Yahweh's splendour on the house, they bent down, face to the ground, on the pavement. They bowed low and confessed Yahweh, 'Because he is good, because his commitment lasts permanently'.
[4]When the king and all the people made sacrifice before Yahweh, [5]King Shelomoh sacrificed 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep, and the king and the entire people dedicated God's house, [6]while the priests were standing at their watches, the Levites with the instruments for singing to Yahweh, which David the king had made for confessing Yahweh, 'Because his commitment lasts permanently', with David's praise in their hand, and the priests blowing trumpets in front of them, and all Yisra'el standing.
[7]Shelomoh made sacred the middle of the courtyard which was before Yahweh's house, because he made the burnt offerings and the fat parts of the well-being sacrifices there, because the copper altar that Shelomoh had made couldn't contain the burnt offering, the grain offering and the fat parts. [8]Shelomoh made the festival at that time for seven days, and all Yisra'el with him, a very big congregation, from Lebo Hamat as far as the Misrayimite Wadi.
[9]On the eighth day they made an assembly, because they made the dedication of the altar for seven days and the festival for seven days. [10]On the twenty-third day of the seventh month he sent the people off to their tents, rejoicing and good-hearted because of the good things that Yahweh had done for David, for Shelomoh and for Yisra'el his people.

If my people

[11]Shelomoh had finished Yahweh's house and the king's house. Everything that had come into Shelomoh's mind to do in Yahweh's house and in his own house he succeeded in doing. [12]And Yahweh appeared to Shelomoh at night and said to him, 'I've listened to your plea and chosen this place for myself as a house for sacrifice. [13]If I hold back the heavens and there's no rain, or if I order the locust to consume the country, or if I send off an epidemic against my people, [14]and my people over whom my name is called out bow down and plead and seek my face, and turn back from their bad ways, I myself will listen from the heavens and pardon their wrongdoing, and heal their country. [15]My eyes will now be opened and my ears be heeding to this place's plea. [16]So now I've chosen and made sacred this house for my name to be there permanently. My eyes and my mind will be there for all time.
[17]You yourself, if you walk before me as David your father walked, acting in accordance with all that I've ordered you, and you keep my decrees and my rulings, [18]I will set up your kingly throne as I solemnized it to David your father, saying "There will not be cut off for you someone ruling in Yisra'el."
[19]But if you people turn back and abandon my decrees and my orders that I've put before you, and you go and serve other gods and bow low to them, [20]I will uproot them from upon my land that I gave them, and this house that I've made sacred for my name I will throw out from before my face and make it into an object lesson and a taunt among all the peoples.
[21]This house, which has been high – everyone who passes by it will be desolate and will say, "Why did Yahweh act in that way to this country and to this house?" [22]And people will say, "On account of the fact that they abandoned Yahweh their ancestors'

God who got them out of the country of Misrayim, and took strong hold of other gods and bowed low to them and served them. That's why he brought upon them all this bad fate."'

Shelomoh's other projects

8 At the end of the twenty years while Shelomoh built Yahweh's house and his own house [2](and the towns that Huram gave Shelomoh – he built them up and got Yisra'elites to live there), [3]Shelomoh went to Hamat Tsobah and overpowered it, [4]and built Tadmor in the wilderness, and all the supply towns that he built in Hamat. [5]He built Upper Bet Horon and Lower Bet Horon as fortified towns (walls, gateways and a bar), [6]Ba'alat and the supply towns that belonged to Shelomoh, all the chariotry towns and the cavalry towns – every attraction that Shelomoh had for building in Yerushalaim, in the Lebanon and in all the country he ruled.

[7]The entire people that were left of the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Hivvite and the Yebusite, who were not of Yisra'elite birth ([8]of their descendants who were left after them in the country, whom the Yisra'elites had not finished off), Shelomoh raised them as a workforce until this day. [9]Of the Yisra'elites, whom Shelomoh did not make into servants for his work: rather they were men of battle, adjutant officers, and officers over his chariotry and his cavalry, [10]and these were King Shelomoh's prefect officers, 250, holding sway over the people.

[11]Par'oh's [Pharaoh's] daughter Shelomoh took up from David's Town to the house that he built for her, because (he said), 'My wife will not live in the house of David king of Yisra'el, because those places where Yahweh's chest has come are sacred.'

[12]Shelomoh then offered up burnt offerings for Yahweh on Yahweh's altar which he built before the porch, [13]offering up each day's requirement in its day in accordance with Mosheh's order for the sabbaths, the new months and the three appointed occasions in the year, on the Flatbread Festival, on the Shabu'ot Festival and on the Sukkot Festival.

[14]In accordance with the ruling of David his father, he put in place the priests' divisions for their service, the Levites for their watches to praise and to minister in front of the priests, each day's requirement in its day, and the gatemen by their divisions, gateway by gateway, because this was the order of David, the supernatural man. [15]They did not depart from the king's order regarding the priests or the Levites in connection with anything, or in connection with the treasuries.

There had been nothing like it

[16]So all Shelomoh's work was established from the day Yahweh's house was founded and until Yahweh's house was finished, complete.

[17]Shelomoh then went to Etsyon-geber and to Elot on the sea coast in the country of Edom. [18]Huram sent ships to him by the hand of his servants; his servants knew the sea. They came with Shelomoh's servants to Ophir and got gold from there, 450 talents, and brought it to King Shelomoh.

9 Since the queen of Sheba heard report of Shelomoh, she came to test Shelomoh in Yerushalaim with conundrums, with a very substantial force, both camels carrying spices, and gold in quantity, and precious stones. She came to Shelomoh and spoke with him of everything that was in her mind, [2]and Shelomoh told her about all the things she said. Nothing was concealed from Shelomoh that he didn't tell her.

[3]The queen of Sheba saw Shelomoh's smartness, the house that he had built, [4]the food on his table, the seating of his servants, the standing of his ministers and their dress, his wine waiters and their dress, and his stairway by which he would go up to Yahweh's house, and there was no longer any breath in her.

[5]She said to the king, 'The thing is true that I heard in my country about your words and about your smartness. [6]I didn't believe their words until I came, and my eyes saw, but here, half of the extent of your smartness had not been told me; you exceed the report that I heard. [7]The blessings of your people, the blessings of these servants of yours who are standing continually before you and listening to your smartness! [8]May Yahweh your God be blessed, who delighted in you so as to put you on his throne as king for Yahweh your God, in your God's loyalty to Yisra'el in enabling them to stand, permanently, and made you king over them to exercise authority with faithfulness.'

All that she wanted

[9]She gave the king 120 talents of gold, spices in very large quantity and precious stones. There never again came spice like that spice that the queen of Sheba gave King Shelomoh. [10]Huram's servants and Shelomoh's servants, who brought gold from Ophir, also brought algum wood and precious stones. [11]The king made the algum logs into causeways for Yahweh's house and for the king's house and into guitars and mandolins for the singers. Ones like these had not been seen before in the country of Yehudah. [12]King Shelomoh himself gave the queen of Sheba all that she wanted, that she asked for, beyond what she brought to the king. Then she turned round and went to her country, she and her servants.

[13]The weight of the gold that came to Shelomoh in one year was 666 talents of gold, [14]apart from what the traders and the merchants were bringing; and all the kings of Arabia and the governors of the region were bringing gold and silver to Shelomoh. [15]King Shelomoh made 200 body-shields of hammered gold (he would raise 600 gold pieces for each shield) [16]and 300 hand-shields of hammered gold (he would raise 300 pieces of gold for each shield). The king put them in the Lebanon Forest house.

[17]The king made a big ivory throne and overlaid it with refined gold, [18]with six steps to the throne, and a gold footstool for the throne attached, and arms on this side and on that side of the place where one sat, and two lions standing beside the arms, [19]and twelve lions standing there on the six steps on this side and on that side; none was made like this for any kingdom.

Tusks, monkeys and peacocks

[20]All King Shelomoh's drinking vessels were gold and all the vessels in the Lebanon Forest house were beaten gold – silver was not thought of for anything in Shelomoh's days, [21]because the king had a fleet going to Tarshish with Huram's servants. Once in three years the Tarshish fleet would come carrying gold and silver, tusks, monkeys and peacocks.
[22]King Shelomoh was bigger than all the kings of the earth in wealth and in smartness. [23]All the kings of the earth were seeking audience with Shelomoh to listen to his smartness, which God had put into his mind, [24]and they were bringing each his offering: silver objects and gold objects, robes, weaponry and spices, horses and mules, each year's requirement in its year. [25]Shelomoh had 4,000 stalls for horses and chariots and 12,000 cavalry. He settled them in chariot towns, and with the king in Yerushalaim.
[26]He was ruling over all the kings from the River as far as the Pelishtites' [Philistines'] country and as far as the Misrayimite border. [27]The king made the silver in Yerushalaim like the stones, and made the cedars like the wild fig trees that are in the foothills in the large number. [28]They were getting horses out of Misrayim for Shelomoh, and out of all the countries.
[29]The rest of the things about Shelomoh, early and late, are written in the words of Natan the prophet, in the prophecy of Ahiyyah the Shilonite and in the visions of Ye'do the seer concerning Yarob'am [Jeroboam] ben Nebat, aren't they. [30]Shelomoh reigned in Yerushalaim over all Yisra'el forty years. [31]Shelomoh lay down with his ancestors and they buried him in the town of David his father. Rehab'am [Rehoboam] his son began to reign in place of him.

How Rehab'am could win people's allegiance

10 Rehab'am went to Shekem, because all Yisra'el had come to Shekem to make him king. [2]But when Yarob'am ben Nebat heard while he was in Misrayim, where he had taken flight from before Shelomoh the king, Yarob'am came back from Misrayim, [3]and they sent and called for him. Yarob'am and all Yisra'el came and spoke to Rehab'am: [4]'Your father – he made our yoke tough. So now, lighten something of your father's tough servitude and of his heavy yoke that he put on us, and we'll serve you.'
[5]He said to them, 'In three more days, come back to me.' The people went, and [6]King Rehab'am took counsel with the elders who had been standing before Shelomoh his father when he was alive: 'How do you counsel me to give back word to this people?' [7]They spoke to him: 'If you're good to this people and accept them and speak good words to them, they'll be servants to you for all time.'
[8]But he abandoned the elders' counsel which they gave him and took counsel with the young men who grew up with him, who were standing before him. [9]He said to them, 'What are you going to counsel, so that we may give back word to this people who spoke to me: "Lighten something of the yoke that your father put upon us"?' [10]The young men who grew up with him spoke with him: 'You should say this to the people who spoke to you: "Whereas your father made our yoke heavy, you, lighten it from on us" – you should say this to them: "My little finger is thicker than my father's hips. [11]So now, whereas my father imposed a heavy yoke on you, I myself will add to your yoke. Whereas my father disciplined you with whips, I myself will with scorpions."'

How to forfeit people's allegiance

[12]Yarob'am and all the people came to Rehab'am on the third day as the king had spoken, "Come back to me on the third day", [13]and the king answered them toughly. So King Rehab'am abandoned the elders' counsel [14]and spoke to them in accordance with the young men's counsel: 'I shall make your yoke heavy. I myself shall add to it. Whereas my father disciplined you with whips, I myself will with scorpions.' [15]The king didn't listen to the people, because the turn of affairs came from God in order that Yahweh might implement his word, which he had spoken by means of Ahiyyahu the Shilonite to Yarob'am ben Nebat.
[16]All Yisra'el [saw] that the king had not listened to them, and the people said back to the king:

> What share do we have in David? –
> we have no domain in ben Yishay.
> Each one to your tents, Yisra'el;
> now see to your own household, David.

So all Yisra'el went to their tents, [17]though the Yisra'elites who were living in the towns of Yehudah – Rehab'am reigned over them. [18]King Rehab'am sent Hadoram, who was in charge of the workforce, but the Yisra'elites pelted him with stones and he died, though King Rehab'am got himself together to climb up into the chariot to flee to Yerushalaim.
[19]So Yisra'el rebelled against David's household, until this day.
11 Rehab'am came to Yerushalaim and congregated the household of Yehudah and Binyamin, 180,000 picked men doing battle, to go to battle with Yisra'el and get the kingship back for Rehab'am. [2]But Yahweh's word came to Shema'yahu, the supernatural man: [3]'Say to Rehab'am son of Shelomoh king of Yehudah, and to all Yisra'el in Yehudah and in Binyamin: [4]"Yahweh has said this: 'You will not go up, you will not go to battle with your brothers. Go back each one to his home, because this thing has come about from me.'"' They listened to Yahweh's words and turned back from going against Yarob'am.

People from Ephrayim join Rehab'am

[5]Rehab'am lived in Yerushalaim but built up towns as a fortress in Yehudah. [6]He built up Bet-lehem, Etam, Teqoa, [7]Bet-tsur, Soko, Adullam, [8]Gat, Mareshah, Ziph, [9]Adorayim, Lakish, Azeqah, [10]Tsorah, Ayyalon and Hebron, which are in Yehudah and in Binyamin, as fortress towns. [11]He strengthened the fortresses and put chiefs in them, and treasuries of food, oil and wine, [12]and in each and every town shields and spears. He strengthened them very greatly.

So Yehudah and Binyamin were his, [13]while the priests and the Levites who were in all Yisra'el took their stand with him, from all their territory, [14]because the Levites abandoned their pasturelands and their holding and went to Yehudah and to Yerushalaim (because Yarob'am and his sons rejected them from acting as priests for Yahweh [15]and put in place priests for himself for the shrines for the goats and for the calves that he made). [16]Following them from all the Yisra'elite clans, the people who were giving their mind to seek Yahweh the God of Yisra'el came to Yerushalaim to sacrifice for Yahweh, their ancestors' God. [17]They strengthened the kingdom of Yehudah and enabled Rehab'am to be firm for three years, because they walked in the way of David and Shelomoh for three years.

[18]Rehab'am took Mahalat bat Yerimot, the son of David, and Abihayil bat Eli'ab, the son of Yishay. [19]She gave birth to sons for him, Ye'ush, Shemaryah and Zaham. [20]After her he took Ma'akah bat Abshalom. She gave birth for him to Abiyyah, Attay, Ziza and Shelomit. [21]Rehab'am loved Ma'akah bat Abshalom more than all his wives and his secondary wives (because he had 18 wives and 60 secondary wives, and fathered 28 sons and 60 daughters).

[22]Rehab'am put in place Abiyyah son of Ma'akah as head, as chief among his brothers, because it was to make him king. [23]He was discerning and he got some of all his sons to break out to all the regions of Yehudah and Binyamin, to all the fortified towns, gave them provisions in quantity and asked for a horde of wives.

You abandon me; I abandon you

12 When Rehab'am had established his kingship and he was strong, he abandoned Yahweh's instruction, he and all Yisra'el with him, [2]and in the fifth year of King Rehab'am, Shishaq king of Misrayim went up against Yerushalaim because they had trespassed against Yahweh, [3]with 1,200 chariotry and 60,000 cavalry; there was no numbering of the company that came with him from Misrayim (Lubites, Sukkiyyites and Kushites). [4]He captured the fortified towns that belonged to Yehudah and came as far as Yerushalaim.

[5]Shema'yah the prophet came to Rehab'am and the Yehudahite officers who had gathered in Yerushalaim in face of Shishaq, and said to them, 'Yahweh has said this: "You people have abandoned me, so I myself have also abandoned you into the hand of Shishaq."' [6]The Yisra'elite officers and the king bowed down and said, 'Yahweh is in the right.' [7]When Yahweh saw that they had bowed down, Yahweh's word came to Shema'yah: 'They have bowed down. I will not devastate them, but in a little while will give them an escape group. My wrath will not pour out on Yerushalaim by means of Shishaq, [8]but rather they will be servants to him and will acknowledge [the difference between] serving me and serving the kingships of the earth.'

[9]Shishaq king of Misrayim went up against Yerushalaim and took the treasures of Yahweh's house and the treasures of the king's house. He took everything. He took the gold shields that Shelomoh had made; [10]King Rehab'am made copper shields in place of them and appointed them to the control of the officers in charge of the runners who kept watch over the entrance to the king's house. [11]Whenever the king came to Yahweh's house the runners came and they would carry them, then take them back to the runners' chamber.

[12]So when he bowed down, Yahweh's anger turned back from him and did not completely devastate him; and in Yehudah there were good things, too.

A salt covenant

[13]King Rehab'am showed himself strong in Yerushalaim and reigned, in that he was a man of forty-one years when he began to reign and he reigned seventeeen years in Yerushalaim, the town that Yahweh chose to put his name there out of all Yisra'el's clans. His mother's name was Na'amah the Ammonite. [14]But he did what was bad, because he didn't establish his mind to enquire of Yahweh.

[15]The things about Rehab'am, early and late, are written in the words of Shema'yah the prophet and Iddo the seer regarding enrolment by genealogy, aren't they. There were battles between Rehab'am and Yarob'am all the time. [16]Rehab'am lay down with his ancestors and was buried in David's Town, and Abiyyah his son began to reign in place of him.

13 In the eighteenth year of King Yarob'am, Abiyyah began to reign over Yehudah. [2]Three years he reigned in Yerushalaim. His mother's name was Mikayahu bat Uri'el, from Gib'ah. There was a battle between Abiyyah and Yarob'am, [3]and Abiyyah hitched up for the battle with a force of strong men of battle, 400,000 picked men, while Yarob'am lined up with him for battle with 800,000 picked men – strong, forceful.

[4]Abiyyah got up on Mount Tsemarayim, which is in the highland of Ephrayim, and said, 'Listen to me, Yarob'am and all Yisra'el. [5]It's for you to acknowledge, isn't it, that Yahweh the God of Yisra'el gave kingship over Yisra'el to David permanently, to him and to his sons, by a salt pact. [6]Yarob'am ben Nebat, a servant of Shelomoh ben David, rose up and rebelled against his lord. [7]There collected to him empty-headed scoundrels, and they took a firm stand against Rehab'am son of Shelomoh when Rehab'am was a boy and green in mind, and he didn't assert his strength before them. [8]Now you're saying you'll assert your strength before Yahweh's kingship in the hand of David's sons. Whereas you're a numerous horde and you have with you the gold calves that Yarob'am made for you as gods, [9]you drove out Yahweh's priests, the Aharonites and the Levites, didn't you, and made priests for yourselves, like the peoples of the countries. Anyone who comes to commission himself, with a bull from the herd and seven rams, becomes a priest, for no-gods.

Don't do battle with Yahweh

[10]But for us, Yahweh is our God. We haven't abandoned him. The priests ministering to Yahweh are Aharonites, with the Levites at work, [11]burning up whole offerings for Yahweh morning by morning and evening by evening, with spiced incense and the row of bread on the pure table, and the gold candelabrum and its lamps to burn evening by evening, because we are keeping

the charge of Yahweh our God, but you people have abandoned it. [12]So here, God is with us, at the head, and his priests with
resounding trumpets to sound against you. Yisra'elites, don't battle with Yahweh, your ancestors' God, because you won't
succeed.'
[13]Now Yarob'am had sent an ambush round to come from behind them, so they were before Yehudah, and the ambush was
behind them. [14]Yehudah turned their face, and there – the battle was in front and behind for them. They cried out to Yahweh, with
the priests blowing on the trumpets, [15]and the men of Yehudah shouted. When the men of Yehudah shouted, God himself hit
Yarob'am and all Yisra'el before Abiyyah and Yehudah. [16]The Yisra'elites fled from before Yehudah and God gave them into
their hand. [17]Abiyyah and his company struck them down in a great rout. There fell of Yisra'el, run through, 500,000 picked men.
[18]So the Yisra'elites bowed down at that time and the Yehudahites stood firm because they relied on Yahweh, their ancestors'
God. [19]Abiyyah pursued after Yarob'am and captured some towns from him, Bet-el and its daughter-towns, Yeshanah and its
daughter-towns, and Ephrayin and its daughter-towns. [20]Yarob'am did not retain energy any more in the days of Abiyyahu, and
Yahweh struck him and he died, [21]but Abiyyahu showed himself strong. He got himself 14 wives and fathered 22 sons and 16
daughters. [22]The rest of the things about Abiyyah, his ways and his words, are written in the commentary of the prophet Iddo.

We rest on thee

14 Abiyyah lay down with his ancestors and they buried him in David's Town, and Asa his son began to reign in place of him.
In his days the country was calm ten years. [2]Asa did what was good and upright in the eyes of Yahweh his God. [3]He
removed the alien altars and the shrines, broke up the columns and cut down the totem poles. [4]He said to Yehudah that they were
to look to Yahweh, their ancestors' God, and to act on the instruction and the order. [5]From all the towns in Yehudah he removed
the shrines and the incense stands. The kingdom was calm before him, [6]and he built up fortified towns in Yehudah because the
country was calm and there was no battle made with him in those years, because Yahweh enabled him to settle down. [7]He said to
Yehudah, 'Let's build up these towns and surround them with a wall and towers, gateways and bars, while the country is before
us, because we've enquired of Yahweh our God. We've enquired of him and he has enabled us to settle down all round.' So they
built and they were successful.
[8]Asa had a force carrying body-shield and spear from Yehudah, 300,000 men, and from Binyamin 280,000 men carrying hand-
shield and drawing a bow. All these were forceful strong men. [9]Zerah the Kushite went out against them with a force of 1,000,000
and 300 chariots, and came as far as Mareshah. [10]Asa went out before him and lined up for battle in the Tsephat Ravine near
Mareshah. [11]Asa called to Yahweh his God: 'Yahweh, there is no one compared with you to help, between the numerous and the
powerless. Help us, Yahweh our God, because we lean on you and in your name we've come against this horde. You are Yahweh
our God. A mere human being is not to hold on with you.'

God's spirit comes

[12]Yahweh hit the Kushites before Asa and before Yehudah, and the Kushites fled. [13]Asa and the company that was with him
pursued them as far as Gerar, and some of the Kushites fell. There was no saving of life for them, because they broke up before
Yahweh and before his camp.
They took up very much spoil [14]and struck down all the towns round Gerar, because a dread of Yahweh was on them. They
plundered all the towns because there was much plunder in them. [15]They also struck down the cattle tents and captured sheep in
large number and camels, then went back to Yerushalaim.
15 Azaryahu ben Oded – God's spirit came on him [2]and he went out before Asa and said to him, 'Listen to me, Asa and all
Yehudah and Binyamin. Yahweh is with you when you are with him. If you enquire of him he will be found by you, but if
you abandon him, he will abandon you. [3]For a long time Yisra'el had no true God, no priest instructing and no instruction, [4]but in
the pressure upon it, it turned back to Yahweh the God of Yisra'el. They sought him, and he let himself be found by them.
[5]In those times there was no well-being for the person who went out or for the person who came in, because there was much
turmoil among all the inhabitants of the countries. [6]Nation was crushed by nation, town by town, because God put them into a
turmoil with every kind of pressure. [7]But you: be strong. Your hands are not to slacken, because there will be wages for your
work.'
[8]When Asa heard these words, the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he showed himself strong and got rid of the abominations
from the entire country of Yehudah and Binyamin and from the towns that he had captured from the highland of Ephrayim, and he
renovated Yahweh's altar which was before Yahweh's porch.

Taking the initiative in covenant

[9]He collected all Yehudah and Binyamin and the resident aliens with them from Ephrayim and Menashsheh and from Shim'on,
because people from Yisra'el in great number had submitted to him when they saw that Yahweh his God was with him. [10]They
collected in Yerushalaim in the third month of the fifteenth year of Asa's reign. [11]They sacrificed for Yahweh that day some of
the spoil; they brought 700 cattle and 7,000 sheep [12]and came into a pact to enquire of Yahweh their ancestors' God, with their
entire mind and with their entire being. [13]Anyone who would not enquire of Yahweh the God of Yisra'el would be put to death,
whether small or great, man or woman. [14]They swore to Yahweh with a loud voice, with a shout, with trumpets and with horns.
[15]All Yehudah rejoiced over the oath because they swore with their entire mind and sought him with their entire heart, and he let
himself be found by them. Yahweh enabled them to be settled all round.
[16]In addition, Ma'akah mother of Asa the king he removed as queen mother, because she had made a monstrosity for Asherah.

Asa cut down her monstrosity, turned it to dust and burned it in Wadi Qidron, [17]though the shrines did not disappear from Yisra'el. Yet Asa's mind was perfect all his days. [18]He brought into God's house the sacred things belonging to his father and to him, silver, gold and articles, [19]while no battle happened until the thirty-fifth year of Asa's reign.

16 In the thirty-sixth year of Asa's reign, Ba'sha king of Yisra'el went up against Yehudah and built up The Height so as not to grant Asa king of Yehudah anyone going out or coming. [2]Asa got silver and gold out from the treasuries of Yahweh's house and the king's house and sent to Ben-hadad king of Aram who lived in Dammeseq [Damascus], saying, [3]'A pact between me and you and between my father and your father: here, I've sent you silver and gold; go contravene your pact with Ba'sha king of Yisra'el so that he may go up from me.'

God's eyes are ranging through the earth

[4]Ben-hadad listened to King Asa and sent the officers of the forces that he had against Yisra'el's towns. He struck down Iyyon, Dan, Water Meadow and all the supply places, the towns in Naphtali. [5]When Ba'sha heard, he left off building up The Height and stopped his work, [6]while Asa the king got all Yehudah and they carried the stones from The Height and its timber with which Ba'sha had built, and with them he built up Geba and The Watchtower.

[7]But at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Yehudah and said to him, 'For your leaning on the king of Aram and not leaning on Yahweh your God, because of this the king of Aram's force has escaped from your hand. [8]The Kushites and the Lubites were a force in large numbers, of chariotry and cavalry, very many, weren't they, but when you leaned on Yahweh, he gave them into your hand. [9]Because Yahweh – his eyes are ranging through the entire earth, to show himself strong with people whose mind is perfect towards him. You've been very idiotic in connection with this, because from now on there will be battles with you.' [10]Asa was provoked by the seer, and he put him into the stocks because he was in a rage with him on account of this, and Asa oppressed some of the people at that time.

[11]There, the things about Asa, early and late – there they are, written on the document about the kings of Yehudah and Yisra'el. [12]In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa had an ailment in his feet, until his ailment was exceptionally serious, and further, in his ailment he did not enquire of Yahweh but with physicians. [13]Asa lay down with his ancestors and died in the forty-first year of his reign. [14]They buried him in the graveyard that he had cut for himself in David's Town. They laid him in his bed, which they filled with spices and perfumes blended by blending work, and they made for him a very great fire.

A teaching mission

17 Yehoshaphat his son began to reign in place of him and showed himself strong over Yisra'el. [2]He put a force in all the fortified towns of Yehudah and put outposts in the country of Yehudah and in the towns of Ephrayim that Asa his father had captured.

[3]Yahweh was with Yehoshaphat because he walked in the earlier ways of David his ancestor and did not enquire of the Masters. [4]He enquired of the God of his father and walked by his orders, not in accordance with the practice of Yisra'el. [5]Yahweh established the kingship in his hand and all Yehudah gave offerings to Yehoshaphat, so that he had wealth and splendour in quantity. [6]His mind was lofty in Yahweh's ways, and further he removed the shrines and the totem poles from Yehudah.

[7]In the third year of his reign he sent his officials Ben-hayil, Obadyah, Zekaryah, Netan'el and Mikayahu to teach in the towns of Yehudah, [8]and with them the Levites Shema'yahu, Netanyahu, Zebadyahu, Asah'el, Shemiramot, Yehonatan, Adoniyyah, Tobiyyahu and Tob Adoniyyah, the Levites, and with them Elishama and Yehoram, the priests. [9]They taught in Yehudah, Yahweh's instruction document being with them. They went round through all the towns of Yehudah and taught among the people.

[10]A dread of Yahweh was on all the kingships of the countries that were round Yehudah and they didn't battle with Yehoshaphat. [11]Some Pelishtites were bringing Yehoshaphat offerings and silver as a levy; also the Arabs were bringing him flocks: 7,700 rams and 7,700 goats.

[12]So Yehoshaphat was getting bigger and bigger. He built castles and supply towns in Yehudah; [13]he had much work in the towns of Yehudah, and men of battle, forceful strong men, in Yerushalaim. [14]These, their registering by their ancestral households was:

for Yehudah as chiliarchs –
Adnah the officer, and with him 300,000 forceful strong men;
[15]next to him Yehohanan the officer, and with him 280,000;
[16]next to him Amasyah ben Zikri, who gave freely for Yahweh, and with him 200,00 forceful strong men;
[17]and from Binyamin –
a forceful strong man, Elyada, and with him 200,000 men able to wield bow and shield;
[18]next to him Yehozabad, and with him 180,000 men equipped for the army.

[19]These were the people ministering to the king, apart from the people that the king put in the fortified towns in all Yehudah.

The prophet whom Ah'ab didn't like

18 Yehoshaphat had wealth and splendour in quantity. He made a marriage alliance with Ah'ab, [2]and at the end of some years went down to Ah'ab in Shomron [Samaria]. Ah'ab sacrificed sheep and cattle in quantity for him and for the company that was with him, and incited him into going up to Heights-in-Gil'ad.

[3]Ah'ab king of Yisra'el said to Yehoshaphat king of Yehudah, 'Will you go with me to Heights-in-Gil'ad?' He said to him, 'I'll be the same as you, my company the same as yours, with you in the battle.' [4]But Yehoshaphat said to the king of Yisra'el, 'Please enquire for Yahweh's word today.'
[5]So the king of Yisra'el collected the prophets, 400 individuals, and said to them, 'Shall we go to Heights-in-Gil'ad for battle, or shall I leave off?' They said, 'Go up, and God will give it into the king's hand.' [6]But Yehoshaphat said, 'There isn't any further prophet of Yahweh here, is there, so we may enquire of him?' [7]The king of Yisra'el said to Yehoshaphat, 'There is one further individual to enquire of Yahweh from, but I myself dislike him because he doesn't prophesy good for me but always bad. He's Mikayehu ben Yimlah.' Yehoshaphat said, 'The king shouldn't say that.' [8]So the king of Yisra'el called to a courtier and said, 'Hurry Mikayehu ben Yimlah.'
[9]As the king of Yisra'el and Yehoshaphat king of Yehudah were sitting, each on his throne, dressed in robes, sitting at the threshing-floor at the entrance to the gateway of Shomron, and all the prophets were prophesying before them, [10]Tsidqiyyahu ben Kena'anah had made himself iron horns, and he said, 'Yahweh has said this: "With these you will gore the Aramites until you have finished them off."' [11]All the prophets were prophesying in this way: 'Go up to Heights-in-Gil'ad and succeed! Yahweh will give it into the king's hand.'

The lying spirit

[12]Now the envoy who went to call for Mikayehu spoke to him: 'Here, the prophets' words are good for the king, as one bidding. Your word should please be like one of them. You should speak of something good.' [13]Mikayehu said, 'As Yahweh lives, what my God says to me – I will speak it.'
[14]He came to the king and the king said to him, 'Mikah, shall we go up to Heights-in-Gil'ad for battle, or should I leave off?' He said, 'Go up, and succeed! They will be given into your hand.' [15]The king said to him, 'How many times am I going to get you to swear that you won't speak to me anything but truth in Yahweh's name?'
[16]So he said, 'I saw all Yisra'el scattered on the mountains like a flock that have no shepherd. Yahweh said, "These people have no lords. They should go back, each to his house, with things being well."' [17]The king of Yisra'el said to Yehoshaphat, 'I said to you, "He won't prophesy something good for me, but rather something bad", didn't I.'
[18]He said, 'Therefore, listen to Yahweh's word. I saw Yahweh sitting on his throne, with the entire heavenly army standing to his right and his left. [19]Yahweh said, "Who'll entice Ah'ab king of Yisra'el so he'll go up but fall at Heights-in-Gil'ad?" One spoke, saying "Like this", and another saying "Like this". [20]Then a spirit went out and stood before Yahweh and said, "I'm the one who'll entice him." Yahweh said to him, "How?" [21]He said, "I'll go out and become a false spirit in the mouth of all his prophets." He said, "You are to entice him. Yes, you'll be able to. Go out and do it." [22]So now, there, Yahweh put a false spirit in the mouth of these prophets of yours, in that Yahweh has spoken of something bad for you.'

The power of chance

[23]Tsidqiyyahu ben Kena'anah went up and struck Mikayehu on the jaw, and said, 'Which way did Yahweh's spirit pass from being with me to speak with you?' [24]Mikayehu said, 'Here, you are going to see, on that day when you come to an innermost room to hide.'
[25]The king of Yisra'el said, 'Get Mikeyahu and take him back to Amon the town official and to Yo'ash the king's son [26]and say, "The king has said this: 'Put this man in the cells and give him slave bread and slave water until I come back with things being well.'"' [27]Mikayehu said, 'If you really do come back with things being well, Yahweh did not speak through me.' (And he said, 'Listen, you peoples, all of them.')
[28]So the king of Yisra'el went up with Yehoshaphat king of Yehudah to Heights-in-Gil'ad. [29]The king of Yisra'el said to Yehoshaphat, 'I'm putting on disguise and coming into battle, but you, dress in your robes.' So the king of Yisra'el put on disguise and they came into battle.
[30]Now the king of Aram had ordered his chariot officers, 'You will not battle anyone small or great except the king of Yisra'el alone.' [31]When the chariot officers saw Yehoshaphat and said 'He's the king of Yisra'el', they turned round to him to do battle. But Yehoshaphat cried out and Yahweh helped him. God incited them away from him, [32]and when the chariot officers saw that it was not the king of Yisra'el, they turned back from following him. [33]But a man drew his bow innocently and struck the king of Yisra'el between the links and the armour. He said to his charioteer, 'Turn your hand, get me out from the camp, because I'm wounded.'
[34]The battle mounted that day, while the king of Yisra'el was keeping himself standing in the chariot opposite the Aramites until the evening. But he died towards the time of the sun's setting.

Proper exercise of authority

19 Yehoshaphat king of Yehudah went back to Yerushalaim to his house with things being well, [2]but Yehu ben Hanani the seer went out before him. He said to King Yehoshaphat, 'Do you help the faithless, are you loyal to the people hostile to Yahweh? For this, there is fury upon you from before Yahweh. [3]Yet good things are found with you, because you burned away the totem poles in the country and set your mind on enquiring of God.'
[4]Yehoshaphat lived in Yerushalaim, but he again went out among the people from Be'er Sheba as far as the highland of Ephrayim and got them to come back to Yahweh, their ancestors' God. [5]He put in place authorities in the country in all the fortified towns in Yehudah, town by town.

[6]He said to the authorities, ‘Watch what you’re doing, because it’s not for a human being that you exercise authority but for Yahweh, who is with you when you speak an authoritative word. [7]So now, a dread of Yahweh is to be upon you. Keep watch and act, because with Yahweh our God there is no evil or honouring of the face or taking of a bribe.’ [8](Also in Yerushalaim Yehoshaphat put in place some of the Levites and the priests and some of the ancestral heads of Yisra’el for the exercise of Yahweh’s authority and for arguments.)

They came back to Yerushalaim [9]and he ordered them, ‘You’re to act like this: with awe for Yahweh, with truthfulness and with a perfect mind. [10]Every argument that comes to you from your brothers who are living in their towns, between blood and blood, between instruction and order, decrees or rulings, you’re to warn them so that they don’t become liable before Yahweh and fury come on you and on your brothers. So you will do, and you won’t become liable. [11]Here, Amaryahu the head priest is over you in everything to do with Yahweh, and Zebadyahu ben Yishma’el is the chief of Yehudah’s household in everything to do with the king. The Levite overseers are before you. Be strong when you act. Yahweh be with the good.’

How to pray in a political crisis

20 Subsequently the Mo’abites and the Ammonites, and some of the Me’unites, came against Yehoshaphat for battle. [2]People came and told Yehoshaphat, ‘A great horde is coming against you from across the sea, from Aram. There, they’re at Hatsetson Tamar (i.e. Gedi Spring).’ [3]Yehoshaphat was afraid and gave himself to enquiring of Yahweh, and he called a fast for all Yehudah. [4]Yehudah collected to seek help from Yahweh; from all the towns in Yehudah, too, people came to seek Yahweh.

[5]Yehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Yehudah and Yerushalaim in Yahweh’s house before the new court. [6]He said, ‘Yahweh, our ancestors’ God: you are God in the heavens and one who rules all the kingships of the nations, are you not. In your hand are energy and strength. There’s no one able to take a stand with you. [7]It was you, our God, wasn’t it, who dispossessed the inhabitants of this country from before your people Yisra’el and gave it to the offspring of Abraham your friend permanently. [8]They lived in it and built you a sanctuary in it for your name, saying [9]“If bad fortune comes upon us (the sword exercising authority, or epidemic, or famine), we will stand before this house and before you, because your name is in this house, and we will cry out to you because of the pressure on us, and you will listen and deliver.”

[10]Now, there, people from Ammon and Mo’ab and Mount Se’ir, into which you did not let Yisra’el come when they came from the country of Misrayim (rather they departed from being against them and did not annihilate them), [11]here – they are dealing to us by coming to drive us out from your possession which you let us possess. [12]Our God, you will exercise authority over them, won’t you, because there’s no energy in us before this great horde that’s coming against us. We don’t know what we’ll do, but our eyes are on you.’ [13]All Yehudah was standing before Yahweh, also their little ones, their wives and their children.

The two stages whereby we see answers to prayer

[14]Then Yahazi’el ben Zekaryahu son of Benayah son of Ye’i’el son of Mattanyah, the Levite, one of the sons of Asaph – Yahweh’s spirit came on him in the middle of the congregation, [15]and he said, ‘Heed, all Yehudah, inhabitants of Yerushalaim and King Yehoshaphat. Yahweh has said this to you: “Don’t be afraid, don’t be scared before this great horde, because the battle is not yours but God’s.

[16]Tomorrow, go down against them. There they’ll be, going up by the Tsits Ascent. You’ll find them at the end of the wadi, before the Yeru’el Wilderness. [17]It’s not for you to battle on this occasion. Take your position, stand and see Yahweh’s deliverance of you, Yehudah and Yerushalaim. Don’t be afraid, don’t be scared. Tomorrow, go out before them. Yahweh will be with you.”’

[18]Yehoshaphat bowed his head, face to the ground, and all Yehudah and the inhabitants of Yerushalaim fell before Yahweh to bow low to Yahweh. [19]The Levites from the Qehatites and from the Qorahites stood up to praise Yahweh the God of Yisra’el with an exceptionally loud voice.

[20]They started early in the morning and went out to the Teqoa Wilderness. When they went out, Yehoshaphat stood and said, ‘Listen to me, Yehudah and inhabitants of Yerushalaim. Stand firm in faith in Yahweh your God and you will stand firm; stand firm in faith in his prophets and you will succeed.’ [21]He took counsel with the people and put in place people singing for Yahweh and praising his sacred glory as they went out before the armed company, and saying, ‘Confess Yahweh, because his commitment is permanent.’

[22]At the time when they began resounding and praising, Yahweh set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Mo’ab and Mount Se’ir who were coming to Yehudah, and they took a beating. [23]The people of Ammon and Mo’ab stood against the inhabitants of Mount Se’ir to devote and annihilate them. When they’d finished off the inhabitants of Se’ir, they helped, each individual, to devastate his neighbour.

Relief and thanksgiving

[24]When Yehudah came to a watchtower towards the wilderness and they turned their faces towards the horde – there, they were corpses fallen to the ground. There was no escape group. [25]Yehoshaphat came with his company to plunder their spoil and they found among them, in quantity, both property and corpses and desirable articles. They rescued things for themselves until they couldn’t carry anything. They were plundering the spoil for three days because there was so much.

[26]On the fourth day they congregated in Blessing Vale (because they blessed Yahweh there, that’s why people have called the place Blessing Vale until this day). [27]Everyone from Yehudah and Yerushalaim went back with Yehoshaphat at their head, going back to Yerushalaim with rejoicing, because Yahweh had let them rejoice over their enemies. [28]They came to Yerushalaim with mandolins, with guitars and with trumpets, to Yahweh’s house. [29]Dread of God came over all the kingships in the countries when

they heard that Yahweh had battled with Yisra'el's enemies. [30]So Yehoshaphat's kingship was calm; his God enabled him to settle down all round.

[31]Yehoshaphat began to reign over Yehudah as a man of thirty-five years, when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-five years in Yerushalaim. His mother's name was Azubah bat Shilhi. [32]He walked in the way of his father Asa and did not turn aside from it in doing what was upright in Yahweh's eyes. [33]Yet the shrines did not disappear and the people did not set their minds on their ancestors' God.

[34]The rest of the things about Yehoshaphat, early and late – there they are, written in the words of Yehu ben Hanani, which were entered into the document about the kings of Yisra'el. [35]But subsequently, Yehoshaphat king of Yehudah joined with Ahazyah king of Yisra'el; he was faithless in so doing. [36]He joined with him in making ships to go to Tarshish. They made the ships at Etsyon Geber. [37]Eli'ezer ben Dodavahu from Mareshah prophesied against Yehoshaphat: 'As you've joined with Ahazyahu, Yahweh is breaking out on your work.' And the ships broke up and had to hold back from going to Tarshish.

The son who killed his brothers

21 Yehoshaphat lay down with his ancestors and was buried with his ancestors in David's Town, and his son Yehoram began to reign in place of him. [2]He had brothers, Yehoshaphat's sons: Azaryah, Yehi'el, Zekaryahu, Azaryahu, Mika'el and Shephatyahu. All these were sons of Yehoshaphat king of Yisra'el. [3]Their father gave them many gifts of silver and of gold, and of choice things, with fortified towns in Yehudah, but the kingship he gave to Yehoram, because he was the firstborn.

[4]Yehoram rose up over his father's kingship and showed himself strong, and killed all his brothers with the sword, and also some Yisra'elite ministers. [5]Yehoram was a man of thirty-two years when he began to reign and he reigned eight years in Yerushalaim. [6]He walked in the way of the kings of Yisra'el, as Ah'ab's household had done, because he had Ah'ab's daughter as wife. He did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes. [7]But Yahweh was not willing to devastate David's household, for the sake of the pact that he solemnized towards David, and as he had said he would give him and his sons hegemony for all time.

[8]In his days Edom rebelled from under Yehudah's hand and got a king to reign over them. [9]Yehoram went across with his officers and all his chariotry with him. He rose by night and struck down the Edomites, who were surrounding him and the chariot officers. [10]But Edom has rebelled from under Yehudah's hand until this day. Then Libnah rebelled from under his hand at that time, because he had abandoned Yahweh, his ancestors' God. [11]He also made shrines in the highland of Yehudah, and got the inhabitants of Yerushalaim to whore, and drove Yehudah away.

How to be really unpopular

[12]A document from Eliyyahu [Elijah] the prophet came to him, saying 'Yahweh the God of David your ancestor has said this: "Since you have not walked in the ways of Yehoshaphat your father and in the ways of Asa king of Yehudah [13]but have walked in the way of the kings of Yisra'el, and got Yehudah and the inhabitants of Yerushalaim to whore, as the household of Ah'ab got them to whore, and your brothers, your father's household, who were better men than you, you have also killed – [14]here, Yahweh is going to inflict a great beating on your people, on your sons, on your wives and on all your property, [15]and you yourself with a great illness, with an illness of the insides, until your insides come out because of the illness, days upon days."'

[16]Yahweh made the spirit of the Pelishtites and the Arabs who were near the Kushites rise against Yehoram. [17]They went up against Yehudah, broke into it and took captive all the property that could be found belonging to the king's house, and also his sons and his wives. No son remained to him except Yeho'ahaz, the youngest of his sons.

[18]After all this, Yahweh hit him in his insides with an illness without healing. [19]After days upon days, as the end of two years came, his insides came out with his illness, and he died because of the bad illness. His people did not make a fire for him like the fire for his ancestors. [20]He was a man of thirty-two years when he began to reign and he reigned eight years in Yerushalaim but went without people caring. They buried him in David's Town but not in the kings' graves.

22 The inhabitants of Yerushalaim made Ahazyahu, his youngest son, king in place of him, because the raiding gang which came into the camp with Arabs had killed all the older ones. So Ahazyahu ben Yehoram began to reign as king of Yehudah.

Two forceful women

[2]Ahazyahu was a man of twenty-two years when he began to reign and he reigned one year in Yerushalaim. His mother's name was Atalyahu bat Omri. [3]He too walked in the ways of Ah'ab's household, because his mother was his counsellor in acting faithlessly. [4]He did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes, like Ah'ab's household, because they became his counsellors after his father's death, to his devastation. [5]He also went by their counsel when he went to battle with Yehoram ben Ah'ab king of Yisra'el, against Haza'el king of Aram at Heights-in-Gil'ad. The Aramites struck Yoram down, [6]so he went back to heal in Yizr'e'el because they had been striking him down (the people who struck him down at The Height when he was battling with Haza'el king of Aram).

Now Azaryahu ben Yehoram king of Yehudah went down to see Yehoram ben Ah'ab in Yizr'e'el because he was ill. [7]But from God came the treading down of Ahazyahu for coming to Yoram. When he came, he went out with Yehoram to Yehu ben Nimshi whom Yahweh had anointed to cut down Ah'ab's household. [8]When Yehu entered into judgement with Ah'ab's household, he found the Yehudahite officers and Ahazyahu's nephews, Ahazyahu's ministers, and killed them. [9]He looked for Ahazyahu and took him captive; he was hiding in Shomron. They brought him to Yehu and put him to death. They buried him, because (they said), 'He's the son of Yehoshaphat, who enquired of Yahweh with his entire mind.'

Ahazyahu's household could not retain energy for reigning. [10]When Atalyahu, Ahazyahu's mother, saw that her son was dead, she set to and obliterated all the royal offspring of Yehudah's household. [11]But Yehoshab'at, the king's daughter, got Yo'ash ben

Ahazyahu and stole him away from among the king's sons who were being put to death and put him and his nanny in a bedroom. Yehoshab'at bat Yehoram, the wife of Yehoyada the priest, concealed him (because she was Ahazyahu's sister) from Atalyahu, and she didn't put him to death. [12]He was with them in God's house hiding for six years, while Atalyah was reigning over the country.

Two covenants among people

23 In the seventh year, Yehoyada showed himself strong and got the centurions, Azaryahu ben Yeroham, Yishma'e'l ben Yehohanan, Azaryahu ben Obed, Ma'aseyahu ben Adayahu and Elishaphat ben Zikri, into a pact with him. [2]They went round in Yehudah and collected the Levites from all the towns in Yehudah, and the ancestral heads of Yisra'el. They came to Yerushalaim [3]and the entire congregation solemnized a pact in God's house with the king.

He said to them, 'Here, the king's son will reign, as Yahweh spoke concerning David's sons. [4]This is the thing that you're to do: a third of you who are coming in on the sabbath as priests and as Levites are to be gatemen on the thresholds, [5]a third in the king's house, a third at the Foundation Gate, the entire people in the courts of Yahweh's house. [6]No one is to come into Yahweh's house except the priests and the ministering Levites; they may come in because they are sacred, but the entire people is to keep Yahweh's charge. [7]The Levites are to encircle the king all round, each with his equipment in his hand. Anyone who comes into the house is to be put to death. They are to be with the king when he comes in and when he goes out.'

[8]The Levites and all Yehudah acted in accordance with all that Yehoyada the priest ordered. They took each his men who were coming in on the sabbath with those who were going out on the sabbath (because Yehoyada the priest did not free the divisions). [9]Yehoyada the priest gave the centurions the lances, the hand-shields and the body-shields that belonged to King David, which were in God's house. [10]He put in place the entire people, each with his weapon in his hand, from the shoulder of the house on the right as far as the shoulder of the house on the left, at the altar and at the house, in charge of the king all round. [11]Then they got the king's son out, put the diadem and the affirmation on him, and made him king. Yehoyada and his sons anointed him and said, 'Long live the king!'

A new covenant with God

[12]Atalyahu heard the sound of the people running and praising the king and came to the people at Yahweh's house. [13]She saw, there, the king was standing by his pillar at the entrance, and the officials with their trumpets by the king, and the entire people of the country rejoicing and blowing on trumpets, and the singers with musical instruments, who were helping them to know how to give praise. Atalyahu tore her clothes and said, 'Conspiracy, conspiracy!'

[14]Yehoyada the priest sent out the centurions who were appointed over the force and said to them, 'Take her out between the rows. The person who follows her is to be put to death with the sword' (because the priest said, 'You will not put her to death in Yahweh's house'). [15]They laid hands on her and she came to the Horse Gate entrance to the king's house, and they put her to death there.

[16]Yehoyada solemnized a pact between himself and the entire people and the king, that they would be a people for Yahweh. [17]The entire people came to the Master's house and tore it down. Its altars and its images they broke down, and Mattan, the Master's priest, they killed before the altars.

[18]Yehoyada put the appointments in Yahweh's house in the hand of the Levite priests to whom David had given a share over Yahweh's house in offering up Yahweh's burnt offerings in accordance with what is written in Mosheh's instruction, with rejoicing and with song on the basis of David's directions. [19]He put in place the gatemen at the gateways of Yahweh's house so that anyone who was defiled in any way should not come in. [20]He got the centurions, the august people, the people's rulers and all the people of the country, and took the king down from Yahweh's house. They brought him through the Upper Gate to the king's house and seated the king on the royal throne. [21]The entire people of the country rejoiced, while the town was quiet, when they had put Atalyahu to death by the sword.

Boy king, insistent young man

24 Yo'ash was seven years of age when he began to reign and he reigned forty years in Yerushalaim. His mother's name was Tsibyah, from Be'er Sheba. [2]Yo'ash did what was upright in Yahweh's eyes all the days of Yehoyada the priest. [3]Yehoyada got him two wives, and sons and daughters were born to him.

[4]Subsequently, it came into Yo'ash's mind to renovate Yahweh's house. [5]He collected the priests and the Levites and said to them, 'Go out to the towns of Yehudah and collect silver from all Yisra'el to strengthen your God's house, each year's requirement in its year. You're to make speed about the thing.' But the Levites didn't make speed. [6]So the king called for Yehoyada the head and said to him, 'Why have you not required of the Levites to bring from Yehudah and from Yerushalaim the levy of Mosheh, Yahweh's servant, and the congregation of Yisra'el, to the affirmation tent?' [7]Because the faithless Atalyahu – her sons had broken into God's house, and further had made all the sacred things in Yahweh's house for the Masters.

[8]So the king said, and they made a chest and put it at the gateway of Yahweh's house, outside, [9]and they gave voice in Yehudah and in Yerushalaim to bring to Yahweh the levy of Mosheh, Yahweh's servant, made on Yisra'el in the wilderness. [10]All the officials and the entire people rejoiced and brought it, and threw it into the chest until they'd filled it. [11]At the time when they would bring the chest to the king's appointees by the hand of the Levites, when they saw that the silver was much, the king's secretary and the head priest's appointee would come and empty the chest and carry it and take it back to its place. So they did day by day, and they gathered silver in quantity.

[12]The king and Yehoyada gave it to the people doing the work, the service for Yahweh's house, and they were hiring masons

and craftsmen to renovate Yahweh's house, and also craftsmen in iron and copper to strengthen Yahweh's house.

But when the mentor's gone . . .

[13]The people doing the work did it, and restoration progressed by the work at their hand. They set up God's house in accordance with its design and made it stand firm. [14]When they'd finished, they brought before the king and Yehoyada the remainder of the silver and they made articles for Yahweh's house, articles for ministry and the burnt offerings, ladles, and gold and silver articles. They were offering up burnt offerings in Yahweh's house regularly all the days of Yehoyada.
[15]But Yehoyada grew old and became full of years and died, a man of 130 years when he died. [16]They buried him in David's Town with the kings, because he had done good things in Yisra'el with God and God's house. [17]But after Yehoyada's death the officials of Yehudah came and bowed low to the king. Then the king listened to them [18]and they abandoned the house of Yahweh, their ancestors' God, and served the totem poles and the idols, and fury came on Yehudah and Yerushalaim because of this liability of theirs.
[19]Yahweh sent prophets among them to turn them back to Yahweh, and they testified against them, but they didn't give ear. [20]God's spirit clothed Zekaryahu ben Yehoyada, the priest, and he stood above the people and said to them: 'God has said this: "Why are you transgressing Yahweh's orders? You will not succeed. Because you have abandoned Yahweh, he has abandoned you."' [21]But they conspired against him and pelted him with stones, by the king's order, in the court of Yahweh's house. [22]So Yo'ash the king was not mindful of the commitment with which Yehoyada his father had acted with him, and he killed his son. As he died he said, 'May Yahweh see and require.'
[23]At the turn of the year, a force from Aram went up against him. They came to Yehudah and Yerushalaim and eliminated all the people's officers from the people. All their plunder they sent off to the king of Dammeseq, [24a]because the Aramite force had come with a few men but Yahweh gave into their hand a force of a very large number because they had abandoned Yahweh, their ancestors' God.

Boy king, insistent young man, apostate adult

[24b]So they executed acts of authority upon Yo'ash, [25]and when they went from him (because they abandoned him with many wounds), his servants conspired against him because of the shedding of the blood of the sons of Yehoyada the priest, and they killed him on his bed. So he died and they buried him in David's Town, but they didn't bury him in the kings' graves. [26]These were the people who conspired against him: Zabad ben Shim'at (the Ammonite woman) and Yehozabad ben Shimrit (the Mo'abite woman). [27]His sons, the quantity of prophecy against him, and the founding of God's house – there, they are written in the exposition in the document about the kings. His son Amatsyahu began to reign in place of him.
25 Amatsyahu began to reign as a man of twenty-five years and he reigned twenty-nine years in Yerushalaim. His mother's name was Yeho'addan, from Yerushalaim. [2]He did what was upright in Yahweh's eyes, only not with a perfect mind. [3]When the kingship was strongly in his control, he killed his servants who had struck down the king, his father, [4]but the children he didn't put to death, because it was in accordance with what is written in the instruction in Mosheh's document where Yahweh ordered, 'Parents will not die because of children and children will not die because of parents. Rather, it is as an individual for his own wrongdoing that people are to die.'
[5]Amatsyahu collected the Yehudahites and set them by ancestral households under chiliarchs and centurions, for all Yehudah and Binyamin. He registered them from the age of twenty upwards and found them to be 300,000 picked men able to go out in the army, able to grasp spear and shield. [6]He hired from Yisra'el 100,000 forceful strong men for a hundred talents of silver. [7]But a supernatural man came to him saying, 'Your Majesty, the army of Yisra'el is not to come with you, because Yahweh is not with Yisra'el (all the Ephrayimites). [8]Rather, come, you act, be strong for battle. God could make you collapse before an enemy, because there's energy in God to help and to make collapse.'

A war crime

[9]Amatsyahu said to the supernatural man, 'But what am I to do about the hundred talents that I gave to the Yisra'elite raiding gang?' The supernatural man said, 'Yahweh has the means to give you much more than this.' [10]So Amatsyahu made them distinct (the raiding gang that had come to him from Ephrayim) for them to go to their own place. Their anger raged greatly against Yehudah, and they went back to their place in angry fury.
[11]But Amatsyahu showed himself strong and drove his company, and went to Salt Ravine. He struck down the men of Se'ir, 10,000, [12]and the Yehudahites captured 10,000 alive, brought them to the top of The Cliff, and threw them down from the top of The Cliff; all of them tore apart. [13]But the men in the raiding gang that Amatsyahu sent back from going with him to the battle made a raid against the Yehudahite towns from Shomron as far as Bet Horon, struck down 3,000 of them and took much plunder.
[14]After Amatsyahu came from striking down the Edomites, he brought the gods of the people of Se'ir and set them up for himself as gods, and he would bow low before them and burn incense for them. [15]Yahweh's anger raged at Amatsyahu and he sent a prophet to him. He said to him, 'Why have you enquired of the gods of the people who did not rescue their people from your hand?' [16]When he spoke to him, he said to him, 'Have we made you a counsellor to the king? Leave off for yourself! Why should they strike you down.' The prophet left off, and said, 'I know that God has counselled to devastate you, because you have done this and not listened to my counsel.'

What counts as effective counsel

[17]Amatsyahu king of Yehudah took counsel and sent to Yo'ash ben Yeho'ahaz son of Yehu, king of Yisra'el, saying 'Come on, let's face each other.' [18]Yo'ash king of Yisra'el sent to Amatsyahu king of Yehudah, saying, 'A thistle that was in the Lebanon sent to a cedar that was in the Lebanon, saying "Give your daughter to my son as wife." But an animal of the wild that was in the Lebanon passed by and trampled the thistle. [19]You've said, "There, you've struck down Edom", and your mind has lifted you up, so that you behave with splendour. Stay in your house now. Why stir up something bad? You'll fall, you and Yehudah with you.'

[20]Amatsyahu didn't listen, because it was from God, in order that he might give them into his hand, because he'd enquired of the Edomite gods. [21]So Yo'ash king of Yisra'el went up, and he and Amatsyahu king of Yehudah faced each other at Bet Shemesh, which belongs to Yehudah. [22]Yehudah took a beating before Yisra'el and they fled each man to his tents. [23]Amatsyahu king of Yehudah, son of Yo'ash son of Yeho'ahaz – Yo'ash king of Yisra'el captured him at Bet Shemesh, brought him to Yerushalaim and broke down the Yerushalaim wall from the Ephrayim Gate as far as the Corner Gate, 200 metres. [24]He took all the gold and the silver and all the articles that were to be found in God's house with Obed Edom, and the treasuries of the king's house, and hostages, and went back to Shomron.

[25]Amatsyahu ben Yo'ash king of Yehudah lived after the death of Yo'ash ben Yeho'ahaz king of Yisra'el fifteen years. [26]The rest of the things about Amatsyahu, early and late, there, they are written on the document about the kings of Yehudah and Yisra'el, aren't they. [27]After the time when Amatsyahu departed from following Yahweh, people formed a conspiracy against him in Yerushalaim and he fled to Lakish, but they sent after him to Lakish and put him to death there. [28]They carried him on horses and buried him in Yerushalaim with his ancestors in the Town of Yehudah.

A young man's achievements

26 All the people of Yehudah got Uzziyyahu (he was sixteen years of age) and made him king in place of his father Amatsyahu. [2]It was he who built up Elot. He had got it back for Yehudah after the king lay down with his ancestors.

[3]Uzziyyahu was sixteen years of age when he began to reign and he reigned fifty-two years in Yerushalaim. His mother's name was Yekolyah, from Yerushalaim. [4]He did what was upright in Yahweh's eyes in accordance with all that Amatsyahu his father did. [5]He came to enquire of God in the days of Zekaryahu, who enabled him to understand awe for God, and in the days when he enquired of Yahweh, God enabled him to be successful.

[6]He went out and battled against the Pelishtites and broke through the wall of Gat, the wall of Yabneh and the wall of Ashdod, and built up towns in Ashdod and among the Pelishtites. [7]God helped him against the Pelishtites, against the Arabs who lived in Gur-ba'al, and the Me'unites. [8]The Ammonites gave offerings to Uzziyyahu, and his name went as far as the entry point to Misrayim, because he became exceptionally strong. [9]Uzziyyahu built towers in Yerushalaim on the Corner Gate, on the Ravine Gate and on the Angle, and made them strong. [10]He built towers in the wilderness and hewed many cisterns, because he had much livestock, and in the foothills and in the flatland – ploughmen and vinedressers in the mountains and in the farmland, because he loved the ground.

On the separation of church and state, Old Testament style

[11]Uzziyyahu had a battle force, men able to go out in the army as a raiding gang by the number of their registering by the hand of Ye'i'el the secretary and Ma'aseyahu the overseer, in the control of Hananyahu from the king's officials. [12]The total number of the ancestral heads of the forceful strong men was 2,600, [13]and in their control an army force of 307,500 able to do battle with forceful energy to help the king against the enemy.

[14]Uzziyyahu prepared for them, for the entire army, shields, spears, helmets, coats of armour, bows and slingstones. [15]He made in Yerushalaim contrivances, an inventor's invention, to be on the towers and on the corners, for shooting arrows and big stones. His name went out far, because he did extraordinarily in acquiring help, until he was strong.

[16]But when he became strong, his mind became lofty, until he acted devastatingly. He trespassed against Yahweh his God, and came into Yahweh's palace to burn incense on the incense altar. [17]Azaryahu the priest followed him; with him were eighty priests of Yahweh, forceful men. [18]They stood against Uzziyyahu the king and said to him, 'It's not for you, Uzziyyahu, to burn incense for Yahweh, but for the priests, the Aharonites, who have been made sacred, to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, because you've trespassed. It will not mean splendour for you from Yahweh God.'

[19]Uzziyyahu was furious, the censer for burning incense in his hand. When he got furious with the priests, scaliness broke out on his forehead before the priests in Yahweh's house, by the incense altar. [20]Azaryahu the head priest turned his face to him, with all the priests: there, he was scaly on his forehead. They hurried him from there, and he himself hastened to get out, because Yahweh had touched him. [21]Uzziyyahu the king was made scaly until the day of his death. He lived in a house apart as a person who was scaly, because he was cut off from Yahweh's house, while Yotam his son was in charge of the king's house, exercising authority over the people in the country.

The son who had learned a lesson

[22]The rest of the things about Uzziyyahu, early and late, Yesha'yahu [Isaiah] ben Amots the prophet wrote. [23]Uzziyyahu lay down with his ancestors, but they buried him with his ancestors in the burial field that belonged to the kings because (they said), 'He was made scaly.' Yotam his son began to reign in place of him.

27 Yotam was a man of twenty-five years when he began to reign and he reigned sixteen years in Yerushalaim. His mother's name was Yerushah bat Tsadoq. [2]He did what was upright in Yahweh's eyes in accordance with all that his father Uzziyyahu had done, only he did not come into Yahweh's palace. But the people acted devastatingly.

[3]It was he who built up the Upper Gate of Yahweh's House, and built on a large scale on the Ophel Wall. [4]He built up towns in

the highland of Yehudah, and in the forests he built castles and towers. [5]When he battled with the king of the Ammonites he was stronger than them; the Ammonites gave him that year 100 talents of silver, 10,000 ten-gallon measures of wheat and 10,000 of barley. This the Ammonites gave back to him – and in the second and third year. [6]Yotam showed himself strong because he established his ways before Yahweh his God. [7]The rest of the things about Yotam, and all his battles and his ways – there they are, written on the document about the kings of Yisra'el and Yehudah. [8]He was a man of twenty-five years when he began to reign and he reigned sixteen years in Yerushalaim. [9]Yotam lay down with his ancestors and they buried him in David's Town, and Ahaz his son began to reign in place of him.

28 Ahaz was a man of twenty years when he began to reign and he reigned sixteen years in Yerushalaim. He did not do what was upright in Yahweh's eyes like David his ancestor, [2]but walked in the ways of the kings of Yisra'el. He even made cast images for the Masters. [3]He was the one who burned incense in the Ben-himmon Ravine and burned up his sons in fire in accordance with the offensive practices of the nations that Yahweh dispossessed from before the Yisra'elites. [4]He sacrificed and burned incense at the shrines, on the hills and under every verdant tree.

The warning to the victors

[5]So Yahweh his God gave him into the hand of the king of Aram, and they struck him down, took captive a large group of his and brought them to Dammeseq. He was also given into the hand of the king of Yisra'el; he struck him down in a great rout. [6]Peqah ben Remalyahu killed 120,000 in Yehudah on one day, all forceful men, because of their abandoning Yahweh, their ancestors' God. [7]Zikri, the Ephrayimite strong man, killed Ma'aseyahu the king's son, Azriqam the chief over the house, and Elqanah, number two to the king, [8]and the Yisra'elites took captive 200,000 of their brothers, wives, sons and daughters, and also plundered much spoil from them and brought the plunder to Shomron.

[9]There was a prophet of Yahweh there, Oded by name. He went out before the army which was coming to Shomron and said to them, 'Here, because of the wrath of Yahweh your ancestors' God with Yehudah, he gave them into your hand and you killed them in a fury that reached as far as the heavens. [10]And now you are saying that you'll subjugate the people of Yehudah and Yerushalaim as your servants and maidservants, while you yourselves – with you there are only liabilities in relation to Yahweh your God, aren't there. [11]So now listen to me. Give back the captives that you've taken from your brothers, because the angry rage of Yahweh is on you.'

[12]People from among the heads of the Ephrayimites, Azaryahu ben Yehohanan, Berekyahu ben Meshillemot, Yehizqiyyahu ben Shallum and Amasa ben Hadlay, rose up against the people coming from the army. [13]They said to them, 'You will not bring the captives here, because it will be a liability upon us in relation to Yahweh; you're saying you'll add to our wrongdoings and to our liabilities, because our liability is great and there's angry rage against Yisra'el.' [14]So the armed men abandoned the captives and the plunder before the officers and the entire congregation.

The administrators with compassion

[15]The people who were designated by their names set to, took strong hold of the captives and clothed all the naked with the spoil. They both clothed them and gave them boots and food and drink, and bathed them and led them (everyone who was collapsing) on donkeys, and brought them to Yeriho (Palms Town) beside their brothers, and went back to Shomron.

[16]At that time King Ahaz sent to the kings of Ashshur for help for himself. [17]The Edomites had again come and struck down Yehudah and taken captives, [18]and the Pelishtites had raided the towns in the foothills and in the Negeb belonging to Yehudah. They had taken Bet-shemesh, Ayyalon, Gederot, Soko and its daughter-townships, Timnah and its daughter-townships, and Gimzo and its daughter-townships, and gone to live there, [19]because Yahweh made Yehudah bow down on account of Ahaz king of Yisra'el, because he had been lax in Yehudah and had trespassed against Yahweh.

[20]Tillegat Pilne'eser king of Ashshur came out against him and put him under pressure; he did not strengthen him, [21]because Ahaz had divided up Yahweh's house and the house of the king and the officers and given it to the king of Ashshur, but it was no help to him.

[22]In his time of pressure he added to his trespassing against Yahweh, that King Ahaz, [23]and sacrificed to the gods of Dammeseq who had struck him down; he had said, 'Because the gods of the king of Aram help them, I will sacrifice to them so that they may help me.' So those became the cause of his collapsing, and that of all Yisra'el. [24]Ahaz gathered the articles from God's house and cut up the articles from God's house. He shut the doors of God's house and made himself altars in every corner of Yerushalaim. [25]In each and every town in Yehudah, he made shrines to burn incense for other gods, and provoked Yahweh, his ancestors' God.

[26]The rest of the things about him and all his ways, early and late – there they are, written on the document about the kings of Yehudah and Yisra'el. [27]Ahaz lay down with his ancestors and they buried him in the town, in Yerushalaim, because they didn't bring him into the graves of the kings of Yisra'el. His son Yehizqiyyahu [Hezekiah] began to reign in place of him.

The new David

29 Yehizqiyyahu began to reign as a man of twenty-five years and reigned twenty-nine years in Yerushalaim. His mother's name was Abiyyah bat Zekaryahu. [2]He did what was upright in Yahweh's eyes in accordance with all that David his ancestor did. [3]He, in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of Yahweh's house and strengthened them.

[4]He brought the priests and the Levites and gathered them in the eastern square, [5]and said to them, 'Listen to me, Levites. Make yourselves sacred now and make sacred the house of Yahweh, your ancestors' God. Take out the defilement from the sacred place. [6]Because our fathers trespassed and did what was bad in the eyes of Yahweh our God, and abandoned him. They turned their faces from Yahweh's dwelling. They turned their back. [7]They also shut the porch's doors and put out the lamps. They didn't

burn incense and they didn't offer up a burnt offering in the sacred place for the God of Yisra'el. [8]So Yahweh's fury came on Yehudah and Yerushalaim. He made them a thing of horror and desolation and a thing to whistle at, as you see with your own eyes. [9]There, our fathers have died by the sword and our sons and daughters and wives have been in captivity on account of this.
[10]It's now in my mind to solemnize a pact towards Yahweh the God of Yisra'el so that his angry rage may turn back from us. [11]My sons, don't be negligent now, because you're the ones Yahweh chose to stand before him to minister for him, to be people who minister and burn incense for him.'
[12]So the Levites set to:

Mahat ben Amasay and Yo'el ben Azaryahu, of the Qehatites;
of the sons of Merari, Qish ben Abdi and Azaryahu ben Yehallel'el;
of the Gershonites, Yo'ah ben Zimmah and Eden ben Yo'ah;
[13]of the sons of Elitsaphan, Shimri and Ye'i'el;
of the sons of Asaph, Zekaryahu and Mattanyahu;
[14]of the sons of Heman, Yehi'el and Shim'i;
and of the sons of Yedutun, Shema'yah and Uzzi'el.

The great purification

[15]They gathered their brothers and made themselves sacred, and came in accordance with the king's order, by Yahweh's words, to purify Yahweh's house. [16]The priests came into the inside of Yahweh's house to purify it, and took out all that was defiled that they found in Yahweh's palace into the court of Yahweh's house. The Levites received it to take it outside to Wadi Qidron. [17]They began to make it sacred on the first of the first month, and on the eighth of the month they came to Yahweh's porch. They made Yahweh's house sacred in eight days, and on the sixteenth day of the first month they finished.
[18]Then they came inside to Hizqiyyahu the king and said, 'We've purified Yahweh's entire house, the burnt-offering altar and all its implements, and the table for the row [of bread] and all its implements. [19]All the implements that King Ahaz spurned when he was king, when he trespassed, we've prepared and made sacred. There they are, before Yahweh's altar.'
[20]Yehizqiyyahu the king started early, gathered the town officials and went up to Yahweh's house. [21]They brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs and seven goats as a purification offering for the kingship, for the sanctuary and for Yehudah. He said to the Aharonites, the priests, to offer them up on Yahweh's altar. [22]They slaughtered the cattle, and the priests received the blood and tossed it against the altar. They slaughtered the rams and tossed the blood against the altar. They slaughtered the lambs and tossed the blood against the altar. [23]They took up the goats for the purification offering before the king and the congregation, and they leaned their hands on them. [24]The priests slaughtered them and made the purification with their blood to make expiation for all Yisra'el, because the king had said that the burnt offering and the purification offering were for all Yisra'el. [25]He put the Levites in place in Yahweh's house with cymbals, with mandolins and with guitars, by the order of David, Gad the king's seer and Natan the prophet, because the order was through Yahweh through his prophets.

What God has made possible

[26]So the Levites stood with David's instruments and the priests with the trumpets, [27]and Hizqiyyahu said to offer up the burnt offering at the altar. At the time when the burnt offering began, Yahweh's song and the trumpets began, along with the instruments of David king of Yisra'el, [28]with the entire congregation bowing low, the singers singing and the trumpeters trumpeting, all of it until they finished the burnt offering. [29]When they'd finished offering it up, the king and all who were to be found with him bent down and bowed low. [30]Yehizqiyyahu the king with the officers said to the Levites to praise Yahweh in the words of David and of Asaph the seer, and they praised with rejoicing and bent their heads and bowed low.
[31]Yehizqiyyahu avowed, 'You have now commissioned yourselves to Yahweh. Come up and bring sacrifices and thank offerings to Yahweh's house.' The congregation brought sacrifices and thank offerings, and everyone who was free in heart, a burnt offering. [32]The number of burnt offerings that the congregation brought was 70 cattle, 100 rams, 200 lambs as a burnt offering for Yahweh, all these. [33]The sacred things were 600 cattle and 3,000 from the flocks. [34]Only the priests were few and they could not skin all the burnt offerings, so their brothers, the Levites, added to their strength until the finishing of the work and until the priests had made themselves sacred (because the Levites were more upright in mind in making themselves sacred than the priests). [35]Also there were burnt offerings in quantity with the fat parts of the well-being sacrifices and with the libations for the burnt offering.
So the service of Yahweh's house was established, [36]and Yehizqiyyahu rejoiced, with all the people, over what God had established for the people, because the thing had happened so rapidly.

One nation

30 Yehizqiyyahu sent to all Yisra'el and Yehudah and also wrote communiqués to Ephrayim and Menashsheh to come to Yahweh's house in Yerushalaim to make Pesah [Passover] for Yahweh, the God of Yisra'el. [2]The king took counsel, he and his officials and the entire congregation in Yerushalaim, about making the Pesah in the second month, [3]because they couldn't do it at that time because the priests had not made themselves sacred in sufficiency, and the people had not assembled to Yerushalaim.
[4]The thing was upright in the king's eyes and in the congregation's eyes. [5]So they put in place a word to pass an announcement through all Yisra'el from Be'er-sheba as far as Dan about coming to make Pesah for Yahweh, the God of Yisra'el, in Yerushalaim, because they hadn't done it in large numbers as it is written.

[6]The runners went out with the communiqués from the hand of the king and his officials, through all Yisra'el and Yehudah, in accordance with the king's order, saying 'Yisra'elites, turn back to Yahweh the God of Abraham, Yitshaq and Yisra'el, and he will turn back to the escape group that remains to you from the fist of the kings of Ashshur. [7]Don't be like your fathers and like your brothers who trespassed against Yahweh, their ancestors' God, and he made them into a desolation, as you see. [8]Don't toughen your neck now like your ancestors. Give your hand to Yahweh, come to his sanctuary which he made sacred permanently, serve Yahweh your God, so that his angry rage may turn back from you. [9]When you turn back to Yahweh, your brothers and your children will find compassion before their captors and they will come back to this country, because Yahweh your God is gracious and compassionate, and he will not turn aside his face from you if you turn back to him.'

Laughter and response

[10]The runners were passing from town to town in the region of Ephrayim and Menashsheh and as far as Zebulun, but they were making fun of them and ridiculing them. [11]Yet people from Asher, Menashsheh and Zebulun bowed down and came to Yerushalaim. [12]God's hand was on Yehudah, too, to give them one mind to act on the order of the king and the officials by Yahweh's word.

[13]So a numerous people gathered to Yerushalaim to make the Flatbread Festival in the second month, a congregation in very large numbers. [14]They set to and removed the altars that were in Yerushalaim and removed all the incense stands and threw them into Wadi Qidron.

[15]They slaughtered the Pesah on the fourteenth of the second month, while the priests and the Levites were ashamed, and made themselves sacred and brought burnt offerings to Yahweh's house. [16]They stood in their position in accordance with the ruling for them, in accordance with the instruction of Mosheh the supernatural man, the priests tossing the blood from the Levites' hand.

[17]Because much of the congregation had not made themselves sacred, the Levites were in charge of the slaughter of the Pesah animals for everyone who was not pure, to make them sacred for Yahweh, [18]because most of the people (much of the group from Ephrayim and Menashsheh, Yissakar and Zebulun) had not purified themselves, but they ate the Pesah not in accordance with what is written, because Yehizqiyyahu had pleaded for them: 'May the good Yahweh expiate on behalf of [19]everyone who has set his mind on enquiring of God, Yahweh his ancestors' God, though not in accordance with purification in the sacred place.' [20]Yahweh listened to Yehizqiyyahu and healed the people.

The great rejoicing

[21]The Yisra'elites who were to be found in Yerushalaim made the Flatbread Festival for seven days with great rejoicing and the Levites and the priests praising Yahweh daily with powerful instruments for Yahweh. [22]Yehizqiyyahu spoke to encourage all the Levites who showed good insight for Yahweh, and they ate what was appointed for the seven days, making well-being sacrifices and confessing Yahweh, their ancestors' God. [23]The entire congregation took counsel to make another seven days, and made seven days with rejoicing, [24]because Hizqiyyahu king of Yehudah raised for the congregation 1,000 bulls and 7,000 from the flock, while the officials raised for the congregation 1,000 bulls and 10,000 from the flock, and the priests made themselves sacred in large numbers.

[25]The entire congregation of Yehudah rejoiced, with the priests and the Levites, the entire congregation that came from Yisra'el, and the resident aliens who had come from the country of Yisra'el but who lived in Yehudah. [26]So there was great rejoicing in Yerushalaim, because from the days of Shelomoh ben David king of Yisra'el there had not been something like this in Yerushalaim. [27]The Levite priests rose and blessed the people. And there was listening to their voice; their plea came to his sacred abode, to the heavens.

31 When they had finished all this, all Yisra'el who were to be found went out to the towns of Yehudah and broke up the columns, cut down the totem poles and demolished the shrines and the altars from all Yehudah and Binyamin, and in Ephrayim and Menashsheh, until they had finished. Then all the Yisra'elites went back each to his holding, to their towns.

Embarras de richesse

[2]Yehizqiyyahu put in place the divisions of the priests and the Levites, by their divisions, each in accordance with his service (with regard to the priests and the Levites), for the burnt offering and the well-being offerings, to minister and to confess and to praise in the gateways of Yahweh's camps; [3]and the king's share, from his property, for the burnt offerings – the morning and the evening burnt offerings and the burnt offerings for sabbaths, for beginning of months and for set times, as it is written in Yahweh's instruction. [4]He said to the people, the inhabitants of Yerushalaim, to give the priests' and Levites' share, in order that they might hold fast to Yahweh's instruction.

[5]When the word broke out, the Yisra'elites produced much of the very first of grain, new wine, fresh oil, syrup and all the yield of the field. They brought a tenth of everything, in quantity. [6]The people of Yisra'el and Yehudah who lived in the towns of Yehudah – they too brought a tenth of cattle and flock and a tenth of sacred things that had been made sacred for Yahweh their God, and put them in heaps upon heaps. [7]In the third month they began to found the heaps and in the seventh month they finished.

[8]Yehizqiyyahu and the officials came and saw the heaps, and blessed Yahweh and his people Yisra'el. [9]Yehizqiyyahu enquired of the priests and the Levites about the heaps [10]and Azaryahu the head priest, of the household of Tsadoq, said to him, 'From when they began bringing the contribution into Yahweh's house, there's been eating and being full and having a quantity remain, because Yahweh has blessed his people, and this horde remains over.' [11]So Yehizqiyyahu said to prepare halls in Yahweh's house, and they prepared them, [12a]and brought in the contribution, the tenth and the sacred things, truthfully.

The trustworthy administrators

[12b]The chief over them was Kananyahu the Levite; Shim'i his brother was number two. [13]Yehi'el, Azazyahu, Nahat, Asah'el, Yerimot, Yozabad, Eli'el, Yismakyahu, Mahat and Benayah were appointees under the control of Kananyahu and Shim'i his brother, by the appointment of Yehizqiyyahu the king and Azaryahu the chief over God's house. [14]Qore ben Yimnah the Levite, gateman on the east, was in charge of the free offerings to God, to give out the contribution for Yahweh and the very sacred things. [15]In his control were Eden, Minyamin, Yeshua, Shema'yahu, Amaryahu and Shekanyahu, in the priests' towns in their trustworthy position, to give out to their brothers by their divisions, old and young alike:

[16]apart from their enrolment by genealogy, to males from three years and upwards;
to everyone who came into Yahweh's house, each day's requirement in its day, for their service in their watches, by their divisions;
[17]the priests' enrolment by genealogy, by their ancestral households;
the Levites from twenty years and upwards in their watches, by their divisions,
[18]and (in line with the enrolment by genealogy of all their little ones, their wives, their sons and their daughters) to the entire congregation, because in their trustworthy position they would make themselves very sacred.

[19]And to the Aharonites, the priests, in their towns' pastureland fields, everywhere town by town: men who were designated by their names were to give portions to every male among the priests, and to the entire enrolment by genealogy among the Levites.

[20]Yehizqiyyahu acted like this in all Yehudah. He did what was good, upright and trustworthy before Yahweh his God. [21]In all the work that he began in the service of God's house and in the instruction and in the order, by enquiring of his God with his entire mind, he acted and succeeded.

The Assyrian crisis

32 After these things with their trustworthiness, Sanherib [Sennacherib] king of Ashshur came. He came against Yehudah, camped against the fortified towns and said he would break into them for himself. [2]Yehizqiyyahu saw that Sanherib had come with his face directed to battle against Yerushalaim [3]and took counsel with his officials and his strong men about blocking the water in the springs that were outside the town. They helped him, [4]and a large company collected and blocked all the springs and the stream flowing through the middle of the country, saying 'Why should the kings of Ashshur come and find much water?' [5]He showed himself strong and built up all the wall that had been broken through, and raised the towers on it, and outside it another wall. He strengthened the Fill in David's Town and made weaponry in quantity, and shields, [6]and put battle officers over the people.

He collected them to him in the square at the town gateway and spoke to encourage them: [7]'Be strong and stand firm. Don't be afraid, don't be scared in face of the king of Ashshur and in face of the entire horde that's with him, because with us is one greater than with him. [8]With him is an arm of flesh, but with us is Yahweh our God to help us and to fight our battles.' The people leaned on the words of Yehizqiyyahu king of Yehudah.

[9]Subsequently, Sanherib king of Ashshur sent his servants to Yerushalaim (he was at Lakish, and his command with him) to Yehizqiyyahu king of Yehudah and to all Yehudah who were in Yerushalaim, saying, [10]'Sanherib king of Ashshur has said this: "On what are you relying, living in a siege in Yerushalaim? [11]Yehizqiyyahu is inciting you to give yourselves over to dying by hunger and by thirst, isn't he, in saying, 'Yahweh our God will rescue us from the fist of the king of Ashshur.' [12]He, Yehizqiyyahu, removed his shrines and his altars, didn't he, and said to Yehudah and to Yerushalaim, 'Before one altar you are to bow low, and on it burn incense.'

The superpower's boast

[13]You acknowledge what I and my ancestors have done to all the peoples of the countries, don't you. Were the gods of the countries' nations at all able to rescue their country from my hand? [14]Which among all the gods of these nations that my ancestors devoted was able to rescue his people from my hand, that your God should be able to rescue you from my hand? [15]Hizqiyyahu should not now deceive you. He should not incite you like this. Don't trust him. Because no god of any nation or kingdom has been able to rescue his people from my hand or from the hand of my ancestors. Certainly your gods will not rescue you from my hand."'

[16]His servants spoke further against Yahweh God and against Yehizqiyyahu his servant, [17]and he wrote documents to revile Yahweh the God of Yisra'el and to say about him, 'Like the gods of the countries' nations that did not rescue their people from my hand, so Yehizqiyyahu's God will not rescue his people from my hand.' [18]They called in a loud voice in Yehudahite to the people of Yerushalaim who were on the wall, to make them afraid and fearful, in order that they might take the town. [19]They spoke of Yerushalaim's God as they spoke about the gods of the peoples of the earth, the making of human hands.

[20]Yehizqiyyahu the king and Yesha'yahu ben Amots the prophet pleaded about this and cried out to the heavens, [21]and Yahweh sent an envoy and he effaced every forceful strong man, chief and officer in the camp of the king of Ashshur. He went back in shame to his country. He came into his god's house, and there some of the people who had come out from inside him made him fall by the sword.

Even Yehizqiyyahu can stumble

[22]Yahweh delivered Yehizqiyyahu and Yerushalaim's inhabitants from the hand of Sanherib king of Ashshur and from the hand of everyone. He led them all round [23]and many were bringing offerings for Yahweh to Yerushalaim and choice things for Yehizqiyyahu king of Yehudah. He rose high in the eyes of all the nations from then on.

[24]In those days Yehizqiyyahu became deathly ill, but he pleaded to Yahweh, and he spoke to him and gave him a sign, [25]but Yehizqiyyahu did not give back in accordance with the dealing done to him, because his mind became lofty. So there was fury on him and on Yehudah and Yerushalaim. [26]But Yehizqiyyahu bowed down, when his mind had become lofty, he and the inhabitants of Yerushalaim, and Yahweh's fury didn't come on them in Yehizqiyyahu's days.

[27]Yehizqiyyahu had wealth and splendour, very great. He made himself treasuries for silver, for gold, for precious stone, for spices, for shields and for all desirable objects, [28]supplies of the yield of grain, new wine and fresh oil, and stalls for each and every cattle, and flocks for folds. [29]He made himself towns and livestock, flocks and cattle, in large numbers, because God gave him very much property. [30]He, Yehizqiyyahu, blocked the Upper Gihon water outlet and directed it down on the west of David's Town. Yehizqiyyahu succeeded in all his action. [31]And so with the spokesmen of the officials from Babel who sent to him to enquire about the sign that happened in the country, when God abandoned him to test him so as to know everything in his mind.

[32]The rest of the things about Yehizqiyyahu and his acts of commitment – there they are, written in the vision of Yesha'yahu ben Amots the prophet, on the document regarding the kings of Yehudah and Yisra'el. [33]Yehizqiyyahu lay down with his ancestors and they buried him in the upper floor of the graves of David's sons, and all Yehudah and the inhabitants of Yerushalaim did him honour when he died. Menashsheh his son began to reign in place of him.

The possibility of repentance

33 Menashsheh was twelve years of age when he began to reign and he reigned fifty-five years in Yerushalaim. [2]He did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes in accordance with the offensive practices of the nations that Yahweh dispossessed from before the Yisra'elites. [3]He rebuilt the shrines that Yehizqiyyahu his father had demolished, set up altars for the Masters and made totem poles, and bowed low to all the heavenly army and served them. [4]He built altars in Yahweh's house, of which Yahweh had said, 'In Yerushalaim my name will be permanently.' [5]He built altars for all the heavenly army in the two courtyards of Yahweh's house. [6]He himself made his sons pass through fire in Ben-hinnom Ravine. He practised augury, divined, acted as a medium, and dealt with ghosts and spirits. He did much that was bad in Yahweh's eyes, so as to provoke him.

[7]He put the image sculpture that he made in God's house, of which God had said to David and to Shelomoh his son, 'In this house and in Yerushalaim, which I chose from all Yisra'el's clans, I will put my name permanently. [8]And I will never again remove Yisra'el's foot from upon the land that I put in place for their ancestors, only if they keep watch to act on all that I ordered them – the entire instruction, the decrees and the rulings by means of Mosheh.' [9]Menashsheh made Yehudah and Yerushalaim and the inhabitants of Yerushalaim wander so as to deal badly, more than the nations that Yahweh annihilated from before the Yisra'elites.

[10]Yahweh spoke to Menashsheh and to his people but they didn't heed, [11]so Yahweh brought against them the officers of the army belonging to the king of Ashshur. They took Menashsheh captive in hooks, bound him with copper shackles and made him go to Babel. [12]But when he was under pressure, he sought the goodwill of Yahweh his God. He bowed right down before his ancestors' God [13]and pleaded to him. He let himself be entreated by him and listened to his prayer for grace, and let him go back to Yerushalaim to his kingship. So Menashsheh acknowledged that Yahweh was God.

Menashsheh and Amon

[14]Subsequently he built an outer wall for David's Town, west of Gihon, in the wadi and as you come through the Fish Gate. It went round the Ophel. He made it very lofty. He put forceful officers in all the fortified towns in Yehudah. [15]He removed the foreign gods and the image from Yahweh's house and all the altars that he had built on the mountain of Yahweh's house and in Yerushalaim, and threw them outside the town. [16]He built up Yahweh's altar and made on it well-being sacrifices and thank offerings. He said to Yehudah to serve Yahweh the God of Yisra'el, [17]though the people were still sacrificing at the shrines, only for Yahweh their God.

[18]The rest of the things about Menashsheh, his plea to his God, and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of Yahweh his God – there they are, on the things of the kings of Yisra'el. [19]His plea and his being entreated by him, and all his wrongdoing and his trespass, and the sites in which he built shrines and put in place totem poles and sculptures, before he bowed down – there, they're written in the words of his seers. [20]Menashsheh lay down with his ancestors and they buried him in his house, and Amon his son began to reign in place of him.

[21]Amon was a man of twenty-two years when he began to reign and he reigned two years in Yerushalaim. [22]He did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes, as Menashsheh his father had done. To all the sculptures that Menashsheh his father had made, Amon sacrificed and served them. [23]He did not bow down before Yahweh as Menashsheh his father bowed down, but rather he, Amon, made his liability great. [24]His servants conspired against him and put him to death in his house, [25]but the people of the country struck down those who had conspired against King Amon. The people of the country made Yo'shiyyahu his son king in place of him.

The great reformer

34 Yo'shiyyahu [Josiah] was eight years of age when he began to reign and he reigned thirty-one years in Yerushalaim. [2]He did what was upright in the eyes of Yahweh and walked in the ways of David his ancestor. He did not depart right or left.

[3]In the eighth year of his reign when he was still a boy he began to enquire of the God of David his ancestor, and in the twelfth year began to purify Yehudah and Yerushalaim of the shrines, the totem poles, the sculptures and the cast images. [4]They demolished the Masters' altars before him, and the incense stands that were above, over them, he cut down. The totem poles, the sculptures and the cast images he broke up, made dust of them and threw it over the face of the graves of the people who had

sacrificed to them. [5]The priests' bones he burned on their altars. He purified Yehudah and Yerushalaim, [6]and in the towns of Menashsheh, Ephrayim and Shim'on, and as far as Naphtali, and in their ruins all round, [7]he demolished the altars and the totem poles, crushed the sculptures to dust and cut down the incense stands in the entire country of Yisra'el, and went back to Yerushalaim.

[8]In the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purified the country and the house, he sent Shaphan ben Atsalyahu, Ma'aseyahu the town official and Yo'ah ben Yo'ahaz the recorder to strengthen the house of Yahweh his God. [9]They came to Hilqiyyahu the big priest and gave him the silver that had been brought to God's house, which the Levites who keep watch over the threshold had gathered from the hand of Menashsheh and Ephrayim, from the entire remainder of Yisra'el and from all Yehudah and Binyamin and the inhabitants of Yerushalaim.

[10]They gave it into the hand of the one doing the work, the people appointed in Yahweh's house. The ones doing the work who were doing it in Yahweh's house gave it for dealing with the defects and for strengthening the house. [11]They gave it to craftsmen and masons for acquiring hewn stones and logs for the clasps and for roofing the houses that the kings of Yehudah had let become devastated.

The worrying discovery

[12]The men were acting with trustworthiness in the work:
appointed in charge of them: Yahat and Obadyahu, Levites from the Mararites, and Zekaryah and Meshullam from the Qehatites, to supervise;
the Levites, everyone with understanding of musical instruments, [13]both in charge of the carriers and supervising everyone doing the work, service by service;
some of the Levites: secretaries, overseers and gatemen.

[14]When they were taking out the silver that had been brought to Yahweh's house, Hilqiyyahu the priest found a document of Yahweh's instruction by means of Mosheh. [15]Hilqiyyahu avowed to Shaphan the secretary, 'I've found an instruction document in Yahweh's house.' Hilqiyyahu gave the document to Shaphan, [16]and Shaphan brought the document to the king. He also took word back to the king: 'All that was given into your servants' hands, they're doing. [17]They've melted down the silver that was found in Yahweh's house and given it into the hand of the appointees and into the hand of the people doing the work.' [18]And Shaphan the secretary told the king, 'Hilqiyyahu the priest gave me a document', and he read it out before the king.

[19]When the king heard the words in the instruction, he tore his clothes. [20]The king ordered Hilqiyyahu, Ahiqam ben Shaphan, Abdon ben Mikah, Shaphan the secretary and Asayah the king's servant, [21]'Go enquire of Yahweh on my behalf and on behalf of the remainder in Yisra'el and Yehudah about the words in the document that's been found, because great is Yahweh's wrath that's poured upon us because our ancestors didn't keep Yahweh's word by acting in accordance with everything that's written on this document.'

[22]Hilqiyyahu and those whom the king [had said] went to Huldah the prophetess, wife of Shallum ben Toqhat son of Hasrah, keeper of the robes; she was living in Yerushalaim in the Second Quarter. They spoke to her in this way.

The prophetess speaks straight

[23]She said to them, 'Yahweh the God of Yisra'el has said this: "Say to the man who sent you to me: [24]'Yahweh has said this: "Here, I'm going to bring bad fortune on this place and its inhabitants, all the curses written on the document that they read out before the king of Yehudah, [25]because of the fact that they abandoned me and burned incense to other gods, in order to provoke me with all the actions of their hands, so that my wrath will pour out on this place and will not go out."'"

[26]But to the king of Yehudah who sent you to enquire of Yahweh, you're to say to him, "Yahweh the God of Yisra'el has said this: 'The words that you have heard: [27]since your mind softened and you bowed down before God when you heard his words about this place and about its inhabitants, and you bowed down before me and tore your clothes and cried before me, I for my part have also listened (Yahweh's declaration). [28]Here, I'm going to gather you to your ancestors, and you'll gather yourself to your great grave with things being well. Your eyes will not see all the bad fortune that I'm going to bring on this place and on its inhabitants.'"'

They took word back to the king [29]and the king sent and gathered all the elders of Yehudah and Yerushalaim. [30]The king went up to Yahweh's house, with everyone in Yehudah, the inhabitants of Yerushalaim, the priests, the Levites, and all the people, old and young. He read out in their ears all the words of the pact document found in Yahweh's house. [31]The king stood in his position and solemnized a pact before Yahweh to follow Yahweh and to keep his orders, his affirmations and his decrees with his entire mind and with his entire being, by acting on the words of the pact that were written on this document. [32]He got everyone who was to be found in Yerushalaim and Binyamin to stand, and the inhabitants of Yerushalaim acted in accordance with the pact of God, their ancestors' God.

Preparations for a great celebration

[33]Yo'shiyyahu removed all the offensive things from all the regions that belonged to the Yisra'elites and got everyone who was to be found in Yisra'el to give their service to Yahweh their God. All his days they did not depart from following Yahweh, their ancestors' God.

35 Yo'shiyyahu made Pesah for Yahweh in Yerushalaim; they slaughtered the Pesah on the fourteenth of the first month. [2]He put in place the priests at their watches and he strengthened them for the service of Yahweh's house. [3]He said to the Levites, who helped all Yisra'el understand, who were sacred for Yahweh, 'Put the sacred chest in the house that Shelomoh ben David, king of Yisra'el, built. There's no carrying it on the shoulder for you now; serve Yahweh your God and his people Yisra'el now.

[4]Establish yourselves by your ancestral households according to your divisions, by the writing of David king of Yisra'el and by the writing of Shelomoh his son. [5]Stand in the sacred place by the ancestral household groupings of your brothers (the members of the people) and the ancestral household divisions of the Levites, [6]and slaughter the Pesah. Make yourselves sacred and prepare it for your brothers, acting in accordance with Yahweh's word by means of Mosheh.'

[7]Yo'shiyyahu raised for the members of the people flocks, lambs and goats (all of it for the Pesah occasions for everyone who was to be found) to the number of 30,000, and cattle 3,000, these from the king's property. [8]His officials raised a free offering for the people, for the priests and for the Levites; Hilqiyyah, Zekaryahu and Yehi'el, the chiefs over God's house, gave for the Pesah occasions 2,600, and 300 cattle. [9]Kananyahu, Shema'yahu and Netan'el his brothers, and Hashabyahu, Ye'i'el and Yozabad, the Levites' officials, raised for the Levites for the Pesah occasions 5,000, and 500 cattle.

No Pesah (Passover) like this for centuries

[10]So the service was prepared. The priests stood in their position, with the Levites by their divisions in accordance with the king's order. [11]They slaughtered the Pesah and the priests tossed some of the blood they had while the Levites were doing the skinning. [12]They removed the burnt offering to give them to the groups by ancestral households, to the members of the people, to present to Yahweh in accordance with what is written in Mosheh's document, and so for the cattle. [13]They cooked the Pesah in fire in accordance with the ruling, and the sacred things they cooked in pots, in cauldrons and in pans, and ran them to all the members of the people.

[14]After, they prepared things for themselves and for the priests, because the priests, the Aharonites, were involved in offering up the burnt offering and the fat parts until evening, while the Levites prepared for themselves and for the priests, the Aharonites. [15]The singers, the Asaphites, were in their place in accordance with the order of David, Asaph, Heman and Yedutun the king's seer, and the gatemen were at gateway by gateway: there was no departing from their service for them, because their Levite brothers prepared for them.

[16]The entire service of Yahweh was prepared that day, making the Pesah and offering up burnt offerings on Yahweh's altar in accordance with the order of King Yo'shiyyahu. [17]The Yisra'elites who were to be found made the Pesah at that time, and the Flatbread Festival, for seven days. [18]Pesah had not been made like this in Yisra'el since the days of Shemu'el [Samuel] the prophet. No kings of Yisra'el had made one like the Pesah that Yo'shiyyahu made, with the priests, the Levites, all Yehudah and Yisra'el to be found, and the inhabitants of Yerushalaim. [19]This Pesah was made in the eighteenth year of Yo'shiyyahu 's reign.

One fatal mistake

[20]After all this, when Yo'shiyyahu had established the house, Neko king of Misrayim went up to do battle at Karkemish on the Euphrates, and Yo'shiyyahu went out to meet him.

[21]He sent envoys to him saying, 'What is there between you and me, king of Yehudah? You're not the one I'm against today, but against the household that's doing battle with me. God said I should hurry. Hold yourself back from God, who's with me, so he doesn't devastate you.'

[22]But Yo'shiyyahu didn't turn his face round from him but disguised himself to do battle against him. He didn't listen to the words of Neko from the mouth of God but came to battle in the Megiddo Valley, [23]and the archers shot King Yo'shiyyahu. The king said to his servants, 'Get me out, because I'm badly hurt.' [24]His servants got him out of the chariot, put him on the second-in-command's chariot and took him to Yerushalaim, but he died. He was buried in his ancestors' graves, and all Yehudah and Yerushalaim was mourning over Yo'shiyyahu.

[25]Yirmeyahu [Jeremiah] lamented over Yo'shiyyahu, and all the singers (male and female) have spoken of Yo'shiyyahu in their laments until this day. They made them a decree in Yisra'el. There, they're written in the laments. [26]The rest of the things about Yo'shiyyahu and his acts of commitment in accordance with what is written in Yahweh's instruction, [27]his words early and late: there, they are written on the document about the kings of Yisra'el and Yehudah.

36 The people of the country got Yeho'ahaz ben Yo'shiyyahu and made him king in place of his father in Yerushalaim.

The rebellious end

[2]Yeho'ahaz was a man of twenty-three years when he began to reign and he reigned three months in Yerushalaim, [3]but the king of Misrayim removed him in Yerushalaim and levied the country for a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. [4]The king of Misrayim made Elyaqim his brother king over Yehudah and Yerushalaim and changed his name to Yehoyaqim. Neko took Yo'ahaz his brother and brought him to Misrayim.

[5]Yehoyaqim was a man of twenty-five years when he began to reign and he reigned eleven years in Yerushalaim. He did what was bad in the eyes of Yahweh his God. [6]Nebukadne'tstsar king of Babel went up against him and bound him with copper shackles to make him go to Babel. [7]Nebukadne'tstsar brought some of the articles from Yahweh's house and put them in his palace in Babel. [8]The rest of the things about Yehoyaqim and the offensive things that he did, and what was found against him – there, they are written on the document about the kings of Yisra'el and Yehudah. His son Yehoyakin began to reign in place of him.

[9]Yehoyakin was eighteen years of age when he began to reign and he reigned three months and ten days in Yerushalaim. He did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes. [10]At the turn of the year King Nebukadne'tstsar sent and brought him to Babel with desirable articles from Yahweh's house. He made Tsidqiyyahu, his brother, king over Yehudah and Yerushalaim.

[11]Tsidqiyyahu was twenty-one years of age when he began to reign and he reigned eleven years in Yerushalaim. [12]He did what was bad in the eyes of Yahweh his God and did not bow down before Yirmeyahu the prophet from Yahweh's mouth. [13]Further, he

rebelled against Nebukadne'tstsar, who had made him swear by God. He toughened his neck and firmed up his mind from turning back to Yahweh the God of Yisra'el. [14]Further, all the officials of the priests and the people committed many acts of trespass, in accordance with the offensive practices of the nations, and defiled Yahweh's house which he had made sacred in Yerushalaim.

The land fulfils its sabbaths

[15]Yahweh, their ancestors' God, sent to them by means of his envoys, starting early and sending, because he had pity on his people and on his abode. [16]But they were mocking God's envoys, despising his words and scoffing at his prophets, until Yahweh's wrath against his people rose, until there was no healing.

[17]So he brought up the king of the Kasdites [Babylonians] against them. They killed their young men by the sword in their sacred house. He did not have pity on young man or young girl, elder or greybeard. He gave everything into his hand. [18]All the articles in God's house, big and small, the treasures of Yahweh's house, and the treasures of the king and his officers – he brought everything to Babel. [19]They burned God's house and demolished the wall of Yerushalaim. They burned all its citadels with fire and devastated all its desirable objects.

[20]He exiled to Babel the people who remained from the sword and they became his and his sons' servants until Parsite [Persian] kingship reigned, [21]to fulfil Yahweh's word by the mouth of Yirmeyahu, until the country made amends for its sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it stopped [*shabat*], to fill up seventy years.

[22]But in the first year of Koresh king of Paras [Cyrus king of Persia], fulfilling Yahweh's word by the mouth of Yirmeyahu, Yahweh stirred the spirit of Koresh king of Paras, and he made an announcement pass through his entire kingdom, and also in writing: [23]'Koresh king of Paras has said this:

> Yahweh the God of the heavens has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he himself has appointed me to build him a house in Yerushalaim, which is in Yehudah. Whoever among you from all his people: may Yahweh his God be with him, and he is to go up.

Ezra

Ezra and Nehemiah were originally one book; they were divided into two some time after Christ's day. They tell the story of the community in Judah over the first hundred years after the moment when Judahites who had been taken off into exile (or whose parents had been taken off into exile) were allowed to return to Judah to rebuild the temple, in about 539 BC. The books thus continue the story told in Kings and in Chronicles. But whereas those books relate a fairly continuous story, Ezra-Nehemiah is episodic.

- First, Ezra 1—6 tells of the actual return of some of those Judahites, by the commission of the Persian emperor and in fulfilment of the promise of Jeremiah, and of their rebuilding of the temple. In relating this story, Ezra 1—6 emphasizes the problem of opposition from the other little peoples that surrounded Judah, all of them provinces of the Persian Empire. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah were allies of Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the priest in getting the community to complete the work. But the work does get completed, and the achievement is reason for a great celebration.

- Without warning Ezra 7—10 then jumps forward half a century to the mission of Ezra himself. The opening date indicates that he came from Babylon to Jerusalem in 458 BC. (That fact in itself makes evident that by no means all Judahites had accepted the chance to join in the move to Jerusalem described in Ezra 1—6.) He comes as a theologian who is an expert in the Torah of Moses, and he brings a copy of the Torah with him in order to campaign for people in Jerusalem to implement what it says. It wouldn't be surprising if this mission marks the moment when the 'Books of Moses' (Genesis to Deuteronomy) have reached the form in which we know them. Ezra comes to Jerusalem with the support of the Persian emperor, who will have seen the advantage to him of having a good administrative order in the province, of a kind that the people themselves would accept. A key feature of Ezra's work is his persuading Judahites to terminate their marriages with people from the other communities around, which imperilled the distinctiveness of Israel as God's people.

- Next the story moves to the mission of Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1—7). Nehemiah came from Susa in Persia to Jerusalem in 445 BC. He has heard in Susa of the broken-down state of things in Jerusalem. He first prays, then he too gets the support of the emperor (whose butler he is) for him to go to Jerusalem to do something about it. His signature achievement is the rebuilding of the city's walls, again despite opposition from neighbouring communities. But he also campaigns for the community to be generous rather than self-serving as it lives with the economic pressures of the times.

- Finally the two books give some account of Ezra and Nehemiah working together, and of some further events (Nehemiah 8—13). This last section of the story involves the community reading the Torah and accepting a commitment to aspects of the way of life that marks them out that were apparently neglected, such as proper observance of the sabbath and support for the temple and its worship. The story also speaks of action to get more people to come and live in Jerusalem, which will have been discouraged by the city's broken-down state. The books close with further action by Nehemiah to deal with offensive practices such as trading on the sabbath (again) and intermarrying with people from other communities that could lead them into unfaithfulness (again). It is an important initiative in seeing that the people of God stayed in being and did not cease to exist through assimilation.

So if one was going to subdivide Ezra-Nehemiah, it might have been more illuminating to divide it into four parts, not just two.

Yahweh stirs the emperor and the people

1 In the first year of Koresh king of Paras [Cyrus king of Persia], fulfilling Yahweh's word from the mouth of Yirmeyah [Jeremiah], Yahweh stirred the spirit of Koresh king of Paras, and he made an announcement pass through his entire kingdom, and also in writing:
[2]Koresh king of Paras has said this:

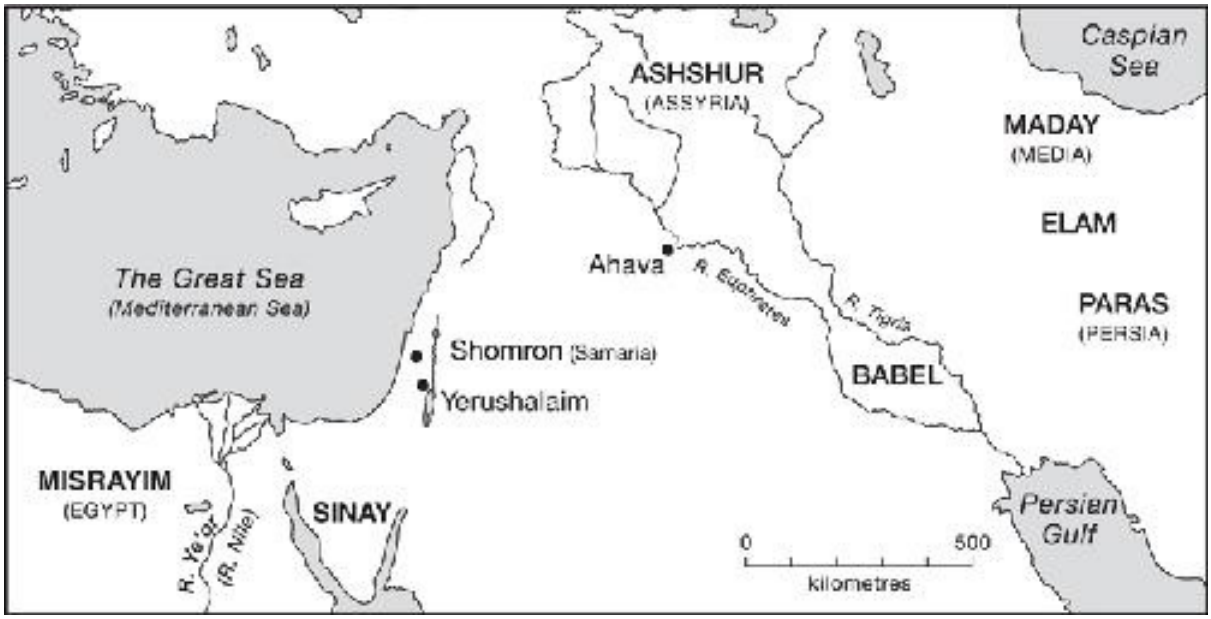
> Yahweh the God of the heavens has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he himself has appointed me to build him a house in Yerushalaim, which is in Yehudah. [3]Whoever among you from all his people: may his God be with him, and may he go up to Yerushalaim which is in Yehudah and build the house of Yahweh the God of Yisra'el; he is the God who is in Yerushalaim. [4]Anyone who remains, from all the places where he is a resident – the people of his place are to support him with silver, with gold, with property and with cattle, along with the free offering for the house of God which is in Yerushalaim.

[5]So the ancestral heads of Yehudah and Binyamin, and the priests and the Levites, everyone whose spirit God stirred, set to so as to go up to build up Yahweh's house which is in Yerushalaim. [6]All the people who were round about them strengthened their hands with silver articles, with gold, with property, with cattle and with choice things, apart from every free offering. [7]Koresh the king took out the articles belonging to Yahweh's house that Nebukadne'tstsar had taken out from Yerushalaim and put in his god's house. [8]Koresh king of Paras took them out by the hand of Mitredat the treasurer, and counted them out to Sheshbatstsar, the Yehudahite leader. [9]These are their count:

> gold bowls: 30;
> silver bowls: 1,000;
> knives: 29;

[10]gold dishes: 30;
double silver bowls: 410;
other articles: 1,000.
[11]All the articles of gold and of silver: 5,400.

All these Sheshbatstsar took up when the exiles were taken up from Babel to Yerushalaim.



Ancient Near East at the time of Ezra

Who we were

2 These are the people of the province, who went up from among the captives in exile whom Nebukadne'tstsar king of Babel had exiled to Babel and who went back to Yerushalaim and Yehudah, each to his town, [2]who came with Zerubbabel, Yeshua, Nehemyah, Serayah, Re'elayah, Mordokay, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvay, Rehum, Ba'anah.
The number of the men belonging to the Yisra'elite people:

[3]sons of Par'osh 2,172
[4]sons of Shephatyah 372
[5]sons of Arah 775
[6]sons of Pahat Mo'ab (by the sons of Yeshua, Yo'ab) 2,812
[7]sons of Elam 1,254
[8]sons of Zattu 945
[9]sons of Zakkay 760
[10]sons of Bani 642
[11]sons of Bebay 623
[12]sons of Azgad 1,222
[13]sons of Adoniqam 666
[14]sons of Bigvay 2,056
[15]sons of Adin 454
[16]sons of Ater (by Yehizqiyyah) 98
[17]sons of Betsay 323
[18]sons of Yorah 112
[19]sons of Hashum 223
[20]sons of Gibbar 95
[21]sons of Bet-lehem 123
[22]people of Netophah 56
[23]people of Anatot 128
[24]sons of Azmavet 42
[25]sons of Arim Township, Kephirah and Be'erot 743
[26]sons of The Height and Geba 621
[27]people of Mikmas 122
[28]people of Bet-el and Ha'ay 223
[29]sons of Nebo 52
[30]sons of Magbish 156
[31]sons of the other Elam 1,254
[32]sons of Harim 320
[33]sons of Lod, Hadid and Ono 725
[34]sons of Yereho 345
[35]sons of Sena'ah 3,630
[36]The priests:
sons of Yeda'yah (by the household of Yeshua) 973
[37]sons of Immer 1,052
[38]sons of Pashhur 1,247
[39]sons of Harim 1,017
[40]The Levites:
sons of Yeshua and Qadmi'el (by the sons of Hodavyah) 74
[41]The singers:
sons of Asaph 128

Gatemen, assistants and undocumented people

sons of Tabba'ot

[42]The sons of the gatemen:
sons of Shallum
sons of Ater
sons of Talmon
sons of Aqqub
sons of Hatita
sons of Shobay
altogether 139
[43]The assistants:
sons of Tsiha
sons of Hasupha
[44]sons of Qeros
sons of Si'aha
sons of Padon
[45]sons of Lebanah
sons of Hagabah
sons of Aqqub
[46]sons of Hagab
sons of Shalmay
sons of Hanan
[47]sons of Giddel
sons of Gahar
sons of Re'ayah
[48]sons of Retsin
sons of Neqodah
sons of Gazzam
[49]sons of Uzza
sons of Paseah
sons of Besay
[50]sons of Asnah
sons of Me'unim
sons of Nephusim
[51]sons of Baqbuq
sons of Haqupha
sons of Harhur
[52]sons of Batslut
sons of Mehida
sons of Harsha
[53]sons of Barqos
sons of Sisera
sons of Temah
[54]sons of Netsiah
sons of Hatipha
[55]The sons of Shelomoh's [Solomon's] servants:
sons of Sotay
sons of Hassopheret
sons of Peruda
[56]sons of Ya'alah
sons of Darqon
sons of Giddel
[57]sons of Shephatyah
sons of Hattil
sons of Pokeret Hatstsebayim
sons of Ami

[58]All the assistants and the sons of Shelomoh's servants 392.

[59]These are the people who came up from Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Kerub, Addan, Immer, but who could not tell their ancestral household and their origin, whether they were from Yisra'el:

[60]sons of Delayah
sons of Tobiyyah
sons of Neqoda 652
[61]Of the sons of the priests:
sons of Habayah
sons of Haqqots
sons of Barzillay (who had taken a wife from the daughters of Barzillay the Gil'adite and was called by their name):

[62]these looked for their record in the enrolment by genealogy but they couldn't be found, and they were deconsecrated from the priesthood. [63]The administrator said to them that they should not eat of the very sacred things until there was a priest standing with Urim and Tummim.

[64]The entire congregation altogether 42,360;
[65]apart from their servants and handmaids: these were 7,337;
and they had 200 male and female singers;
[66]their horses 736; their mules 245; [67]their camels 435; their donkeys 6,720.

New beginnings

[68]Some of the ancestral heads, when they came to Yahweh's house in Yerushalaim, gave a free offering for God's house, to put it in its place on its established site. [69]In accordance with their energy, to the treasury for the work they gave gold, 61,000 drakmas; silver, 5,000 minas; and priests' robes, 100. [70]The priests, the Levites, some of the people, the singers, the gatemen and the assistants went to live in their towns, and all Yisra'el in their towns.

3 When the seventh month arrived, with the Yisra'elites in their towns, the people gathered as one person in Yerushalaim.
[2]Yeshua ben Yotsadaq and his brother priests, and Zerubbabel ben She'alti'el and his brothers, set to and built the altar of the God of Yisra'el, to offer up burnt offerings on it as is written in the instruction of Mosheh [Moses] the supernatural man. [3]They established the altar on its established site because they were in dread of the peoples of the countries, and they offered up burnt offerings on it for Yahweh, the burnt offerings for morning and for evening. [4]They made the Sukkot Festival as it is written, and the burnt offering day by day, by the number in accordance with the ruling, each day's requirement in its day, [5]and afterwards the regular burnt offering and the ones for the new months and for all the occasions set by Yahweh that were made sacred, and for anyone making a free offering for Yahweh.
[6]From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer up burnt offerings for Yahweh, though Yahweh's palace had not been started. [7]They gave silver to the hewers and to the craftsmen, and food, drink and oil to the Tsidonites and to the Tsorites, to

bring cedar logs from the Lebanon by sea to Yafo, in accordance with the authorization to them by Koresh king of Paras.

Shouts of joy and the sound of crying

[8]In the second year of their coming to the house of God at Yerushalaim, in the second month, Zerubbabel ben She'alti'el and Yeshua ben Yotsadaq, and the rest of their brothers (the priests, the Levites and all the people who had come from the captivity to Yerushalaim) began, and put in place the Levites from people of twenty years and upwards to supervise the work on Yahweh's house. [9]Yeshua, his sons and his brothers, and Qadmi'el and his sons (descendants of Yehudah) stood up together to oversee the one doing the work on God's house (the sons of Henadad, their sons and their brothers, the Levites).
[10]When the builders started Yahweh's palace, they put in place the priests in their vestments with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise Yahweh in accordance with the directions of David king of Yisra'el. [11]They sang responsively in praise and confession to Yahweh, 'Because he is good, because his commitment stands permanently for Yisra'el', and the entire people gave a big shout in praise of Yahweh, because Yahweh's house had been started. [12]While many of the priests and the Levites and the ancestral heads, the old men who had seen the first house, at the start on this house before their eyes were crying with a loud voice, many were raising their voice in a shout of rejoicing. [13]The people couldn't recognize the sound of the shout of rejoicing from the sound of the people's crying, because the people were giving a big shout. The sound was audible from afar.
4 The adversaries of Yehudah and Binyamin heard that the people from the exile were building a palace for Yahweh the God of Yisra'el, [2]and they came up to Zerubbabel and to the ancestral heads and said to them, 'We'll build with you, because we enquire of your God like you, and we've been sacrificing for him since the days of Esar Haddon king of Ashshur, who got us up here.'

Offers of help refused

[3]Zerubbabel, Yeshua and the remainder of the ancestral heads of Yisra'el said to them, 'It's not for you and for us to build a house for our God, because we as one will build for Yahweh the God of Yisra'el, as Koresh king of Paras ordered us.'
[4]Then the people of the country were making the hands of the people of Yehudah slacken and making them fearful to build. [5]They were bribing counsellors against them so as to contravene their counsel all the days of Koresh king of Paras and until the reign of Doryavesh [Darius] king of Paras, [6]and in the reign of Ahashverosh [Xerxes], at the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Yehudah and Yerushalaim.
[7]Then in the days of Artahshasta [Artaxerxes], Bishlam, Mitredat, Tabe'el and the remainder of his associates wrote to Artahshasta king of Paras. The writing of the document was in Aramaic and translated.
(Aramaic.) [8]Rehum the administrator and Shimshay the secretary wrote a communiqué about Yerushalaim to King Artahshasta as follows.

[9]Rehum the administrator, Shimsay the secretary and the remainder of their associates, the authorities and officials, of Tarpel, Paras, Erek, Babel, Shushan (i.e. the Elamites) [10]and the remainder of the peoples that the great and glorious Osnapper [Ashurbanipal] exiled and made live in the town of Shomrayin [Samaria] and the remainder of Beyond-the-River province (so now [11]this is a copy of the communiqué they sent him) to Artahshasta the king.

Your servants, men of Beyond-the-River province:

So now [12]be it known to the king that the Yehudahites who came up from you to us have come to Yerushalaim. They are building up the rebellious and wicked town. They have completed the walls and strengthened the foundations. [13]Now be it known to the king that if this town is built up and its walls are completed, they will not give tribute, taxes or tolls, so the kings' interests will suffer harm.

A pattern of tension running through the story

[14]Now since we share the salt of the palace and it's not right for us to see the king's dishonour, therefore we have sent and made it known to the king [15]so that they may search in the document with your ancestors' records. You will find in the records document and acknowledge that this town is a rebellious town, harmful to kings and provinces. People have been making mutiny in it from days of old. Because of that this town was destroyed. [16]We make it known to the king that if this town is built up and its walls are completed, as a result of that you will not have a share in Beyond-the-River.

[17]The king sent a message:

To Rehum the administrator, Shimshay the secretary, the remainder of their associates who live in Shomrayin, and the remainder of Beyond-the-River, good wishes.

So now [18]the letter that you sent to us was explained, read out before me. [19]A decree was made by me, and they searched and found that this town from days of old has risen against kings. Rebellion and mutiny have been made in it. [20]There have been powerful kings over Yerushalaim and they have exercised authority over the whole of Beyond-the-River. Tribute, taxes and tolls were rendered to them. [21]Now make a decree to stop these men. That town will not be built up until the order is made by me. [22]Be careful about acting negligently in this. Why should damage grow so as to harm kings?

[23]When a copy of the letter from Artahshasta the king was read out before Rehum, Shimshay the secretary and their associates, they went with speed to Yerushalaim to the Yehudahites and stopped them with compelling force.

To return to the time of the temple building . . .

[24]So work stopped on God's house in Yerushalaim. It stopped until the second year of the reign of Doryavesh king of Paras,
5 and Haggay the prophet and Zekaryah ben Iddo prophesied to the Yehudahites who were in Yehudah and in Yerushalaim in the name of the God of Yisra'el, over them. [2]Then Zerubbabel ben She'alti'el and Yeshua ben Yotsadaq set to and began to build God's house in Yerushalaim, God's prophets being with them, supporting them.
[3]At that time Tattenay the governor of Beyond-the-River, Shetar Bozenay and their associates came to them and said this to them: 'Who made you a decree to build this house and finish these supplies?' [4]Then we said to them, 'What are the names of the men who are constructing this building?' [5]But God's eye was on the Yehudahite elders, and they didn't stop them while an account could go to Doryavesh, and then they would bring back a letter about this.
[6]A copy of the communiqué that Tattenay governor of Beyond-the-River, Shetar Bozenay and his associates, the officials of Beyond-the-River, sent to Doryavesh the king. [7]They sent a message to him, and in it was written as follows:

> To Doryavesh the king, all good wishes. [8]Be it known to the king that we went to Yehudah province to the house of the great God. It's being built up of dressed stone, and wood is being set in the walls. This work is being done punctiliously and it is succeeding in their hand. [9]Then we asked of these elders as follows: 'Who made you a decree to build this house and finish these supplies?' [10]We also asked for their names to make them known to you, so that we could write down the name of the men who are at their head.

A defence

> [11]They sent back a message like this to us: 'We are the servants of the God of the heavens and the earth. We are building up the house that was built many years before this, when a great king of Yisra'el built it and completed it. [12]Yet because our ancestors angered the God of the heavens, he gave them into the hand of Nebukadne'tstsar king of Babel, the Kasdite. He destroyed this house and exiled the people to Babel. [13]However, in the first year of Koresh king of Babel, Koresh the king made a decree to build up this house of God. [14]The articles belonging to the house of God, of gold and silver, which Nebukadne'tstsar took out of the palace in Yerushalaim and brought to the palace in Babel, Koresh the king also took out of the palace in Babel and they gave them to someone named Sheshbatstsar whom he made governor. [15]He said to him, "Take up these articles, go off, put them in the palace in Yerushalaim. And the house of God is to be built up on its place." [16]This Sheshbatstsar then came and made a start on the house of God in Yerushalaim. From then until now it's been being built, but it's not complete.'
>
> [17]Now, if it seems good to the king, there should be a search in the king's treasure-house there in Babel, if it's the case that a decree was made by Koresh the king for building up that house of God in Yerushalaim. And may the king send us his wish concerning this.

6 Then a decree was made by Doryavesh the king and they searched in the documents house where treasures were kept in Babel.

An astounding result

[2]But a scroll was found in the fortress at Ahmeta in Maday [Media] province. In it was written as follows:

> Memorandum. [3]In the first year of Koresh the king, Koresh the king made a decree: 'The house of God in Yerushalaim. The house is to be built up, a place where people make sacrifices, with its foundations buttressed, its height 30 metres, its width 30 metres, [4]three courses of dressed stone and a course of new wood. The expense will be paid by the king's house. [5]Also the articles belonging to the house of God, of gold and silver, which Nebukadne'tstsar took out of the palace in Yerushalaim and brought to Babel are to be given back. It is to go to the palace in Yerushalaim to its place. You are to deposit it in God's house.'

[6]'Now Tattenay governor of Beyond-the-River, Shetar Bozenay and their associates, officials of Beyond-the-River, stay away from there. [7]Leave the work on this house of God alone. The governor of the Yehudahites and the elders of the Yehudahites are to build up this house of God on its place, [8]and a decree is made by me about what you're to do with these elders of the Yehudahites, to build up this house of God. The expense is to be paid punctiliously to these men out of the assets of the king, out of the tribute from Beyond-the-River, so as not to cause a stop. [9]Whatever they need, both young bulls, rams and lambs for burnt offerings for the God of the heavens, wheat, salt, wine and oil, in accordance with the word of the priests in Yerushalaim – it's to be given them day by day without fail, [10]so that they may present pleasing sacrifices to the God of the heavens and pray for the life of the king and his sons.
[11]And a decree is made by me that anyone who defies this message, wood will be removed from his house and he will be lifted up and beaten upon it, and his house will be made forfeit, because of this. [12]And may the God who had his name dwell there overthrow any king or people who puts out a hand to defy – to damage this house of God in Yerushalaim. I, Doryavesh, have made a decree. It's to be put into effect scrupulously.'

Success and celebration

[13]Then Tattenay governor of Beyond-the-River, Shetar Bozenay and their associates, in keeping with what Doryavesh the king sent, accordingly acted punctiliously. [14]The elders of the Yehudahites built, and succeeded through the prophesying of Haggay the prophet and Zekaryah ben Iddo. They built and finished by the decree of the God of Yisra'el and by the decree of Koresh, Doryavesh and Artahshasta king of Paras. [15]This house was completed on the third day of the month of Adar; it was in the sixth year of the reign of Doryavesh the king.

[16]The Yisra'elites, the priests, the Levites and the remainder of the exiles made the dedication of this house of God with celebration. [17]For the dedication of this house of God they presented 100 bulls, 200 rams, 400 lambs and twelve goats as a purification offering for all Yisra'el, according to the number of the clans of Yisra'el. [18]They set up the priests in their divisions and the Levites in their groups for the service of God in Yerushalaim, in accordance with what is written in Mosheh's document.

[19]The people from the exile made the Pesah [Passover] on the fourteenth of the first month, [20]because the priests had purified themselves, and the Levites altogether were pure, all of them. They slaughtered the Pesah for all the people from the exile, for their brother priests and for themselves. [21]The Yisra'elites who had come back from the exile ate, with everyone who had made himself distinct from the defilement of the nation in the country, to join them to enquire of Yahweh the God of Yisra'el. [22]They made the Flatbread Festival for seven days with rejoicing, because Yahweh had made them rejoice when he turned round the mind of the king of Ashshur to them so as to strengthen their hands in the work on the house of God, the God of Yisra'el.

Enter the priest-theologian

7 After these things, in the reign of Artahshasta king of Paras, Ezra ben Serayah, son of Azaryah son of Hilqiyyah [2]son of Shallum son of Tsadoq son of Ahitub [3]son of Amaryah son of Azaryah son of Merayot [4]son of Zerahyah son of Uzzi son of Buqqi [5]son of Abishua son of Pinhas son of El'azar son of Aharon the head priest – [6]that Ezra went up from Babel. He was a smart scholar in the instruction of Mosheh which Yahweh the God of Yisra'el had given. In accordance with the hand of Yahweh his God upon him, the king had given him everything that he sought.

[7]Some Yisra'elites, some priests, Levites, singers, gatemen and assistants went up to Yerushalaim in the seventh year of Artahshasta the king, [8]and he came to Yerushalaim in the fifth month (it was the king's seventh year), [9]because on the first of the first month it was the start of the journey up from Babel, and on the first of the fifth month he came to Yerushalaim in accordance with the good hand of his God upon him, [10]because Ezra had set his mind to enquire of Yahweh's instruction so as both to keep and to teach decree and ruling in Yisra'el.

[11]This is a copy of the letter that King Artahshasta gave Ezra the priest-scholar, scholar in things concerning Yahweh's orders and his decrees for Yisra'el:

> [12]Artahshasta, king of kings, to Ezra the priest-scholar in the instruction of the God of the heavens (and so on). Now: [13]a decree is made by me that anyone in my kingdom from the people of Yisra'el and its priests and Levites who freely offers to go to Yerushalaim with you may go. [14]Because you are sent by the king and his seven counsellors to enquire about Yehudah and Yerushalaim on the basis of the instruction of your God which is in your hand, [15]and to take silver and gold that the king and his counsellors have made as a free offering for the God of Yisra'el whose dwelling is in Yerushalaim, [16]and any silver and gold that you find in all Babel province, with the free offering of the people and the priests that they make for the house of their God in Yerushalaim.

What we owe, and what we give because we want to

> [17]Therefore with this money acquire punctiliously bulls, rams and lambs, and their grain offerings and their drink offerings, and present them on the altar in the house of your God in Yerushalaim. [18]And what seems good to you and to your brothers to do with the remainder of the silver and the gold, in accordance with the will of your God, you may do. [19]The articles given to you for the service of your God's house, deliver before God in Yerushalaim. [20]The remainder of the needs of your God's house that it falls to you to give, you may give from the king's treasure-house.
>
> [21]I, Artahshasta the king – by me a decree is made to all the treasurers in Beyond-the-River, that anything Ezra the priest-scholar in the instruction of the God of the heavens asks of you is punctiliously to be done, [22]up to 100 talents of silver, to 100 ten-gallon measures of wheat, to 100 five-gallon measures of wine, to 100 five-gallon measures of oil, and salt without prescribed limit. [23]Anything that is by the decree of the God of the heavens is to be done scrupulously for the house of the God of the heavens, so that fury does not come on the realm of the king and his sons. [24]And to you we make it known that all priests, Levites, musicians, gatemen, assistants and workers in this house of God – it's not permitted to impose tribute, taxes and tolls on them.
>
> [25]You, Ezra, in accordance with your God's smartness which is in your possession, appoint authorities and judges who will give judgement for all the people in Beyond-the-River, for all who acknowledge your God's instructions, and make them known to anyone who does not acknowledge them. [26]Anyone who does not observe the instruction of your God and the instruction of the king, judgement will be done to him punctiliously, whether by death, by banishment, by confiscation of property or by imprisonment.

God working through the king

[27]Blessed be Yahweh, our ancestors' God, who put into the king's mind in this way to glorify Yahweh's house which is in Yerushalaim [28]and extended commitment to me before the king and his counsellors and all the king's officials, the powerful men.
I myself showed myself strong in accordance with the hand of Yahweh my God upon me, and collected heads from Yisra'el to go up with me.

8 These are the ancestral heads and the enrolment by genealogy of the people who went up with me in the reign of Artahshasta the king from Babel:
[2]of the sons of Pinhas, Gershom;
of the sons of Itamar, Daniyy'el;
of the sons of David, Hattush, [3]of the sons of Shekanyah;
of the sons of Parosh, Zekaryah, and with him were enrolled by genealogy 150 males;
[4]of the sons of Pahat Mo'ab, Elyeho'enay ben Zerahyah, and with him 200 males;
[5]of the sons of Shekanyah, ben Yahazi'el, and with him 300 males;
[6]and of the sons of Adin, Ebed ben Yonatan, and with him 50 males;
[7]and of the sons of Elam, Yesha'yah ben Atalyah, and with him 70 males;
[8]and of the sons of Shephatyah, Zebadyah ben Mika'el, and with him 80 males;
[9]of the sons of Yo'ab, Obadyah ben Yehi'el, and with him 218 males;
[10]and of the sons of Shelomit, ben Yosiphyah, and with him 160 males;
[11]and of the sons of Bebay, Zekaryah ben Bebay, and with him 28 males;
[12]and of the sons of Azgad, Yohanan ben Haqqatan, and with him 110 males;
[13]and of the sons of Adoniqam, the last ones – these are their names: Eliphelet, Ye'i'el and Shemayah, and with them 60 males;
[14]and of the sons of Bigvay, Utay and Zakkur, and with him 70 males.

God's good hand

[15]I collected them at the river that comes to Ahava and we camped there for three days. I considered the people and the priests, and didn't find any of the Levites there. [16]So I sent for Eli'ezer, for Ari'el, for Shema'yah, for Elnatan, for Yarib, for Elnatan, for Natan, for Zekaryah and for Meshullam as heads, and for Yoyarib and for Elnatan as people of understanding, [17]and ordered them to Iddo, the head at Kasiphaya, the [worship] site, and put words in their mouth to speak to Iddo, his brother, the assistants at Kasiphaya, the site, to bring us ministers for the house of our God.
[18]In accordance with the good hand of our God upon us they brought us a man of insight from the sons of Mahli ben Levi, son of Yisra'el, namely Sherebyah, and his sons and his brothers, eighteen people, [19]and Hashabyah and with him Yesha'yah of the sons of Merari, his brothers and their sons, twenty people, [20]and of the assistants that David and the officials had given for the service of the Levites, 220 assistants; all of them were recorded by name.
[21]I called a fast there at the River Ahava to humble ourselves before our God so as to seek from him a straightforward journey for us and for our little ones and for all our property, [22]because I was ashamed to ask the king for a force and cavalry to help us against an enemy on the way, because we'd said to the king, 'The hand of our God is upon all who seek him, for good, but his vigour and his anger are on all who abandon him.' [23]So we fasted and sought God about this, and he let himself be entreated by us.

The journey and the arrival

[24]I distinguished twelve of the priestly officials, Sherebyah and Hashabyah and with them ten of their brothers, [25]and weighed out to them the silver, the gold and the articles, the contribution for our God's house that the king, his counsellors, his officials, and all Yisra'el who were to be found, had raised. [26]I weighed out into their hand the silver, 650 talents; the silver articles, 100 talents, the gold, 100 talents; [27]the gold bowls, twenty, worth 100 darics; and two articles of good, shining copper, as precious as gold.
[28]I said to them, 'You are sacred for Yahweh, and the articles are sacred, and the silver and the gold are a free offering for Yahweh, your ancestors' God. [29]Be watchful and keep them until you weigh them out before the priestly officials, the Levites and the ancestral officials of Yisra'el in Yerushalaim in the halls of Yahweh's house.'
[30]The priests and the Levites received the weighed-out silver and gold and the articles to bring to Yerushalaim to our God's house. [31]We moved on from the River Ahava on the twelfth of the first month to go to Yerushalaim. The hand of our God was upon us and he rescued us from an enemy's fist and ambush on the way.
[32]We came to Yerushalaim, stayed there three days, [33]and on the fourth day the silver and the gold and the articles were weighed out in our God's house into the hand of Meremot ben Uriyyah the priest and with him El'azar ben Pinhas, and with them Yozabad ben Yeshua and No'adyah ben Binnuy, the Levites, [34]everything by number/by weight. The entire weight was written down at that time. [35]The people who had come from the captivity, the people from the exile, presented burnt offerings for the God of Yisra'el, 12 bulls for all Yisra'el, 96 rams, 77 lambs and 12 goats as a purification offering. The whole was a burnt offering for Yahweh. [36]They gave the king's instructions to the king's satraps and the governors of Beyond-the-River, and they supported the people and the house of God.

The importance of keeping distinct

When these things finished, the officials came up to me to say, 'The people of Yisra'el and the priests and the Levites have not

9 made themselves distinct from the peoples of the countries in light of their offensive practices (of the Kena'anite [Canaanite], the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Yebusite, the Ammonite, the Mo'abite, the Misrayimite [Egyptian] and the Amorite), [2]because they've got some of their daughters for themselves and for their sons, and the sacred seed has mixed with the peoples of the countries, while the hand of the officials and the overseers has been first in this trespass.'

[3]When I heard this thing, I tore my garment and my coat, pulled hair from my head and from my beard, and sat desolate. [4]Anyone who trembled at the words of the God of Yisra'el was gathering to me because of the exiles' trespass. I was sitting desolate until the evening offering.

[5]At the evening offering I got up from my self-affliction but bent down on my knees in my torn garment and coat and spread out my palms to Yahweh my God, [6]and said, 'My God, I'm disgraced and ashamed to lift up my face to you, my God, because our wayward acts have grown above our head, and our liability is great, as far as the heavens. [7]From the days of our ancestors until this day we've been in great liability, and through our wayward acts we've been given into the hand of the kings of the countries, we, our kings, our priests, with sword, with captivity, with plunder and with shame of face, this very day.

[8]Now for a little while there's been grace from Yahweh our God, in letting an escape group remain for us and giving us a stake in his sacred place, in our God's brightening our eyes and giving us a little life in our servitude. [9]Because we're serfs, but in our serfdom our God hasn't abandoned us but has extended commitment to us before the kings of Paras so as to give us life, to raise up our God's house and make its wastes stand, and to give us a fence in Yehudah and in Yerushalaim.

How to make your people's confession

[10]But now what can we say, our God, after this? Because we've abandoned your orders [11]that you issued by means of your servants the prophets, saying, "The country into which you're going to take possession of it is a country polluted by the pollution of the peoples of the countries, through their offensive practices with which they've filled it from end to end in their defilement. [12]So now don't give your daughters to their sons or get their daughters for your sons. You will not enquire after their well-being or benefit, ever, so that you may be strong and eat the good of the country and enable your children to possess it permanently."

[13]After all that's come upon us because of our bad ways and our great liabilities, when you, our God, have held back [in punishing] below our waywardness, and given us an escape group like this, [14]shall we go back to contravening your orders and intermarrying with the peoples who are characterized by these offensive practices? You will be angry with us so as to finish us off, so that there's no people remaining, no escape group, won't you. [15]Yahweh, God of Yisra'el, you're in the right, because we remain as an escape group this very day. Here we are before you with our liability, but there's no standing before you on account of this.'

10 While Ezra was pleading and making confession, crying and falling down before God's house, a very great congregation from Yisra'el, men, women and children, collected to him, because the people were crying bitterly. [2]Shekanyah ben Yehi'el of the sons of Elam answered Ezra, 'We've trespassed against our God and got foreign women come to live from the peoples of the country. But now there's hope for Yisra'el over this, [3]so now let's solemnize a pact towards our God to get all the women and those born from them to go away, by the counsel of my lord and of those who tremble at our God's order. It should be done in accordance with the instruction. [4]Set to, because the thing rests on you, and we're with you. Be strong and act.'

Where there's commitment there's hope

[5]Ezra set to and swore the priestly officials, the Levites and all Yisra'el to act in accordance with this word, and they swore. [6]Ezra got up from his place before God's house and went into the hall of Yehohanan ben Elyashib. When he went there, he didn't eat food and he didn't drink water, because he was grieving over the exiles' trespass.

[7]They passed an announcement through Yehudah and Yerushalaim to all the people from the exile, that they should collect in Yerushalaim. [8]Anyone who didn't come in three days, in accordance with the counsel of the officials and the elders – all his property would be devoted and he himself would be distinguished from the exile congregation.

[9]So all the men of Yehudah and Binyamin collected in Yerushalaim in three days; it was the ninth month, the twentieth of the month. All the people sat in the square at God's house, trembling about the thing and because of the rains.

[10]Ezra the priest got up and said to them, 'You've trespassed. You've got foreign women come to live, adding to Yisra'el's liability. [11]But now, make confession to Yahweh, your ancestors' God, and do what is acceptable to him. Make yourselves distinct from the peoples of the country and from the foreign women.'

[12]The entire congregation answered with a loud voice, 'Yes, it's for us to act in accordance with your word. [13]Nevertheless the company is large and the time is the rains. We don't have the energy to stand outside, and it's not the work of one day or of two, because we've become greatly rebellious in this thing. [14]Our officials should please stand [here] for the entire congregation, and anyone in our towns who's got foreign women come to live should come at set times, and with them the elders town by town, and its authorities, until we turn back the angry rage of our God from us over this thing.' [15]Only Yonatan ben Asah'el and Yahzeyah ben Tiqvah stood against this, but Meshullam and Shabbatay the Levites helped them.

The tough action

[16]The people from the exile acted in this way. Ezra the priest, the men who were the ancestral heads, for their ancestral family, and all of them by their names, made themselves distinct and sat on the first day of the tenth month to enquire into the thing. [17]They finished with all the men who'd got foreign women to come to live, by the first day of the first month.

[18]There were found among the sons of the priests who'd got foreign women to come to live:

Yeshua ben Yotsadaq and his brothers Ma'aseyah, Eli'ezer, Yarib and Gedalyah; [19]they gave their hand that they would send

away their wives and, being liable, a ram from the flock, for their liability;
[20]of the sons of Immer, Hanani and Zebadyah;
[21]of the sons of Harim, Ma'aseyah, Eliyyah, Shema'yah, Yehi'el and Uzziyyah;
[22]of the sons of Pashhur, Elyo'enay, Ma'aseyah, Yishma'e'l, Netan'el, Yozabad, and El'asah;
[23]of the Levites:
Yozabad, Shim'i, Qelayah (i.e. Qelita), Petahyah, Yehudah and Eli'ezer;
[24]of the singers:
Eliyashib;
of the gatemen:
Shallum, Telem and Uri.
[25]Of the Yisra'elites:
of the sons of Parosh, Ramyah, Yizzeyah, Malkiyyah, Miyyamin, El'azar, Malkiyyah and Benayah;
[26]of the sons of Elam, Mattanyah, Zekaryah, Yehi'el, Abdi, Yeremot and Eliyyah;
[27]of the sons of Zattu, Elyo'enay, Elyashib, Mattanyah, Yeremot, Zabad and Aziza;
[28]of the sons of Bebay, Yehohanan, Hananyah, Zabbay, Atlay;
[29]of the sons of Bani, Meshullam, Malluk, Adayah, Yashub, She'al and Ramot;
[30]of the sons of Patah Mo'ab, Adna, Kelal, Benayah, Ma'aseyah, Mattanyah, Betsal'el, Binnuy and Menashsheh;
[31]of the sons of Harim, Eli'ezer, Ishshiyyah, Malkiyyah, Shema'yah, Shim'on, [32]Binyamin, Malluk, Shemaryah;
[33]of the sons of Hashum, Mattenay, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Yeremay, Menashsheh, Shim'i;
[34]of the sons of Bani, Ma'aday, Amram and U'el, [35]Benayah, Bedeyah, Keluhu, [36]Vanyah, Meremot, Elyashib, [37]Mattanyah, Mattenay, Ya'asay, [38]Bani, Binnuy, Shim'i, [39]Shelemyah, Natan, Adayah, [40]Maknadebay, Shashay, Sharay, [41]Azar'el, Shelemyahu, Shemaryah, [42]Shallum, Amaryah, Yoseph;
[43]of the sons of Nebo, Ye'i'el, Mattityah, Zabad, Zebina, Yadday and Yo'el, Benayah.
[44]All these had got foreign wives, and there were some of them who were women who had had children.

Nehemiah

For an introduction, see the introduction to Ezra.

Survivors troubled and disgraced

1 The words of Nehemyah ben Hakalyah.
In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, when I was in Shushan, the fortress, [2]Hanani, one of my brothers, came, he
and some men from Yehudah, and I asked them about the Yehudahites, the escape group that remained from the captivity, and
about Yerushalaim. [3]They said to me, 'The remaining people, who remain from the captivity there in the province, are in a very
bad way and are subject to reviling there in the province, with Yerushalaim's wall broken down and its gateways set on fire.'
[4]When I heard these things I sat and cried and grieved for days. I was fasting and pleading before the God of the heavens.
[5]I said, 'Oh! Yahweh, God of the heavens, great and awe-inspiring God, keeping pact and commitment for people who are loyal
to him and keep his orders! [6]Please may your ear become heeding and your eyes opened to listen to the plea of your servant that
I'm making before you today, day and night, for the Yisra'elites [Israelites] your servants, making confession concerning the
wrongdoings of the Yisra'elites that we have committed in relation to you. I and my ancestral household have done wrong.
[7]We've acted very ruinously in relation to you. We haven't kept the orders, the decrees and the rulings with which you ordered
Mosheh [Moses] your servant.
[8]Be mindful, please, of the word with which you ordered Mosheh your servant: "Should you people trespass, I for my part will
scatter you among the peoples, [9]but should you turn back to me and keep my orders and do them, if the people who've been
driven away are at the end of the heavens, from there I will collect them and bring them to the place where I chose to have my
name dwell." [10]And they are your servants and your people whom you redeemed by your great energy and your strong hand.
[11a]Oh! Lord, please may your ear become heeding to your servant's plea and to the plea of your servants who want to live in awe
of your name. Please enable your servant to succeed today and give him compassion before this man.'

Boldness (and discretion) as a king's servant

[11b]Now I was the king's butler,
2 and in the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of Artahshasta [Artaxerxes] the king, when wine was before him, I carried
the wine and gave it to the king. I hadn't been in a bad way before him, [2]so the king said to me, 'Why is your face looking
bad when you're not ill? This is nothing but something bad on your mind.' I became very much afraid, [3]but I said to the king,
'Long live the king! Why should my face not look bad when the town where my ancestors' graves are lies waste and its gateways
have been consumed by fire?'
[4]The king said to me, 'What are you asking for?' I pleaded with the God of the heavens [5]and said to the king, 'If it seems good
to the king and if your servant seems good before you, that you send me to Yehudah to the town of my ancestors' graves so that I
may build it up.' [6]The king said to me, with the consort sitting beside him, 'How long will your journey be? When will you come
back?' So it seemed good before the king and he sent me, and I gave him a date.
[7]I said to the king, 'If it seems good to the king, may they give me communiqués for the governors of Beyond-the-River so that
they may let me pass until I come to Yehudah, [8]and a communiqué to Asaph the keeper of the park which belongs to the king so
that he may give me logs for roofing the gateways of the fortress that belongs to the house, for the town wall and for the house to
which I shall come.' The king gave them to me in accordance with the good hand of my God upon me. [9]I came to the governors
of Beyond-the-River and gave them the king's communiqués. The king sent with me officers of a force and cavalry. [10]But
Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiyyah the Ammonite servant heard, and it seemed very bad to them that someone had come to seek
something good for the Yisra'elites.

A secret survey

[11]I came to Yerushalaim and I was there for three days, [12]then I set to by night, I and a few men with me. I didn't tell anyone
what my God had put into my mind to do for Yerushalaim, and there was no animal with me except the animal that I was riding
on. [13]I went out through the Ravine Gate by night, to the Jackals Spring and to the Rubbish Gate. I was examining the
Yerushalaim walls that had been broken down and its gateways that had been consumed by fire. [14]I passed on to the Spring Gate
and to the King's Pool, but there was no room for the animal under me to pass. [15]So I was going up through the wadi by night and
I was examining the wall, then I went back and came in through the Ravine Gate.
Thus I went back, [16]while the overseers didn't know where I'd gone or what I was doing, and I hadn't until now told the
Yehudahites, the priests, the important people, the overseers and the rest of the people who were going to be doing the work. [17]I
said to them, 'You see the bad situation that we're in, that Yerushalaim lies waste and its gateways have been set on fire. Come,
let's build up the Yerushalaim wall and no longer be subject to reviling.' [18]I told them of my God's hand, that it was good upon
me, and also of the king's words that he said to me, and they said, 'Let's set to and build.' So they strengthened their hands for the
good work.
[19]Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiyyah the Ammonite servant and Geshem the Arab heard, and they ridiculed us and despised us.
They said, 'What's this thing that you're doing? Are you rebelling against the king?' [20]I sent back word to them: 'The God of the

heavens – he'll enable us to succeed. We, his servants – we'll set to and build. You have no share or right or record in Yerushalaim.'

Everyone played their part (1)

3 So Elyashib the big priest and his brother priests set to and built up the Sheep Gate. They made it sacred and put in place its doors, and as far as the Hundred Tower they made it sacred, as far as Hanan'el's Tower;
[2]next to him the men of Yereho [Jericho] built;
next to him Zakkur ben Imri built;
[3]the Fish Gate, the sons of Hassena'ah built up; they roofed it and put in place its doors, its bolts and its bars;
[4]next to them Meremot ben Uriyyah son of Haqqots did the strengthening;
next to them Meshullam ben Berekyah son of Meshezab'el did the strengthening;
next to them Tsadoq ben Ba'ana did the strengthening;
[5]next to them the Teqo'ites did the strengthening, but their august people didn't give their neck to the service of their lord;
[6]the Yeshanah Gate, Yoyada ben Paseah and Meshullam ben Besodeyah did the strengthening of; they roofed it and put in place its doors, its bolts and its bars;
[7]next to them Melatyah the Gib'onite and Yadon the Meronotite did the strengthening (people of Gib'on and The Watchtower, the seat of the Beyond-the-River governor);
[8]next to him Uzzi'el ben Harhayah (goldsmiths) did the strengthening;
next to him Hananyah of the perfumers did the strengthening, but they abandoned Yerushalaim as far as the wide wall;
[9]next to them Rephayah ben Hur, official over half the district of Yerushalaim, did the strengthening;
[10]next to them Yedayah ben Harumaph did the strengthening, in front of his house;
next to him Hattush ben Hashabneyah did the strengthening;
[11]a second section Malkiyyah ben Harim and Hashshub ben Paha Mo'ab did the strengthening, and the Ovens Tower.

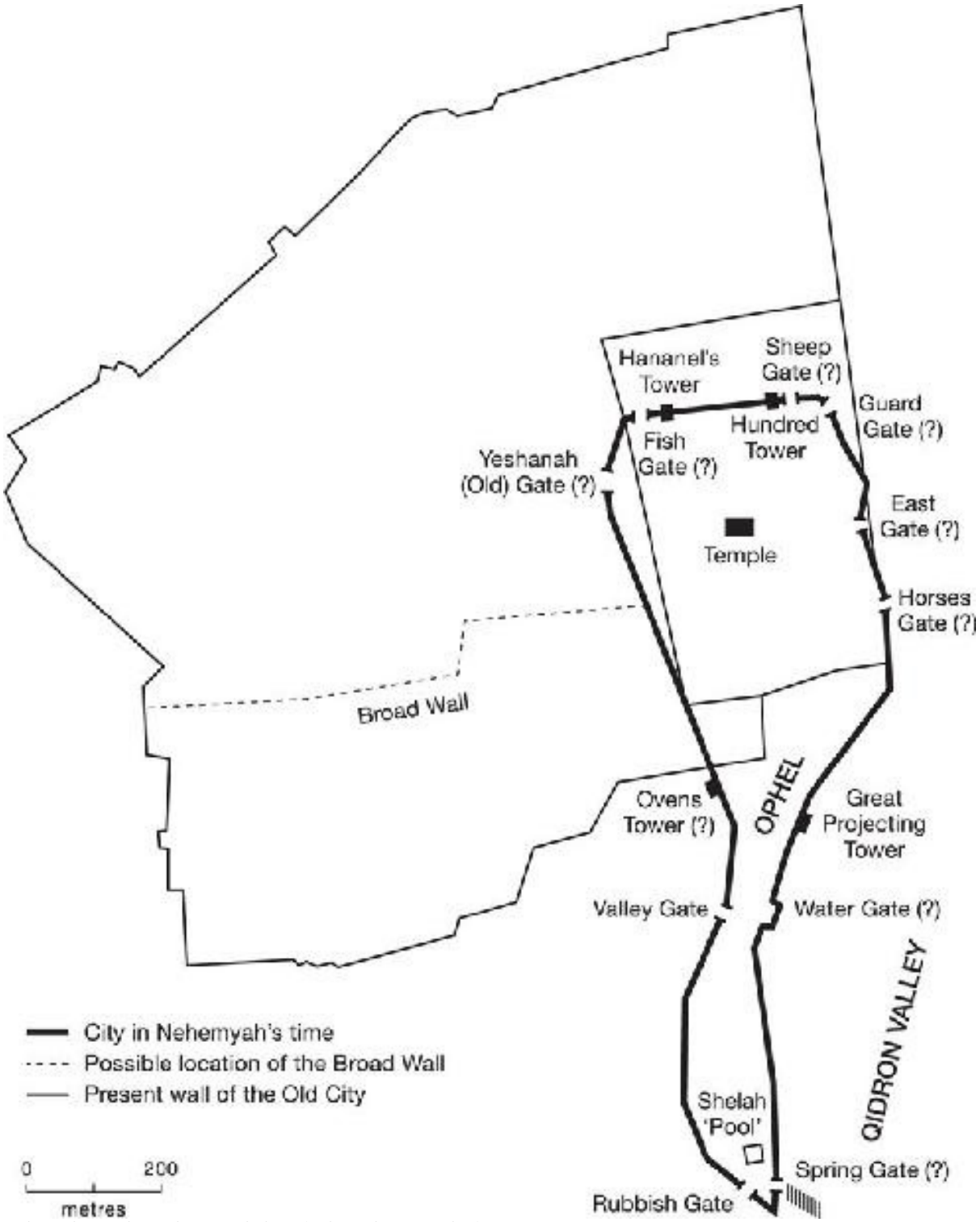
Everyone played their part (2)

[12]Next to him Shallum ben Hallohesh, official over half the district of Yerushalaim, did the strengthening, he and his daughters;
[13]the Ravine Gate, Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah did the strengthening; they built it up and put in place its doors, its bolts and its bars, and 500 metres in the wall as far as the Rubbish Gate;
[14]the Rubbish Gate, Malkiyyah ben Rekab, official over the district of Bet-hakkerem, did the strengthening; he built it up and put in place its doors, its bolts and its bars;
[15]the Spring Gate, Shallun ben-Kol-hozeh the official over the district of The Watchtower did the strengthening; he built it up, covered it, and put in place its doors, its bolts and its bars, and the wall of the Shelah Pool belonging to the King's Garden, and as far as the steps going down from David's Town;
[16]after him Nehemyah ben Azbuq, official over half the district of Bet-tsur, did the strengthening as far as opposite David's graves, as far as the man-made pool and as far as the Strong Men's House;
[17]after him the Levites did the strengthening: Rehum ben Bani;
next to him Hashabyah, official over half the district of Qe'ilah, did the strengthening for his district;
[18]after him their brothers did the strengthening: Bavvay ben Henadad, official over half the district of Qe'ilah;
[19]next to him Ezer ben Yeshua, official over The Watchtower, did the strengthening of a second section, from opposite the ascent to the armoury at the corner;
[20]after him Baruk ben Zakkay burned [with zeal]; he did the strengthening of a second section, from the corner as far as the entrance of the house of Elyashib the big priest.

Everyone played their part (3)

[21]After him Meremot ben Uriyyah son of Haqqots did the strengthening of a second section, from the entrance of Elyashib's house and as far as the end of Elyashib's house;
[22]after him the priests who were the people of the plain did the strengthening;
[23]after him Binyamin and Hashshub did the strengthening opposite their house;
after him Azaryah ben Ma'aseyah son of Ananyah did the strengthening beside his house;
[24]after him Binnuy ben Henadad did the strengthening of a second section, from the house of Azaryah to the corner, to the angle;
[25]Palal ben Uzzay: from opposite the corner and the tower going out from the king's upper house which belongs to the court of the guard;
after him Pedayah ben Parosh [26](the assistants were living on the Ophel as far as opposite the Water Gate to the east and the projecting tower);
[27]after him the Teqo'ites did the strengthening of a second section from opposite the big projecting tower as far the Ophel wall;
[28]above the Horses Gate, the priests did the strengthening, each one opposite his house;
[29]after him Tsadoq ben Immer did the strengthening opposite his house;
after him Shema'yah ben Shekanyah, keeper of the East Gate, did the strengthening;
[30]after him Hananyah ben Shelemyah and Hanun ben Tsalaph (the sixth) did the strengthening of a second section;
after him Meshullam ben Berekyah did the strengthening opposite his room;

[31]after him Malkiyyah of the goldsmiths did the strengthening as far as the house of the assistants and the merchants, opposite the Registration Gate and as far as the upper floor at the angle;
[32]between the upper floor of the angle to the Sheep Gate the goldsmiths and the merchants did the strengthening.



Nehemiah 4: Nehemyah's Yerushalaim (Nehemiah's Jerusalem)

Reasons for discouragement

4 When Sanballat heard that we were building up the wall, it enraged him. He was greatly provoked. He ridiculed the Yehudahites [2]and said before his brothers and the Shomron [Samaria] force, 'What are the feeble Yehudahites doing? Will they abandon it for themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they finish in the day? Will they bring to life the stones from the heaps of earth, when they're burnt?' [3]Tobiyyah the Ammonite, being beside him, said, 'What they're building, if a fox went up, he'd

breach their wall of stones.'
[4]'Listen, our God, because we've become an object of contempt. May their reviling turn back on their own head. Make them into spoil in a land of captivity. [5]Don't cover over their waywardness. Their wrongdoing should not be blotted out from before you, because they've uttered provocation in front of the builders.'
[6]So we built up the wall, and the entire wall joined up until it was half done. The mind of the people was on doing it.[7]But when Sanballat, Tobiyyah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the Ashdodites heard that restoration of the Yerushalaim walls had progressed in that the broken parts had begun to close up, it enraged them very much, [8]and all of them conspired together to come to battle against Yerushalaim and cause confusion in it. [9]We pleaded with our God and put in place a watch over them day and night in the face of them.
[10]But Yehudah said,

The carrier's energy has collapsed,
and there is much earth.
We ourselves are not able
to build up the wall.

[11]And our adversaries said, 'They won't know and they won't see when we come in among them and kill them, and stop the work.' [12]And when the Yehudahites who lived beside them came, they said to us ten times from all the places, 'You should come back to us.'

Sword and trowel, faith and hope

[13]So I put in place at the lowest parts of the space behind the wall at the exposed points – I put the people in place by kin-groups with their swords, their lances and their bows. [14]I looked, and I stood up and said to the important people, to the overseers and to the rest of the people, 'Don't be afraid of them. The Lord, the one who is great and awe-inspiring – be mindful of him and do battle for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes.'
[15]When our enemies heard that it had become known to us and that God had contravened their counsel, we went back to the wall, all of us, each to his work. [16]But from that day, half of my boys were doing the work and half of them were holding strongly on to lances, shields, bows and armour, with the officials behind the entire house of Yehudah [17]who were building up the wall. The basket-carriers who were transporting: with one hand he was doing the work and with one he was holding strongly on to the weapon. [18]The builders were fixed each with his sword on his hips, but they were building. And the person who sounded the horn was beside me.
[19]I said to the important people, to the overseers and to the rest of the people, 'There's much work, and widely spread, and we're divided on the wall, far away one from another. [20]At the place where you hear the sound of the horn, collect there to us. Our God – he'll battle for us.' [21]So we were doing the work with half of them holding strongly on to lances, from when dawn came up until the stars came out. [22]Further, at that time I said to the people, 'Each man and his boy should stay the night within Yerushalaim; they'll be a watch for us at night and they'll work by day.' [23]I, my brothers, my boys and the men in the watch behind me – we didn't take off our clothes, each one, with his weapon at the water.

The community's moral challenge

5 But there was a great outcry by the people and their wives towards their Yehudahite brothers. [2]There were some saying, 'Our sons and our daughters, we are many. We must get grain so we can eat and live.' [3]There were some saying, 'Our fields, our vineyards, our homes – we're mortgaging them so we can get grain during a famine.' [4]And there were some saying, 'We've borrowed silver for the king's tax – our fields and our vineyards. [5]Now, our flesh is the same as our brothers' flesh, our children are the same as their children, but here – we're binding our sons and our daughters as servants. Some of our daughters are bound. There's no power in our hand; our fields and our vineyards belong to other people.'
[6]It enraged me very much when I heard their outcry and these words. [7]When my mind had counselled me, I argued with the important people and the overseers: 'Are you advancing loans, one with his brother?', and I set a big congregation against them. [8]I said to them, 'We acquired our Yehudahite brothers who'd been sold to the Gentiles, as far as it lay in us. Will you indeed sell your brothers so that they may be sold to us?'
They were silent. They couldn't find a word. [9]I said, 'The thing that you're doing isn't good. Will you not walk in awe of God to avoid reviling before our Gentile enemies? [10]Indeed, I, my brothers and my boys are advancing loans of silver and grain with them. Please let's abandon this advancing loans. [11]Please give them back this very day their fields, their vineyards, their olive trees and their houses, and the percentage on the silver, the grain, the new wine and the fresh oil that you're advancing them.'

Putting your money where your mouth is

[12]They said, 'We'll give them back, and we won't seek anything from them. We'll act in this way, as you're saying.' So I called for the priests and swore them to act in accordance with this word. [13]I also shook out my pocket and said, 'May God shake out like this anyone who does not implement this word, from his house and from his labour. May he become shaken out like this and empty.' The entire congregation said 'Yes', and praised Yahweh, and the people acted in accordance with this word.
[14]Further, from the day I was ordered to become governor in the country of Yehudah, from the twentieth year until the thirty-second year of Artahshasta the king, twelve years, I with my brothers didn't eat the governor's food. [15]The previous governors

who were before me made things heavy for the people, and for food and wine for one day took from them forty sheqels of silver (further, their boys had power over the people). I didn't do so, out of awe for God.
[16]And further, I strengthened the work on this wall; we didn't acquire fields, and all my boys were collected there for the work. [17]The Yehudahites and the overseers, 150 individuals, and the people who came to us from the nations that were round us, were at my table. [18]What was being prepared for one day, an ox, six choice sheep, and birds, they were prepared for me with all kinds of wine in quantity at an interval of ten days, but with this I didn't seek the governor's food, because the service was heavy on this people.
[19]Be mindful for me of all that I've done for this people, my God, for good.

Don't trust anybody

6 When it came to be heard by Sanballat, Tobiyyah, by Geshem the Arab and by the rest of our enemies, that we had built up the wall and that no breach was left in it (though up to that time I hadn't put in place doors in the gateways), [2]Sanballat and Geshem sent to me: 'Come, let's meet together at Kephirim in Ono Valley.' But these men were thinking to do something bad to me, [3]so I sent envoys to them saying, 'I'm doing some big work and I can't come down. Why should the work stop when I slacken hold of it and come down to you?'
[4]They sent me this same message four times, and I sent this same message back to them. [5]Sanballat sent me this same message with his boy a fifth time, with an open communiqué in his hand, [6]written in it: 'Among the nations it's come to be heard (and Gashmu says): you and the Yehudahites are thinking to rebel. That's why you're building up the wall. You're going to be their king, according to these words. [7]You've also put prophets in place to call out in Yerushalaim about you, "A king in Yehudah". It will now make itself heard to the king, these very words. So now go, and let's take counsel together.'
[8]I sent to him: 'Nothing like these things that you're saying has happened; rather you're devising things out of your own mind', [9]because they were all of them making us afraid, saying 'Their hands will slacken from the work and it won't be done.'
So now strengthen my hands.

The work completed

[10]I myself came to the house of Shema'yah ben Delayah son of Mehetab'el, when he was confined. He had said,

Let's meet in God's house,
inside the palace.
Let's shut the doors of the palace,
because they're coming to kill you,
by night they're coming to kill you.

[11]I said, 'Will a person like me take flight? And who is there like me who may go into the palace and live? I won't come.' [12]I realized: there, God had not sent him, because he'd spoken the prophecy about me when Obiyyah and Sanballat had hired him. [13]It was to this end that he'd been hired, to the end that I'd be afraid and I'd act in this way and do wrong, and they'd have a bad name, in order that they could revile me.
[14]Be mindful, my God, of Tobiyyah, and of Sanballat in accordance with these acts of his, and also of Noadyah the prophetess and of the rest of the prophets who were making me afraid.
[15]The wall was complete on the twenty-fifth of Elul, after fifty-two days. [16]When all our enemies heard, all the nations that were round us were afraid, and they fell greatly in their own eyes because they acknowledged that this work had been done by our God.
[17]Also in those days, the important people among the Yehudahites were having many communiqués go to Tobiyyah, and ones that were Tobiyyah's were coming to them, [18]because many people in Yehudah were under oath to him, because he was a son-in-law of Shekanyah ben Arah, and Yehohanan his son had taken the daughter of Meshullam ben Berekyah. [19]Further, they were saying good things about him before me, and they were letting my words go out to him when Tobiyyah sent communiqués to make me afraid.

The need for a new population

7 When the wall was built and I'd put in place the doors, they appointed the gatemen, the singers and the Levites. [2]I ordered in charge of Yerushalaim Hanani my brother and Hananyah the fortress officer, because he was truly a trustworthy man and one who lived in awe of God more than many. [3]I said to them, 'The Yerushalaim gateways will not open until the sun is hot; until those men are standing in position they must shut the doors and hold them fast. And put in place the inhabitants of Yerushalaim as watches, one individual at his watch and another individual opposite his own house.'
[4]Now the town was wide on both sides and big, but the people within it was small, and there were no houses built up. [5]My God put it into my mind and I collected the important people, the overseers and the people, for enrolment by genealogy. I found the document with the roll of the people who went up at the first, and found written in it:
[6]These are the people of the province who went up from among the captives in exile whom Nebukadne'tstsar king of Babel had exiled and who went back to Yerushalaim and to Yehudah, each to his town, [7]who came with Zerubbabel, Yeshua, Nehemyah, Azaryah, Ra'amyah, Nahamani, Mordecay, Bilshan, Misperet, Bigvay, Nehum, Ba'anah.
The number of the men belonging to the Yisra'elite people:

[18]sons of Adoniqam 667

[8]sons of Par'osh 2,172
[9]sons of Shephatyah 372
[10]sons of Arah 652
[11]sons of Pahat Mo'ab (by the sons of Yeshua and Yo'ab) 2,818
[12]sons of Elam 1,254
[13]sons of Zattu 845
[14]sons of Zakkay 760
[15]sons of Binnuy 648
[16]sons of Bebay 628
[17]sons of Azgad 2,322
[19]sons of Bigvay 2,067
[20]sons of Adin 655
[21]sons of Ater (by Hizqiyyah) 98
[22]sons of Hashum 328
[23]sons of Bezay 324
[24]sons of Hariph 112
[25]sons of Gib'on 95
[26]people of Bet-lehem and Netophah 188
[27]people of Anatot 128
[28]people of Bet-azmavet 42
[29]sons of Ye'arim Township, Kephirah and Be'erot 743
[30]sons of The Height and Geba 621
[31]people of Mikmas 122
[32]people of Bet-el and Ha'ay 123
[33]people of the other Nebo 52
[34]people of the other Elam 1,254
[35]sons of Harim 320
[36]sons of Yereho 345
[37]sons of Lod, Hadid and Ono 721
[38]sons of Sena'ah 3,930

Ministers on the roll

[39]The priests:
sons of Yeda'yah (by the household of Yeshua) 973
[40]sons of Immer 1,052
[41]sons of Pashhur 1,247
[42]sons of Harim 1,017
[43]The Levites:
sons of Yeshua (by Qadmi'el, by the sons of Hodavyah) 74
[44]The singers:
sons of Asaph 148
[45]The gatemen:
sons of Shallum
sons of Ater
sons of Talmon
sons of Aqqub
sons of Hatita
sons of Shobay
altogether 138
[46]The assistants:
sons of Tsiha
sons of Hasupha
sons of Tabba'ot
[47]sons of Qeros
sons of Si'ah
sons of Padon
[48]sons of Lebanah
sons of Hagabah
sons of Shalmay
[49]sons of Hanan
sons of Giddel
sons of Gahar
[50]sons of Re'ayah
sons of Retsin
sons of Neqodah
[51]sons of Gazzam
sons of Uzza
sons of Paseah
[52]sons of Besay
sons of Me'unim
sons of Nephishesim
[53]sons of Baqbuq
sons of Haqupha
sons of Harhur
[54]sons of Batslit
sons of Mehida
sons of Harsha
[55]sons of Barqos
sons of Sisera
sons of Temah
[56]sons of Netsiah
sons of Hatipha
[57]The sons of Shelomoh's [Solomon's] servants:
sons of Sotay
sons of Sopheret
sons of Perida
[58]sons of Ya'ela
sons of Darqon
sons of Giddel
[59]sons of Shephatyah
sons of Hattil
sons of Pokeret Hatstsebayim
sons of Amon

[60]All the assistants and the sons of Shelomoh's servants 392.

[61]These are the people who came up from Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Kerub, Addan and Immer, but who could not tell their ancestral household and their origin, whether they were from Yisra'el:

[62]sons of Delayah
sons of Tobiyyah
sons of Neqoda
sons of Haqqots
sons of Barzillay (who had taken a wife from the daughters of Barzillay the Gil'adite and was called by their name):

[63]Of the priests:
sons of Habayah

[64]these looked for their record in the enrolment by genealogy but it was not found, and they were deconsecrated from the priesthood. [65]The administrator said to them that they should not eat of the very sacred things until there was a priest standing with Urim and Tummim.

The need for a new community

[66]The entire congregation altogether 42,360;
[67]apart from their servants and handmaids: these were 7,337;
and they had 245 male and female singers;
[68]their horses 736; their mules 245; [69]camels 435; donkeys 6,720.

[70]Some of the ancestral heads gave to the work. The administrator gave to the treasury gold (1,000 drakmas), basins (50), priests' robes (530). [71]Some of the ancestral heads gave to the work treasury gold (20,000 drakmas) and silver (2,200 minas). [72]What the remainder of the people gave: gold (20,000 drakmas), silver (2,000) and priests' robes (67).
[73]The priests, the Levites, the gatemen, the singers, some of the people, the assistants and all Yisra'el went to live in their towns. The seventh month arrived, with the Yisra'elites in their towns,

8 and the entire people gathered as one person to the square that's before the Water Gate, and said to Ezra the scholar to bring Mosheh's instruction document with which Yahweh had ordered Yisra'el. [2]Ezra the priest brought the instruction before the congregation (men and women and all who could understand when they listened) on the first day of the seventh month. [3]He read out in it before the square which is before the Water Gate from dawn until midday, in front of the men and the women and the people who could understand, with the ears of the entire people towards the instruction document.
[4]Ezra the scholar stood on a wooden tower that they made for the thing. There stood beside him Mattityah, Shema, Anayah, Uriyyah, Hilqiyyah and Ma'aseyah on his right, and at his left Pedayah, Misha'el, Malkiyyah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zekaryah, Meshullam. [5]Ezra opened the document before the eyes of the entire people, because he was above the entire people, and as he opened it, the entire people stood. [6]Ezra blessed Yahweh, the great God, and the entire people answered, 'Yes, yes', with a raising of their hands, then bent their heads and bowed low to Yahweh, faces on the ground. [7]Yeshua, Bani, Sherebyah, Yamin, Aqqub, Shabbetay, Hodiyyah, Ma'aseyah, Qelita, Azaryah, Yozabad, Hanan, Pela'yah, and the Levites, helped the people understand the instruction, with the people in their place. [8]They read out in the document, in God's instruction, explaining and giving insight so they understood the reading.

Mourning or celebration?

[9]Nehemyah (he was the administrator), Ezra the priest-scholar and the Levites who were helping the people understand said to the entire people, 'Today is sacred for Yahweh your God. Don't mourn, don't cry', because the entire people were crying as they heard the words of the instruction. [10]He said to them, 'Go, eat rich food, drink sweet drinks and send off portions to anyone who has nothing prepared, because today is sacred for our Lord. Don't be in pain, because joy in Yahweh is your protection.' [11]The Levites were silencing the entire people, saying 'Hush, because today is sacred, don't be in pain.' [12]So the entire people went to eat and drink and send off portions and make great rejoicing, because they understood the things that they had made known to them.
[13]On the second day, the ancestral heads of the entire people, the priests and the Levites gathered to Ezra the scholar, to get insight into the words of the instruction. [14]They found written in the instruction that Yahweh had ordered by means of Mosheh that the Yisra'elites should live in bivouacs [*sukkot*] in the festival in the seventh month [15]and that they should make heard and should pass on an announcement in all their towns and in Yerushalaim: 'Go out into the mountains and bring olive branches, pine-tree branches, myrtle branches, palm branches and leafy tree branches to make bivouacs, as it is written.'
[16]So the people went out and brought them, and made themselves bivouacs, each person on his roof, or in their courtyards, in the courtyards of God's house, in the square at the Water Gate or in the square at the Ephrayim Gate. [17]The entire congregation of people who had come back from the captivity made bivouacs and lived in the bivouacs, because the Yisra'elites had not done so since the days of Yehoshua [Joshua] ben Nun until that day, and there was very great rejoicing.
[18]So he read out in the document of God's instruction day by day, from the first day until the last day. They made festival for seven days and an assembly on the eighth day, in accordance with the ruling.

How to make your confession

9 On the twenty-fourth day of this month the Yisra'elites assembled with fasting and with sack, and earth on themselves. [2]The offspring of Yisra'el distinguished themselves from all foreigners and stood and confessed their wrongdoings and their ancestors' wayward acts. [3]They got up in their position and read out in Yahweh their God's instruction document for a quarter of the day, and for a quarter they were confessing and bowing low to Yahweh their God.
[4]On the Levites' stairway Yeshua and Bani (Qadmi'el, Shebanyah, Bunni, Sherebyah, Bani, Kenani) got up and cried out in a loud voice to Yahweh their God. [5]The Levites Yeshua and Qadmi'el (Bani, Hashabneyah, Sherebyah, Hodiyyah, Petahyah) said, 'Get up, bless Yahweh your God from age to age:

May people bless your glorious name,
though exalted above all blessing and praise.
[6]You are Yahweh, you alone;
you made the heavens,
The highest heavens and all their army,
the earth and all that's on it,
the seas and all that's in them.
You give life to all of them,
and the army in the heavens bow low to you.

[7]You are Yahweh, the God who chose Abram and got him to go out from Ur of the Kasdites, and made his name Abraham. [8]You found his mind trustworthy before you and you solemnized the pact with him to give the country of the Kena'anite [Canaanite], the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Yebusite and the Girgashite – to give [it] to his offspring. You implemented your words, because you're faithful.

[9]You saw our ancestors' humbling in Misrayim [Egypt] and you heard their cry at the Reed Sea. [10]You performed signs and proofs against Par'oh [Pharaoh] and against all his servants and against all the people of his country because you acknowledged that they asserted themselves over them, and you made a name for yourself this very day.

Self-assertion and pardon

[11]You split the sea before them and they passed through the middle of the sea on dry ground, but you threw their pursuers into the depths, like a stone into vigorous water. [12]With a cloud column you led them by day, and with a fire column by night, to give light for them on the way in which they were to go.

[13]On Mount Sinai you came down and spoke with them from the heavens. You gave them upright rulings and truthful instructions, good decrees and orders. [14]Your sacred sabbath you caused to be acknowledged by them, and you ordained for them orders, decrees and instruction by means of Mosheh your servant. [15]Bread from the heavens you gave them for their hunger, and you made water go out from a cliff for them, for their thirst. You said to them to go and take possession of the country that you had raised your hand [to swear] to give them.

[16]But they, our ancestors, asserted themselves, toughened their neck and didn't listen to your orders. [17]They refused to listen and were not mindful of your extraordinary deeds, which you'd done with them. They toughened their neck and appointed a head so as to go back to their serfdom, in their rebelliousness.

But you are a pardoning God, gracious and compassionate, long-tempered and big in commitment, and you didn't abandon them, [18]even when they made themselves a calf figurine and said, "This is your God who got you up from Misrayim." They committed great acts of disdain. [19]But you in your great compassion – you didn't abandon them in the wilderness. The cloud column didn't depart from them by day to lead them on the way, nor the fire column by night to give light to them and on the way in which they were to go.

Provision and rebellion

[20]You gave them your good spirit to enable them to succeed. You didn't withhold your *maan* [manna] from their mouth and you gave them water for their thirst. [21]When for forty years you provided for them in the wilderness, they didn't lack, their clothes didn't wear out and their feet didn't swell. [22]You gave them kingdoms and peoples, and allocated these as a border. They took possession of the country of Sihon, which was the country of the king of Heshbon, and the country of Og king of Bashan.

[23]You made their children as many as the stars in the heavens and brought them to the country that you said to their parents to go in to possess. [24]The children came and took possession of the country. You made the inhabitants of the country, the Kena'anites, bow down before them, and you gave them into their hand, both their kings and the peoples of the country, to do with them in accordance with what was acceptable to them. [25]They took fortified towns and rich land and took possession of houses full of every good thing: hewn cisterns, vineyards, olives and fruit trees, in large number. They ate, were full, grew stocky and revelled in your great goodness.

[26]But they defied and rebelled against you and threw your instruction behind their back. They killed your prophets who testified against them to get them to come back to you, and they committed great acts of disdain. [27]You gave them into the hand of their adversaries and they oppressed them. In their time of pressure they cried out to you and from the heavens you yourself would listen. In accordance with your great compassion you gave them deliverers and they delivered them from the hand of their adversaries.

Servants or serfs

[28]But when things settled down for them, they again dealt badly before you. You abandoned them into the hand of their enemies and they held sway over them. They again cried out to you, and from the heavens you yourself would listen and rescue them in accordance with your great compassion, time after time. [29]You testified against them to get them to come back to your instruction, but they themselves asserted themselves and didn't listen to your orders. They did wrong by your rulings, which a person should act on and live by. They presented a defiant shoulder, they toughened their neck and they didn't listen.

[30]You prolonged things for them for many years and testified against them by your spirit by means of your prophets, but they didn't give ear, so you gave them into the hand of the peoples of the countries. [31]But in your great compassion you didn't make an end of them and you didn't abandon them, because you are a God gracious and compassionate.

[32]So now, our great God, strong and awe-inspiring, keeping pact and commitment, may all the suffering not seem small before you that has found us, our kings, our officials, our priests, our prophets, our ancestors and all your people, from the days of the kings of Ashshur until this day. [33]You are in the right over everything that has come upon us, because you've acted truthfully, but we've acted faithlessly. [34]Our kings, our officials, our priests and our ancestors – they didn't act on your instruction and they didn't heed your orders and your affirmations that you testified against them. [35]Despite their kingship and despite your great goodness that you gave them and despite the wide and rich country that you gave before them, they didn't serve you and they didn't turn back from their bad ways.
[36]Here we are, serfs today. The country you gave our ancestors to eat its fruit and its goodness, here we are, serfs on it. [37]Its great yield belongs to the kings that you've put over us because of our wrongdoings. They're ruling over our bodies and among our animals in accordance with what is acceptable to them. We're under great pressure.

Putting your life where your mouth is

[38]Because of all this, we are confirming a pledge and putting it in writing, and on the sealed document are our officials, our Levites and our priests.'
10 So on the sealed documents are Nehemyah ben Hakalyah, the administrator and

Tsidqiyyah
[2]Serayah
Azaryah
Yirmeyah
[3]Pashhur
Amaryah
Malkiyyah
[4]Hattush
Shebanyah
Malluk
[5]Harim
Meremot
Obadyah
[6]Daniyye'l
Ginneton
Baruk
[7]Meshullam
Abiyyah
Miyyamin
[8]Ma'azyah
Bilgay
Shema'yah

These were the priests. [9]The Levites:

Yeshua ben Azanyah, Binnuy of the sons of Henadad, Qadmi'el;
[10]their brothers Shebanyah, Hodiyyah, Qelita, Pela'yah, Hanan, [11]Mika, Rehob, Hashabyah, [12]Zakkur, Sherebyah, Shebanyah, [13]Hodiyyah, Bani, Beninu.

[14]The heads of the people:

Par'osh
Pahat Mo'ab
Elam
Zattu
[16]Adoniyyah
Bigvay
Adin
[17]Ater
Hizqiyyah
Azzur
[18]Hodiyyah
Hashum
Betsay
[19]Hariph
Anatot
Nebay
[20]Magpi'ash
Meshullam
Hezir
[21]Meshezab'el
Tsadoq
Yaddua
Bani
[15]Bunni
Azgad
Bebay
[22]Pelatyah
Hanan
Anayah
[23]Hoshea
Hananyah
Hashshub
[24]Hallohesh
Pilha
Shobeq
[25]Rehum
Hashabnah
Ma'aseyah
[26]and Ahiyyah
Hanan
Anan
[27]Malluk
Harim
Ba'anah

[28]The remainder of the people, the priests, the Levites, the gatemen, the singers, the assistants and everyone who made themselves distinct from the peoples of the countries to God's instruction, their wives, their sons and their daughters, everyone who knows, having understanding, [29]were taking strong hold of their brothers, the august ones among them, and coming into a curse and into an oath to walk by God's instruction that was given by means of Mosheh, God's servant, and to keep and act on all the orders of

Yahweh our Lord, and his rulings and his decrees.

On being specific

[30]Namely:
We will not give our daughters to the peoples of the country and we will not take their daughters for our sons.
[31]The peoples of the country who bring items of merchandise or any grain on the sabbath day to sell, we will not get from them on the sabbath, or on a sacred day.
We will leave alone the seventh year and the loan linked to any pledge.
[32]We have put in place for ourselves orders to impose on ourselves one third of a sheqel per year for the service of our God's house, [33]for the bread in the row, the regular grain offering and for the regular burnt offering, that of the sabbaths, of the new months, for the appointed occasions, for sacred things and for purification offerings to make expiation for Yisra'el, and all the work in our God's house.
[34]We have let lots fall for the wood offering (the priests, the Levites and the people) to bring it to our God's house by ancestral households at designated times year by year to burn up on the altar of Yahweh our God, as it is written in the instruction.
[35]And to bring the first fruits of our ground and the first fruits of every fruit of every tree year by year for Yahweh's house, [36]and the firstborn of our sons and of our animals, as it is written in the instruction, and to bring the firstborn of our cattle and of our flocks to our God's house to the priests who minister in our God's house.
[37]We will bring the first of our dough, our contributions, and the fruit of every tree, new wine and fresh oil, to the priests to the halls in our God's house, and the tenth of our ground to the Levites; the Levites are the ones who collect the tenths in all the towns where we serve. [38]The priest, the son of Aaron, is to be with the Levites during the tenthing by the Levites, and the Levites are to take up a tenth of the tenth to our God's house, to the halls of the treasure-house, [39]because the Yisra'elites and the Levites are to bring to the halls the contribution of grain, new wine and fresh oil. The sanctuary articles, the priests who minister, the gatemen and the singers are there. We will not abandon our God's house.

The sacred town (1)

11 The people's officials lived in Yerushalaim, while the remainder of the people let lots fall to get one out of ten to come to live in Yerushalaim, the sacred town, while nine tenths were in the towns. [2]The people blessed all the individuals who decided freely to live in Yerushalaim.
[3]These are the heads of the province who lived in Yerushalaim; while in the towns of Yehudah people lived in their towns, each individual on his holding, Yisra'el, the priests, the Levites, the assistants and the descendants of Shelomoh's servants, [4]and some of the Yehudahites and some of the Binyaminites [Benjaminites] lived in Yerushalaim.

Of the Yehudahites:
Atayah ben Uzziyyah son of Zekaryah son of Amaryah son of Shephatyah son of Mahalal'el of the descendants of Perets;
[5]and Ma'aseyah ben Baruk son of Kol-hozeh son of Hazayah son of Adayah son of Yoyarib son of Zekaryah son of the Shilonite.
[6]All the descendants of Perets who were living in Yerushalaim: 468 forceful men.
[7]These are the Binyaminites:
Sallu ben Meshullam son of Yo'ed son of Pedayah son of Qolayah son of Ma'aseyah son of Iti'el son of Yesha'yah;
[8]and after him Gabbay, Sallay: 928.
[9]Yo'el ben Zikri was appointee in charge of them;
and Yehudah ben Hassenu'ah was second-in-command over the town.
[10]Of the priests:
Yeda'yah ben Yoyarib, Yakin, [11]Serayah ben Hilqiyyah son of Meshullam son of Tsadoq son of Merayot son of Ahitub, chief over God's house, [12]and their brothers doing the work for the house: 822;
Adayah ben Yeroham son of Pelalyah son of Amtsi son of Zekaryah son of Pashhur son of Malkiyyah, [13]and his brothers, ancestral heads: 242;
and Amashsay ben Azar'el son of Ahzai son of Meshillemot son of Immer, [14]and their brothers, forceful strong men: 128;
Zabdi'el ben Haggedolim was appointee in charge of them.

The sacred town (2)

[15]Of the Levites:
Shema'yah ben Hashshub, son of Azriqam son of Hashabyah son of Bunni;
[16]and Shabbetay and Yozabad in charge of the outside work for God's house, of the heads of the Levites;
[17]Mattanyah ben Mikah son of Zabdi son of Asaph, head; at prayer, the one who began the confession;
Baqbuqyah, second-in-command, one of his brothers;
and Abda ben Shammua son of Galal son of Yedutun.
[18]All the Levites in the sacred town: 284.
[19]The gatemen:
Aqqub, Talmon and their brothers who watched at the gateways: 172.
[20]The remainder of Yisra'el, the priests, the Levites in all the towns of Yehudah, each on his property.

[21]The assistants were living on the Ophel; Tsipha and Gishpa were in charge of the assistants.
[22]The Levites' appointee in Yerushalaim was Uzzi ben Bani son of Hashabyah son of Mattanyah son of Mika, of the Asaphite singers, in charge of the work in God's house, [23]because there was an order from the king concerning them, a pledge about the singers, each day's requirement in its day.
[24]Petahyah ben Meshezab'el, of the descendants of Zerah son of Yehudah, was at the king's hand in connection with everything regarding the people.
[25]As for the villages, with their fields:
some of the Yehudahites lived in Arba's Township and its daughter-towns, in Dibon and its daughter-towns, and in Yeqabtse'el and its villages, [26]in Yeshua, in Moladah, in Bet Pelet, [27]in Hatsar Shu'al, in Be'er Sheba and its daughter-towns, [28]in Tsiqlag, in Mekonah and its daughter-towns, [29]in En Rimmon, in Tsorah, in Yarmut, [30]Zanoah, Adullam and their villages, Lakish and its fields, and Azeqah and its daughter-towns. So they camped from Be'er-sheba to the Hinnom Ravine.
[31]The Binyaminites:
from Geba, Mikmash, Ayyah, and Bet-el and its daughter-towns; [32]Anatot, Nob, Ananyah, [33]Hatsor, Ramah, Gittayim, [34]Hadid, Tsebo'im, Neballat, [35]Lod and Ono, Craftsmen's Ravine. [36]Some of the Levites who were Yehudah's allocations belonged to Binyamin.

Priests and Levites in the community

12 These are the priests and the Levites who went up with Zerubbabel ben She'alti'el and Yeshua:

Serayah	Abiyyah
Yirmeyah	[5]Miyyamin
Ezra	Ma'adyah
[2]Amaryah	Bilgah
Malluka	[6]Shema'yah
Hattush	Yoyarib
[3]Shekanyah	Yeda'yah
Rehum	[7]Sallu
Meramot	Amoq
[4]Iddo	Hilqiyyah
Ginnetoy	Yeda'yah

These were the heads of the priests and their brothers in the time of Yeshua. [8]The Levites:
Yeshua, Binnuy, Qadmi'el, Sherebyah, and Yehudah;
Mattanyah, in charge of confession songs, he and his brothers;
[9]Baqbuqyah and Unni, their brothers, were opposite them for the watches.
[10]Yeshua fathered Yoyaqim, Yoyaqim fathered Elyashib, Elyashib fathered Yoyada, [11]Yoyada fathered Yonatan, Yonatan fathered Yaddua.
[12]In the time of Yoyaqim, priests who were the ancestral heads were:

for Serayah, Merayah
for Yirmeyah, Hananyah
[13]for Ezra, Meshullam
for Amaryah, Yehohanan
[14]for Meliku, Yonatan
for Shebanyah, Yoseph
[15]for Harim, Adna
for Merayot, Helqay
[16]for Iddo, Zekaryah
for Ginneton, Meshullam
[17]for Abiyyah, Zikri
for Minyamin
for Mo'adyah, Piltay
[18]for Bilgah, Shammua
for Shema'yah, Yehonatan
[19]and for Yoyarib, Mattenay
for Yeda'yah, Uzzi
[20]for Sallay, Qallay
for Amoq, Eber
[21]for Hilqiyyah, Hashabyah
for Yeda'yah, Netan'el

[22]The Levites in the time of Elyashib, Yoyada and Yohanan, and Yaddua, written down as ancestral heads (and the priests in the reign of Doryavesh the Parsite); [23]the Levites as ancestral heads written down on the document about things of the time right up to the time of Yohanan ben Elyashib; [24]so the Levites' heads:
Hashabyah, Sherebyah, Yeshua ben Qadmi'el and their brothers opposite them, for praising, for confessing, by the order of David the supernatural man, watch responding to watch;
[25]Mattanyah, Baqbuqyah, Obadyah, Meshullam, Talmon, Aqqub, keeping watch as gatemen at the storerooms by the gateways.
[26]These were in the time of Yoyaqim ben Yeshua son of Yotsadaq, and in the time of Nehemyah the governor and Ezra the priest-scholar.

Dedication choirs

[27]At the dedication of the Yerushalaim wall, they looked for the Levites from all their places to get them to come to Yerushalaim to make a dedication with rejoicing, with confessions and with song, cymbals, mandolins and with guitars. [28]The

singers gathered both from the plain round Yerushalaim and from the villages of the Netophatites, [29]from Bet Hagilgal, and from the fields of Geba and Azmavet, because the singers had built themselves villages round Yerushalaim. [30]The priests and the Levites purified themselves and purified the people, the gateways and the wall.

[31]I got the officials of Yehudah to go up on to the wall and I put in place two big confessions and processions:

To the right on the wall to the Rubbish Gate. [32]Hosha'yah and half the officials of Yehudah followed them, [33]with Azaryah, Ezra and Meshullam, [34]Yehudah, Binyamin, Shema'yah, Yirmeyah, [35]some of the priests' sons with trumpets, Zekaryah ben Yonatan son of Shema'yah son of Mattanyah son of Mikayah son of Zakkur son of Asaph, [36]his brothers Shema'yah and Azar'el, Milalay, Gilalay, Ma'ay, Netan'el, Yehudah, Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the supernatural man, and Ezra the scholar before them. [37]Above the Spring Gate, straight ahead of them they went up the ascent to David's Town by the ascent to the wall, above David's house, and as far as the Water Gate on the east.

[38]The second confession which went the opposite way with me behind it and half the people, on the wall above the Ovens Tower as far as the wide wall, [39]and above the Ephrayim Gate, by the Yeshanah Gate, by the Fish Gate, Hananel's Tower, the Hundred Tower and as far as the Sheep Gate. They halted at the Guard Gate.

[40]The two confessions halted at God's house, as did I and half the overseers with me, [41]and the priests Elyaqim, Ma'aseyah, Minyamin, Mikayah, Elyo'enay, Zekaryah, Hananyah, with trumpets, [42]and Ma'aseyah, Shema'yah, El'azar, Uzzi, Yehohanan, Malkiyyah, Elam and Ezer. The singers made themselves heard, with Yizrahyah the appointee. [43]They made big sacrifices that day and rejoiced, because God had enabled them to rejoice greatly. The women and the children also rejoiced. The rejoicing in Yerushalaim was heard from afar.

Intermarriage again

[44]On that day they appointed people over the treasury rooms for the contributions, for first fruits and for the tenths, to collect in them (for the fields belonging to the towns) the portions mentioned by the instruction for the priests and for the Levites, because there was rejoicing in Yehudah over the priests and over the Levites who stood [45]and kept their God's watch and the purity watch, and the singers and the gatemen, in accordance with the order of David, Shelomoh his son [46](because in the days of David and Asaph of old, there were heads of the singers and a song of praise and confession to God). [47]In the days of Zerubbabel and in the days of Nehemyah all Yisra'el were giving the singers and the gatemen's portions, each day's requirement in its day, and making things sacred for the Levites, while the Levites were making things sacred for the Aaronites.

13 On that day there was a reading out in Mosheh's document in the ears of the people and it was found written in it that an Ammonite or Mo'abite should not come into God's congregation, permanently, [2]because they did not meet the Yisra'elites with bread and with water but hired Bil'am [Balaam] to slight them (but our God turned the slighting into blessing). [3]When they heard the instruction, they distinguished the entire mixed crowd from Yisra'el.

[4]Before this, Elyashib the priest had been put in a hall in our God's house. Being near to Tobiyyah, [5]he had made for him a big hall where before they had been putting the grain offering, the incense, the articles, the tenth of grain, new wine and fresh oil, the order for the Levites, the singers and the gatemen, and the contribution for the priests.

More frustrations

[6]During all this time I was not in Yerushalaim because in the thirty-second year of Artahshasta king of Babel I came to the king, but at the end of a period of time I asked of the king [7]and came to Yerushalaim. I considered the bad thing that Elyashib had done for Tobiyyah in making a room for him in the courtyards of God's house. [8]It seemed very bad to me. I threw all the articles of Tobiyyah's household outside from the hall [9]and said they should purify the halls, and I put back there the articles from God's house, the grain offering and the incense.

[10]I got to know that the Levites' portions had not been given, so that the Levites and the singers doing the work had taken flight each to his field. [11]I argued with the overseers and said, 'Why has God's house been abandoned?' I collected them and put them in place at their position, [12]and all Yehudah brought the tenth of the grain, the new wine and the fresh oil into the treasuries. [13]I made as treasurers in charge of the treasuries Shelemyah the priest, Tsadoq the secretary, Pedayah from the Levites, and next to them Hanan ben Zakkur son of Mattanyah, because they were reckoned trustworthy, and it was up to them to make allocations to their brothers.

[14]Be mindful of me, my God, because of this. Don't blot out my acts of commitment, which I have performed in God's house and in its duties.

[15]In those days I saw people in Yehudah treading winepresses on the sabbath, and bringing grain heaps and stacking them on donkeys, and also wine, grapes, figs and every load, and bringing them into Yerushalaim on the sabbath day. I testified on the day when they sold provisions [16]and when the Tsorites who lived there were bringing fish and all merchandise and selling on the sabbath to Yehudahites and in Yerushalaim, [17]and I argued with the important people in Yehudah: 'What is this bad thing that you're doing, and profaning the sabbath day? [18]Our ancestors acted like this, didn't they, and our God brought on us all this bad fortune, and on this town. You're bringing more rage against Yisra'el by profaning the sabbath.'

Desecration and trespass

[19]When the gateways of Yerushalaim grew dark before the sabbath, I said that the doors should shut, and I said that they should not open them until after the sabbath. Given that I put in place some of my boys at the gateways, no load would come in on the sabbath day. [20]The merchants and the people selling all merchandise stayed the night outside Yerushalaim once or twice, [21]but I testified against them: 'Why are you staying the night opposite the wall? If you do it again, I'll lay hands on you'; from that time

they didn't come on the sabbath. [22]I said to the Levites that they should purify themselves and come keep watch over the gateways to make the sabbath day sacred.

Be mindful of this for me as well, my God, and have pity on me in accordance with the abundance of your commitment.

[23]In those days I also saw the Yehudahites had got Ashdodite, Ammonite and Mo'abite women to come to live. [24]Their children were speaking half in Ashdodite, and none of them knew how to speak Yehudahite, but in accordance with the tongue of one people or the other. [25]I argued with them and slighted them, and struck some of them down and pulled out their hair, and made them swear by God: 'If you give your daughters to their sons or if you get some of their daughters for your sons or for yourselves . . . [26]It was in these things that Shelomoh king of Yisra'el did wrong, wasn't it. Among the many nations there was no king like him. He was loved by God, and God made him king over all Yisra'el; foreign women caused even him to do wrong. [27]Are we to listen to you doing this great bad thing, trespassing against our God by getting foreign women come to live?'

[28]One of the sons of Yoyada, the son of Elyashib the big priest, was son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite. I made him take flight from me. [29]Be mindful with regard to them, my God, because they polluted the priesthood, the pact of the priesthood and the Levites.

[30]I purified them of everything foreign and put the watches in place for the priests and for the Levites, each one in his work, [31]and for the wood offering at designated times and for the first fruits. My God, be mindful for me for good.

Esther

In the 1930s, the Nazi regime in Germany formulated a 'final solution to the Jewish question' that involved the killing of all the Jews in Germany and in the areas of Europe it controlled. The book of Esther tells the story of the first great attempt at such a 'final solution' formulated by a Persian state official, Haman, in the fifth century BC. It is the same period as Ezra and Nehemiah and another reminder that by no means all Judahites returned to Jerusalem after the exile.

Haman's plan is frustrated as a result of some coincidences and some brave acceptance of responsibility by a young woman called Hadassah whose Persian name was Esther. As it happens, the king has dismissed his queen because she wouldn't be put on display at a party; and as it happens, Esther wins a beauty context and becomes the next queen. She is therefore in a position to get the king to reverse his decision to have Haman's plan implemented and to give the Judahites permission to kill any Persians who are foolish enough to attack them anyway (which a large number are).

The story is full of irony, humour and exaggeration, such as the 12-month beauty preparation and Haman's 25-metre-high gallows on which he ends up being hanged himself. It makes no reference to God or prayer or the Torah and it thus puts the emphasis on Judahites taking responsibility for their destiny and on coincidences. It thus both contrasts with and compares with the exodus story. It testifies to God's involvement in ensuring that his people are preserved, but it keeps that involvement operative behind the scenes – in the way we usually experience it.

The woman who won't play ball

1 In the days of Ahashverosh [Xerxes], that Ahashverosh who reigned from Hoddu [India] as far as Kush [Sudan] over 127
provinces – [2]in those days, when King Ahashverosh sat on his royal throne which was in the Shushan fortress, [3]in the third
year of his reign, he made a banquet for all his officials and his servants. The force of Paras and Maday [Persia and Media], the
nobles and the officials of the provinces were before him, [4]while he let them see the wealth of his royal splendour and the glorious
dignity of his greatness for many days – 180 days.

[5]At the fulfilment of these days the king made a banquet for the entire people to be found in the Shushan fortress, great to small,
for seven days, in the courtyard of the king's palace garden:

[6]white cloth, cotton and blue cloth, held by bands of fine linen and purple to silver rods and alabaster pillars;
couches of gold and silver on a pavement of porphyry, alabaster, marble and mosaic;
[7]giving of drinks in gold vessels (vessels differing from one another);
much royal wine in accordance with the king's liberality;
[8]drinking in accordance with the rule 'There's no one restraining', because the king had laid it down in this way with every
senior person in his household, to act in accordance with what was acceptable, individual by individual.

[9]Queen Vashti also made a women's banquet at the royal house of King Ahashverosh.

[10]On the seventh day, when the king was in good heart because of the wine, he said to Mehuman, Bizzeta, Harbona, Bigta,
Abagta, Zetar and Karkas, the seven eunuchs who ministered to the presence of King Ahashverosh, [11]to get Vashti the queen to
come before the king in her royal diadem, to let the peoples and the officials see her beauty, because she was good-looking.
[12a]Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's word by means of the eunuchs.

The men who are afraid

[12b]The king was quite furious. His wrath burned up in him. [13]The king said to the experts who knew the times (because this was
the thing with the king in relation to all the people who knew law and judgement; [14]near to him were Karshena, Shetar, Admata,
Tarshish, Meres, Marsena and Memukan, the seven officials of Paras and Maday who could see the king and sat in first place in
the realm), [15]'According to law, what should be done with Queen Vashti because she has not acted on the word of King
Ahashverosh by means of the eunuchs?'

[16]Memukan said before the king and the officials, 'It's not against the king alone that Vashti the queen has gone astray, but
against all the officials and against all the peoples that are in all King Ahashverosh's provinces. [17]Because the thing about the
queen will get out to all the women, so as to make them despise their masters in their eyes, when they say, "King Ahashverosh
said to get Vashti the queen to come before him, and she didn't come." [18]This day the leading women of Paras and Maday who
have heard the thing about the queen will say it to all the king's officials, with quite enough despising and fury.

[19]If it seems good to Your Majesty, a royal word should issue from his presence and it should be written in the laws of Paras
and Maday, and not pass away, that Vashti will not come before King Ahashverosh. The king should give her royal position to
another woman who is better than her. [20]The king's proclamation that he makes will make itself heard in all his realm (because
it's great), and all the women will give dignity to their masters, great to small.'

[21]The thing seemed good in the eyes of the king and the officials, and the king acted in accordance with Memukan's word. [22]He
sent documents to all the king's provinces, to each province in accordance with its script and to each people in accordance with its
language, for every man to be ruling in his household and to be speaking in accordance with the language of his own people.

The beauty contest

2 Subsequently, when King Ahashverosh's wrath had subsided, he was mindful of Vashti and what she had done and what had
been determined against her. [2]The king's boys ministering to him said, 'They should seek for the king young, good-looking

girls. [3]The king should appoint people in all the provinces of his realm so they can collect every young, good-looking girl to the Shushan fortress, to the women's household, into the control of Hege, the king's eunuch who keeps watch over the women, and their cleansing treatments should be given them. [4]The girl who seems good in the king's eyes should reign in place of Vashti.' The thing seemed good in the king's eyes, and he did so.

[5]Now there was a Yehudahite [Judahite] man in the Shushan fortress named Mordokay ben Ya'ir son of Shim'i son of Qish, a Binyaminite [Benjaminite], [6]who had been taken into exile from Yerushalaim with the group of exiles that had been exiled with Yekonyah [Jehoiachin] king of Yehudah, which Nebukadne'tstsar king of Babel took into exile. [7]He was guardian of Hadassah (i.e. Esther), his uncle's daughter, because she had no father or mother. The girl was lovely of figure and good-looking. When her father and mother died, Mordokay took her as a daughter to him.

[8]When the king's word, his law, made itself heard and many girls collected to the Shushan fortess into the control of Hegay, Esther was taken into the king's household into the control of Hegay, who kept watch over the women. [9]The girl seemed good in his eyes and she gained commitment before him. He hastened to give to her her cleansing treatments and her portions, and the seven girls who had been looked out to give to her from the king's household. He changed her and her girls to the best part of the women's household. [10]Esther did not tell of her people or her family, because Mordokay had ordered her not to tell of it.

The girl who pays a price

[11]Each and every day Mordokay used to walk about before the courtyard of the women's household so as to know about Esther's welfare and what was being done with her.

[12]When a turn arrived, girl by girl, for coming to King Ahashverosh, at the end of things happening to her in accordance with the law for the women, for 12 months (because their cleansing days were fulfilled like this, six months with oil of myrrh and six months with perfumes and women's cleansing treatments), [13]in this way the girl came to the king: everything that she would say would be given her, so as to come with her from the women's household to the king's household. [14]Whereas she came in the evening, in the morning she went back to the second women's household, into the control of Sha'ashgaz, the king's eunuch who kept watch over the secondary wives. She would not come again to the king unless the king wanted her and she was called for by name.

[15]When the turn arrived for Esther daughter of Abihayil (uncle of Mordokay, who had taken her as daughter to him) to come to the king, she did not seek anything except what Hegay the king's eunuch who kept watch over the women said. Esther would gain grace in the eyes of everyone who saw her.

[16]Esther was taken to King Ahashverosh in his royal household in the tenth month (i.e. the month of Tebet) in the seventh year of his reign. [17]The king liked Esther more than all the women and she gained grace and commitment before him more than all the young girls, and he put a royal diadem on her head and made her queen in place of Vashti. [18]The king made a great banquet for all his officials and his servants, 'Esther's Banquet'. He made a holiday for the provinces and gave gifts in accordance with the capacity of the king.

Amaleq *redivivus*

[19]When the young girls collected a second time, Mordokay was sitting at the king's gateway. [20]Esther had not told of her family or her people, as Mordokay had ordered her; Esther did as Mordokay said, as when she was in guardianship with him.

[21]During that time, when Mordokay was sitting at the king's gateway, Bigtan and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs who kept watch over the threshold, became furious and sought to lay hand on King Ahashverosh. [22]The thing became known to Mordokay, he told Esther the queen, and Esther told the king in Mordokay's name. [23]The thing was enquired into and found to be so, and the two of them were hanged on a pole. It was written in the document about things of the time, before the king.

3 Subsequently, King Ahashverosh promoted Haman ben Hammedata the Agagite. He elevated him and put his seat above all the officials who were with him. [2]All the king's servants who were at the king's gateway would kneel and bow low to Haman, because the king had ordered this regarding him. But Mordokay didn't kneel and didn't bow low. [3]The king's servants who were at the king's gateway said to Mordokay, 'Why are you transgressing the king's order?' [4]But when they said it to him day by day, he didn't listen to them.

They told Haman, to see whether Mordokay's words would stand, because he had told them that he was a Yehudahite. [5]Haman saw that Mordokay was not kneeling or bowing low to him, and Haman filled with wrath, [6]but in his eyes he despised laying hand on Mordokay alone, because they had told him Mordokay's people, and Haman sought to annihilate all the Yehudahites who were in Ahashverosh's entire kingdom – Mordokay's people.

The lottery that meant death

[7]In the first month (i.e. the month of Nisan) in King Ahashverosh's twelfth year, they made *pur* (i.e. the lot) fall before Haman, from day to day and from month to month: [it fell on] the twelfth (i.e. the month of Adar). [8]Haman said to King Ahashverosh, 'There is a people, spread about and divided among the peoples in all the provinces in your kingdom, and their laws are different from every people. They don't act on the king's laws, and it's not advantageous for the king to let them be. [9]If it seems good to Your Majesty, it should be written down to obliterate them. I will weigh out 10,000 talents of silver into the hands of those who do the work, to bring into the king's treasuries.'

[10]The king removed his ring from on his hand and gave it to Haman ben Hammedata the Agagite, the Yehudahites' adversary. [11]The king said to Haman, 'The silver is given to you, and the people, to do with it as seems good in your eyes.'

[12]So the king's secretaries were called for in the first month, on the thirteenth day of it, and it was written down in accordance

with all that Haman had ordered, to the king's satraps and to the governors who were over each and every province and to the officials people by people, province by province, in accordance with its script, and people by people in accordance with its language, written in the name of King Ahashverosh and sealed with the king's ring. [13]Documents were sent by means of the runners to all the king's provinces regarding annihilating, killing and eliminating all the Yehudahites, from young to old, little ones and women, on one day, on the thirteenth of the twelfth month (i.e. Adar), and for despoiling them as plunder. [14]A copy of the document was to be given out as a law in each and every province, shown to all the peoples so that they would be ready for this day.

[15]The runners went out, driven by the king's word, and the law was given out in the Shushan fortess. While the king and Haman sat down to a banquet, the town of Shushan was perplexed.

The risk that needs taking

4 When Mordokay got to know of all that had been done, Mordokay tore his clothes and put on sack and earth. He went out into the middle of the town and cried out with a loud and bitter cry. [2]He came as far as before the king's gateway, because there was no coming into the king's gateway in sack clothing. [3]In each and every province, the place where the king's word and his law arrived, there was great mourning on the part of the Yehudahites, fasting, weeping and lamenting; sack and earth were laid down for most people.

[4]Esther's girls and her eunuchs came and told her, and the queen went all-a-tremble. She sent Mordokay clothes to put on so he could remove the sack from on him, but he didn't accept them. [5]Esther called for Hatak, one of the king's eunuchs whom he had put in place before her, and ordered him to Mordokay to get to know what this was and why this was happening.

[6]Hatak went out to Mordokay in the town square which was before the king's gateway [7]and Mordokay told him everything that had happened to him and the details about the silver that Haman said he would weigh out to the king's treasuries for the Yehudahites, to obliterate them. [8]He gave him a copy of the document containing the law that had been given out in Shushan for their annihilation, to let Esther see and to tell her, and to order her to come to the king and seek grace with him and enquire before him concerning her people.

[9]Hatak came and told Esther Mordokay's words, [10]but Esther said to Hatak and ordered him to Mordokay, [11]'All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that any man or woman who comes to the king in the inner courtyard who has not been called for – he has one law, to put them to death, unless the king extends to him the gold sceptre, and he lives. And I haven't been called for to come to the king these 30 days.'

The possibility of a non-miraculous miracle

[12]They told Mordokay Esther's words, [13]and Mordokay said to take back word to Esther: 'Don't imagine within yourself that you'll escape in the king's household better than all the Yehudahites, [14]because if you stay quite silent at this time, relief and rescue will arise for the Yehudahites from a place, but you and your father's household will perish. Who knows if it was for a time like this that you arrived at the royal position?'

[15]Esther said to take back word to Mordokay: [16]'Go assemble all the Yehudahites to be found in Shushan and fast for me. Don't eat or drink for three days, night or day. I, too, will fast with my girls in this way, and in this way I'll come to the king, which is not in accordance with the law. And as I perish, I perish.' [17]Mordokay passed it on and acted in accordance with everything that Esther ordered him.

5 On the third day, Esther put on royal dress and stood in the inner courtyard of the king's house, opposite the king's house, while the king was sitting on his royal throne in the royal house opposite the entrance to the house. [2]When the king saw Esther the queen standing in the courtyard, she gained grace in his eyes. The king extended to Esther the gold sceptre that was in his hand and Esther drew near and touched the head of the sceptre.

[3]The king said to her, 'What do you have, Esther, queen? What's your request? Up to half the kingdom, it will be given you.' [4]Esther said, 'If it seems good to the king, may the king and Haman come today to the banquet that I have made for him.' [5]The king said, 'Hurry Haman to act on Esther's word.' So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had made.

The girl who knows how to work her man

[6]The king said to Esther at the wine banquet, 'What's your petition? It will be given you. What's your request? Up to half the kingdom, it will be done.' [7]Esther answered, 'My petition, my request: [8]if I have found grace in the king's eyes and if it seems good to the king to grant my petition, to act on my request, may the king and Haman come to the banquet that I will make for them, and tomorrow I will act in accordance with the king's word.'

[9]Haman went out that day rejoicing and good-hearted, but when Haman saw Mordokay at the king's gateway and he didn't get up and didn't tremble because of him, Haman filled with wrath at Mordokay. [10]But Haman controlled himself and came to his house. He sent and got his friends and Zeresh his wife to come. [11]Haman recounted to them the splendour of his wealth and the large number of his sons and all the way that the king had promoted him and that he had elevated him above the officials and the king's servants. [12]And Haman said, 'Indeed, Esther the queen did not get anyone to come to the banquet with the king that she made, except me. Tomorrow, too, I am called to her with the king. [13]But all this does not seem advantageous to me every time that I see Mordokay the Yehudahite sitting at the king's gateway.'

[14]Zeresh his wife with all his friends said to him, 'They should make a pole 25 metres high, and in the morning you should say to the king that they should hang Mordokay on it; and go with the king to the banquet rejoicing.' The thing seemed good to Haman and he made the pole.

That night the king's sleep took flight and he said to bring the records document (the things about the time). They were being read

6 out before the king [2]and it was found written that Mordokay had told of Bigtana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs among the guards of the threshold, who had sought to lay a hand on King Ahashverosh. [3]The king said, 'What dignity or promotion was done for Mordokay for this?' The king's boys, his ministers, said, 'Nothing was done with him.'

Haman comes unstuck

[4]The king said, 'Who's in the courtyard?' Now Haman had come into the outer courtyard of the king's house to say to the king to hang Mordokay on the pole that he had prepared for him. [5]The king's boys said to him, 'There's Haman standing in the courtyard.' The king said, 'He's to come in.' [6]Haman came in, and the king said to him, 'What's to do with a man whose dignity the king wants?' Haman said to himself, 'For whom would the king want dignity more than me?'

[7]So Haman said to the king, 'A man whose dignity the king wants: [8]they should bring royal apparel that the king has worn and a horse on which the king has ridden and on whose head a royal diadem has been put, [9]and put the apparel and the horse into the hand of one of the king's noble officials. They should clothe the man whose dignity the king wants, have him ride on the horse through the town square and call out before him, 'This is what is done for the man whose dignity the king wants!'

[10]The king said to Haman, 'Hurry, get the apparel and the horse, as you've spoken, and do that for Mordokay the Yehudahite, who sits in the king's gateway. No word of all that you have spoken should fall.' [11]Haman got the apparel and the horse, clothed Mordokay, had him ride through the town square and called out before him, 'This is what is done for the man whose dignity the king wants.'

[12]Mordokay went back to the king's gateway while Haman hastened to his house, mourning and head covered. [13]Haman recounted to Zeresh his wife and to all his friends everything that had happened to him. His smart people and Zeresh his wife said to him, 'If Mordokay, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Yehudahite origin, you will not overcome him, because you will surely fall before him.'

Fates reversed

[14]While they were still speaking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and hastened to bring Haman to the banquet that Esther had made.

7 So the king and Haman came to drink with Esther the queen, [2]and the king said to Esther again on the second day at the wine banquet, 'What's your petition, Queen Esther? It will be given you. What's your request, up to half the kingdom? It will be done.' [3]Esther answered, 'If I've found grace in your eyes, Your Majesty, and if it seems good to Your Majesty, may my life be given me as my petition, and my people as my request, [4]because I and my people have been sold for annihilating, killing and obliterating. Had we been sold as servants and as maidservants, I would have kept silent, because the adversity would not be commensurate to the damage to the king.'

[5]King Ahashverosh said – he said to Esther the queen, 'Who's this? Where's this man who is so full of himself to act like this?' [6]Esther said, 'The man who's an adversary and an enemy is this bad man Haman.' As Haman was terrified before the king and the queen, [7]in his wrath the king set off from the wine banquet for the palace garden, while Haman stayed to seek for his life with Esther the queen, because he saw that a bad fate was certain for him from the king.

[8]When the king came back from the palace garden into the wine banquet house, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was. The king said, 'Is he also to violate the queen with me, in the house?' As the word went out from the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. [9]Harbonah, one of the eunuchs before the king, said, 'In addition, there's the pole that Haman made for Mordokay, who spoke something good for the king, standing in Haman's house, 25 metres high.' The king said, 'Hang him on it.'

The right to self-defence

[10]So they hanged Haman on the pole that he had set up for Mordokay, and the king's wrath subsided.

8 That day King Ahashverosh gave over the household of Haman, the Yehudahites' adversary, to Esther the queen, while Mordokay came before the king because Esther had told of what he was to her. [2]The king removed his ring, which he had taken away from Haman, and gave it to Mordokay, and Esther put Mordokay in charge of Haman's household.

[3]Esther again spoke before the king, and fell before his feet and cried. She sought grace from him to take away the bad action of Haman the Agagite, the intention that he had thought up against the Yehudahites. [4]The king extended to Esther the gold sceptre and Esther got up and stood before the king. [5]She said, 'If it seems good to the king, if I have found grace before him, if the thing seems proper before the king and I seem good in his eyes, may things be written to turn back the documents, the intention of Haman ben Hammedata the Agagite, which he wrote so as to obliterate the Yehudahites who are in all the king's provinces, [6]because how can I look upon the bad fate that will befall my people? How can I look upon my family's obliteration?'

[7]King Ahashverosh said to Esther the queen and to Mordokay the Yehudahite, 'Here, I have given Esther the household of Haman and they have hanged him on the pole because he put out his hand against the Yehudahites. [8]You yourselves – write as it seems good in your eyes concerning the Yehudahites in the king's name and seal it with the king's ring' (because a document that's been written in the king's name and sealed with the king's ring can't be turned back).

Rejoicing with relief

[9]So the king's secretaries were called at that time, in the third month (i.e. the month of Sivan) on the twenty-third of it, and it was written in accordance with all that Mordokay ordered, to the Yehudahites and to the satraps, the governors and the officials of the provinces that are from Hoddu as far as Kush, 127 provinces, province by province in accordance with its script, and people

by people in accordance with its language, and to the Yehudahites in accordance with their script and in accordance with their language.

[10]He wrote in King Ahashverosh's name, sealed it with the king's seal, and sent documents by the hand of the runners on horses, riding royal relay steeds, the offspring of racehorses, [11]that the king permitted the Yehudahites who were in each and every town to congregate and stand up for themselves, so as to annihilate, to kill and to obliterate the entire force of a people or province attacking them, little ones and women, and to plunder their spoil [12]on one day, in all King Ahashverosh's provinces, on the thirteenth of the twelfth month (i.e. the month of Adar), [13]a copy of the document to be given out as a law in each and every province, shown to all the peoples, so that the Yehudahites would be ready for this day to take redress from their enemies. [14]The runners went out riding royal relay steeds, hastening and driven by the king's word, and the law was given out in the Shushan fortess.

[15]When Mordokay went out from before the king in royal apparel, blue and white, a big gold crown, and a robe of fine linen and purple, the town of Shushan shouted and rejoiced. [16]For the Yehudahites there was light and rejoicing, joy and dignity. [17]In each and every province and in each and every town, in a place where the king's word and his law arrived, there was rejoicing and joy for the Yehudahites, a banquet and a good time. Many of the peoples of the country professed to be Yehudahites, because dread of the Yehudahites had fallen upon them.

The slaughter

9 So in the twelfth month (i.e. the month of Adar), on the thirteenth, the day when the king's word and his law were due to be acted on, on the day when the Yehudahites' enemies expected to be in power over them, that was turned round, so that the Yehudahites – they were in power over the people hostile to them. [2]The Yehudahites in their towns in all King Ahashverosh's provinces congregated to lay a hand on people who sought something bad for them, but no one stood up before them, because dread of them had fallen on all the peoples. [3]All the king's provincial officials, satraps, governors and people doing work were elevating the Yehudahites, because dread of Mordokay had fallen on them, [4]because Mordokay was big in the king's house and report of him was going through all the provinces, because the man Mordokay was getting bigger and bigger.

[5]So the Yehudahites struck down all their adversaries with a stroke of the sword, with killing and obliteration, and acted against the people hostile to them in accordance with what was acceptable to them. [6]In the Shushan fortess the Yehudahites killed and obliterated 500 people, [7]and killed Parshandata, Dalphon, Aspata, [8]Porata, Adalya, Aridata, [9]Parmashta, Arisay, Ariday and Vayzata, [10]the ten sons of Haman ben Hammedata, the Yehudahites' adversary, but they did not lay their hand on the plunder.

[11]That day the number of the people killed in the Shushan fortess came before the king, [12]and the king said to Esther the queen, 'Given that in the Shushan fortess the Yehudahites have slaughtered and obliterated 500 people, and Haman's ten sons, in the remainder of the king's provinces what have they done? But what's your petition? It will be given you. What else is your request? It will be done.' [13]Esther said, 'If it's seems good to the king, may it be given to the Yehudahites who are in Shushan tomorrow also to act in accordance with today's law, and may they hang Haman's ten sons on the pole.' [14]The king said this was to be done, and a law was given out in Shushan and they hanged Haman's ten sons.

The commemoration

[15]So the Yehudahites who were in Shushan congregated again on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and killed 300 people in Shushan, but did not lay their hand on the plunder. [16]The remainder of the Yehudahites, who were in the king's provinces, congregated and stood up for themselves and got relief from their enemies. They killed 75,000 of the people hostile to them, but did not lay their hand on the plunder, [17]on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar. They let be on its fourteenth and made it a day of banquet and rejoicing, [18]while the Yehudahites who were in Shushan congregated on its thirteenth and on its fourteenth, but let be on its fifteenth and made it a day of banquet and rejoicing. [19]That's why the rural Yehudahites, who live in the rural towns, make the fourteenth day of the month of Adar into rejoicing and banquet, a good time and one of sending portions one to his neighbour.

[20]Mordokay wrote down these things and sent documents to all the Yehudahites who were in all King Ahashverosh's provinces, near and far, [21]to lay upon them to make the fourteenth day of the month of Adar, and its fifteenth day, each and every year, [22]as the days when the Yehudahites got relief for themselves from their enemies and the month that turned for them from sadness to rejoicing and from grief to a good time – to make them days of banquet and celebration, and sending portions one to his neighbour and gifts to the needy.

[23]The Yehudahites accepted what they had begun to do and what Mordokay had written to them, [24]because Haman ben Hammedata the Agagite, the adversary of all the Yehudahites, had thought to obliterate the Yehudahites and had caused the *pur* to fall (i.e. the lot) so as to crush them and obliterate them. [25]But when it came before the king, he said with the document: his bad intention, which he had thought up against the Yehudahites, should come back on to his own head, and they should hang him and his sons on the pole. [26a]On account of this they called these days Purim, after the word *pur*.

A law that will last

[26b]On account of this, on account of all the words in this communiqué and what they had seen – on account of such things and what had come to them, [27]the Yehudahites implemented and accepted for themselves and for their offspring and for all who would join them, so that it should not pass away, to make these two days, in accordance with the document about them and in accordance with their time, each and every year, [28]these days being commemorated and made in each and every generation, family, province and town. These days of Purim will not pass away from among the Yehudahites, and their commemoration will not cease from

their offspring.

[29]Esther the queen, daughter of Abihayil, and Mordokay the Yehudahite wrote with all force to implement this second communiqué about Purim. [30]He sent documents to all the Yehudahites in the 127 provinces in Ahashverosh's realm, words about well-being and truthfulness, [31]to implement these days of Purim at their times as Mordokay the Yehudahite and Esther the queen implemented them for themselves, and as they had implemented for themselves and for their offspring words about the fasts and their outcry. [32]Esther's word implemented these statements about Purim and it was written down in the document.

10 King Ahashverosh put a workforce on the country and the shores across the sea. [2]All his forceful and strong action, and the detail about the importance of Mordokay which the king conferred on him, are written down on the document with the things of the time regarding the kings of Maday and Paras, aren't they, [3]because Mordokay the Yehudahite was second-in-command to King Ahashverosh, important to the Yehudahites and accepted by the large number of his brothers, enquiring after what was good for his people and speaking of well-being for all its offspring.

Job

The book of Job is something like the script for a play – there's no indication that it was performed, but it could have been. The main part of the book is an argument between Job, three of his friends, an angry young man who appears later, and then Yahweh himself, who eventually responds to Job. The framework for the argument is the story of how Job, someone exemplary in his commitment to Yahweh and someone who has done really well in life, loses everything in a series of calamities, and how Yahweh eventually restores him. The argument happens in poetry, which puts us on the track of the fact that this isn't simply the transcript of something that happened, though the basic story line reflects things that happen often enough, and in this sense I imagine it is based on fact.

But the book's point isn't dependent on its being factual. The point about the book is to discuss various approaches to handling the way that people do experience the kind of horrifying tragedy that comes to Job. In this work, discussing the issue doesn't mean trying to explain why people suffer. It's not about the problem of evil, or theodicy, in this sense. It's more about how one lives with an experience like Job's. And it presupposes that the experience of tragedy raises even bigger questions about the very nature of our relationship with God and the basis of that relationship.

Making these questions the basis of an argument between the participants enables the book to look at the questions from different angles. All these angles have some truth to them, though they are not all very relevant to Job.

1. The book's starting point is that there is a relationship of deep mutual commitment between Job and God. But that starting point raises the question whether Job is committed to God because it means God blesses him. The story therefore imagines God agreeing that Job should be tested by taking away his blessings, to see how he reacts; and Job passes the test. So the first insight about the relationship between God and us is that it's based on the free trust and commitment between God and us, not on what we get out of it; and that tragedy can be a means of testing us. (In this introduction to the book, a key role is played by 'The Adversary', who is a member of God's staff whose job it is to make sure that people don't get away with things that they shouldn't get away with. He is a safeguard against God being too soft. In English translations, he is often referred to as Satan, but this is misleading.)
2. The second insight about the relationship is that Job can have an exceptional freedom in expressing his grief, anguish and puzzlement, and in expressing to God his anger, frustration and sense of betrayal (see chapters 3—27).
3. A third insight is expressed time and time again by Job's three friends (interwoven in chapters 3—27), who know that tragedy often issues from our disobedience. The problem is that often it does not. But often it does, so their insight is a real one, though it's irrelevant to Job.
4. The poem about wisdom in Job 28 reminds readers that awe and thus obedience in relation to God is the key to being smart.
5. The insight expressed by the angry young man (chapters 32—37) is that tragedy can be something through which God speaks to you and through which he draws you nearer to himself. It too is a real insight, but not very relevant to Job.
6. When God appears (chapters 38—41) he reminds Job that he is God and Job isn't, and that the world doesn't circulate round Job. If Job thinks he can run the world better than God, he should try. Tragedy drives one to recognize that one must and can trust God and submit to God.
7. The close of the story affirms that in the end God is faithful. The fact that most people's stories don't end as comfortingly as Job's makes it all the more important to affirm this truth about God.

The man of integrity

1 There was a man in the country of Uz named Iyyob [Job]. That man was a person of integrity and upright, in awe of God and turning aside from what is bad. [2]There had been born to him seven sons and three daughters. [3]His acquisitions comprised 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of cattle, 500 she-donkeys and a very large servant body. That man was bigger than all eastern people.

[4]His sons used to make a feast at the house of an individual on his day, and send and call for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. [5]When the days of the feast had made their round, Iyyob would send and make them sacred. He would start early in the morning and offer up burnt offerings for the number of them all, because (Iyyob said) 'Perhaps my children have done wrong and "blessed" God inside.' In this way Iyyob would act continually.

[6]There was a day when the divine beings came to take their stand with Yahweh. The adversary, too, came among them. [7]Yahweh said to the adversary, 'From where do you come?' The adversary answered Yahweh, 'From roaming on the earth and from walking about on it'. [8]Yahweh said to the adversary, 'Have you applied your mind to my servant Iyyob, because there's no one like him on the earth, a person of integrity and upright, in awe of God and turning aside from what is bad?'

[9]The adversary answered Yahweh, 'Is it for nothing that Iyyob lives in awe of God? [10]Have you yourself not hedged about him and about his household and about everything that he has, all round? You've blessed the action of his hands, and his acquisitions have spread through the earth. [11]However, put out your hand, please, and touch everything that he has. If he doesn't "bless" you to your face . . .'

[12]Yahweh said to the adversary, 'There, everything that he has is in your hand. Only against him you may not put out your hand.' So the adversary went out from being in Yahweh's presence.

When life falls apart

[13]There was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in the house of their oldest brother [14]when an

envoy came to Iyyob and said, ‘The cattle were ploughing and the she-donkeys were pasturing next to them, [15]and Sabeans fell and took them, and struck down the boys with the edge of the sword. I alone am the only one who has escaped to tell you.’
[16]While this man was still speaking, another came and said, ‘Fire from God fell from the heavens and burned up the flocks and the boys, and consumed them. I alone am the only one who has escaped to tell you.’
[17]While this one was still speaking, another came and said, ‘Kasdites made three columns and made a dash on the camels and took them, and struck down the boys with the edge of the sword. I alone am the only one who has escaped to tell you.’
[18]While this one was still speaking, another came and said, ‘Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in the house of their oldest brother, [19]and there – a big wind came from across the wilderness and touched the four corners of the house. It fell on the young people and they died. I alone am the only one who has escaped to tell you.’
[20]Iyyob got up, tore his coat and shaved his head, fell to the ground and bowed low, [21]and said, ‘Naked I came out of my mother’s womb, and naked I will go back there. Yahweh gave and Yahweh has taken. Yahweh’s name be blessed.’
[22]In all this Iyyob did not do wrong. He did not ascribe corruptness to God.

The wise silence of friends

2 There was a day when the divine beings came to take their stand with Yahweh. The adversary, too, came among them to take his stand with Yahweh. [2]Yahweh said to the adversary, ‘From where do you come?’ The adversary answered Yahweh, ‘From roaming on the earth and from walking about on it’. [3]Yahweh said to the adversary, ‘Have you applied your mind to my servant Iyyob, because there’s no one like him on the earth, a person of integrity and upright, in awe of God and turning aside from what is bad? He’s still holding strongly to his integrity whereas you incited me against him to swallow him up for nothing.’
[4]The adversary answered Yahweh, ‘Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for the sake of his life. [5]However, put out your hand, please, and touch his bones and his flesh. If he doesn’t “bless” you to your face . . .’
[6]Yahweh said to the adversary, ‘There he is, in your hand. Only keep his life.’ [7]So the adversary went out from Yahweh’s presence and struck Iyyob down with a bad inflammation from the sole of his foot as far as the crown of his head, [8]and he got himself a piece of pot to scratch himself with as he was sitting among ashes.
[9]His wife said to him, ‘Are you still holding strongly to your integrity? “Bless” God and die.’ [10]He said to her, ‘Like the speaking of one of the villainous women, you too speak. We accept good fortune from Yahweh. Do we not accept bad fortune?’ In all this Iyyob didn’t do wrong with his lips.
[11]Three friends of Iyyob heard about all these bad things that had come upon him, and they came each one from his place: Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Tsophar the Na’amatite. They met together by agreement to come to express their sorrow to him and to comfort him, [12]but they raised their eyes from afar and didn’t recognize him. They raised their voice and cried. They ripped, each one, his coat and they threw earth over their heads, to the heavens.
[13]They sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights with no one speaking a word to him because they saw that his suffering was very great.

Iyyob: Perish the day I was born

3 Subsequently, Iyyob opened his mouth and slighted his day. [2]Iyyob avowed:

[3]Perish the day on which I was born,
and the night that said ‘A male has been conceived!’
[4]That day should be darkness,
God above should not enquire about it,
and light should not shine on it.
[5]Darkness and deathly shadow should reclaim it,
cloud should dwell over it.
Blackness by day should terrify it,
[6]that night – shadow should take it.
It should not be one with the days of the year,
it should not come in the number of months.
[7]There, that night should be barren,
no resounding should come in it.
[8]The people who curse a day should damn it,
the people ready to rouse Livyatan [Leviathan].
[9]Its dusk stars should be dark,
it should hope for light when there is none.
It should not see the eyelids of dawn,
[10]because it did not shut the doors of my womb,
and conceal oppression from my eyes.

Iyyob: Life means turmoil, death means rest

[11]Why did I not die at birth,
go out from the womb and breathe my last?
[12]Why did knees meet me,

or why breasts that I would suck?
[13]Because now I would be lying and calm,
I would have slept then and would rest myself,
[14]With kings and the counsellors of the earth,
who build up ruins for themselves,
[15]Or with officials who have gold,
who fill their houses with silver.
[16]Or why was I not like a buried stillborn,
like babies that have not seen the light?
[17]There the faithless leave off causing turmoil;
there people wearied of energy rest.
[18]All at once prisoners relax;
they don't hear the boss's voice.
[19]Small and big are there;
the servant is free of his master.

[20]Why does he give light to the oppressed,
life to the bitter in spirit,
[21]People who wait for death but there is none,
who search for it more than hidden treasures,
[22]Who rejoice with gladness,
who are joyful, because they find a grave,
[23]To the man whose way has concealed itself,
and whom God has hedged about?
[24]Because my sighing comes before my food,
my groans pour out like water.
[25]Because I dreaded something and it happened to me,
what I was terrified of comes to me.
[26]I was not at ease, I was not calm,
I did not rest, and turmoil came.

Eliphaz: Can a mere human being be in the right in God's eyes?

4 Eliphas the Temanite answered:
[2]Should one venture a word to you, will you be distraught?
but holding back utterances: who could?
[3]Here, you have disciplined many,
you would strengthen weak hands.
[4]Your utterances would enable one who was collapsing to get up,
you would firm up bending knees.
[5]Yet now it comes to you, and you are distraught;
it touches you, and you are fearful.
[6]Is your awe not your assurance,
and the integrity of your ways your hope?
[7]Be mindful, please: who is that person free of guilt who has perished,
where did the upright people disappear?
[8]As I have seen, the people who plough trouble,
and sow oppression, reap them.
[9]By God's breath they perish,
by his angry blast they come to a finish.
[10]The lion's roar, the cub's sound,
the teeth of the whelps – they crumple;
[11]The tiger perishes for lack of prey,
the cougar's children scatter.

[12]A word stole to me,
my ear got a whisper of it.
[13]In uneases from visions of the night,
when deep sleep falls on human beings,
[14]Dread befell me, and trembling,
and brought dread to the mass of my bones.
[15]A wind was sweeping over my face,
it was bristling the hair on my flesh.
[16]It was halting, but I didn't recognize its appearance,

the form in front of my eyes.
I heard a murmur, a voice:
[17]'Can a mere human being be in the right before God,
can a man be pure before his maker?'
[18]If he does not trust his servants,
and attributes folly to his envoys,
[19]How much more people who dwell in mud houses,
whose foundation is in the dirt,
so that people crush them before [they crush] a moth.
[20]Between morning and evening they are struck down;
without anyone noticing they perish permanently.
[21]Is it not that, when their tent cord is pulled up from them,
they die, and without smartness?

Eliphaz: God frustrates the intentions of the shrewd

5 Please call – is anyone going to answer you,
and to which of the sacred ones will you turn your face?

[2]Because provocation kills the dense person,
passion puts the simple-minded to death.
[3]I myself have seen a dense person who was taking root,
but I have immediately declared his home cursed.
[4]His children will be far from deliverance;
they will collapse in the gateway and with no one to rescue.
[5]A hungry person will eat his harvest, will take it into baskets,
and thirsty people will pant after their resources.
[6]Because trouble does not grow out from dirt,
oppression does not spring up from the ground.
[7]Because a human being may be born for oppression
and plagues go flying lofty.

[8]However, I myself enquire of God,
and before God I set my words,
[9]One who does big things of which there is no searching out,
extraordinary deeds until there is no numbering,
[10]The one who gives rain on the face of the earth,
sends water on the face of the countryside,
[11]Setting the lowly on high,
so that mourners soar to deliverance,
[12]Contravening the intentions of the shrewd,
so that their hands don't achieve adeptness,
[13]Capturing smart people through their shrewdness,
so that the counsel of the clever sweeps away.
[14]By day they meet with darkness,
at noon they grope as in the night.
[15]But he delivers the needy person from the sword of their mouth,
from the hand of the strong;
[16]So there is hope for the poor person,
and evil shuts its mouth.

Eliphaz: God wounds but binds up

[17]There – the good fortune of the man God reproves;
so don't reject Shadday's correction.
[18]Because he is the one who wounds but binds up,
he hits but his hands heal.
[19]During six attacks he will rescue you;
during seven, bad things will not affect you.
[20]In famine he redeems you from dying;
in battle – from the hands of the sword.
[21]During the scourge of the tongue, you will hide,
you will not be afraid of destruction when it comes.
[22]Of destruction and of blight you will make fun;
you will not be afraid of the animals of the country.

[23]Because your pact is with the stones of the field,
and the animals of the wild are made at peace with you.
[24]You will acknowledge that there is well-being in your tent;
you will attend to your home and not miss anything.
[25]You will acknowledge that your offspring are many,
your descendants like the grass of the earth.
[26]You will come to the grave in fullness,
as a sheaf comes up at its time.
[27]There – we have searched this out and it is so;
listen to it, acknowledge it for yourself.

Iyyob: There's no help for me

6 Iyyob answered:

[2]If only my provocation could be truly weighed,
and people could lift on the scales the malice shown to me, altogether.
[3]Because it would now be heavier than the sand of the seas;
that is why my words have been wild.
[4]Because Shadday's arrows are in me,
their poison my spirit drinks up,
God's terrors line up against me.

[5]Does a wild donkey bray over grass,
does an ox bellow over its fodder?
[6]Is something insipid eaten without salt,
is there taste in the juice of a mallow?
[7]My appetite refuses to touch;
those things are like food for when I am ill.
[8]If only my request would come about,
and God would grant my hope,
[9]That God would show willing and crush me,
let loose his hand and cut me off.
[10]It would still be my consolation
(though I would contort with writhing that wouldn't spare),
because I have not disowned the things said by the Sacred One.

[11]What energy do I have that I should wait,
what end do I have that I should prolong my life?
[12]Is my energy the energy of stones,
or is my flesh copper?
[13]Surely there is no help for me in myself,
and adeptness has driven itself away from me.

Iyyob: You call this friendship?

[14]As for one who refuses commitment to his friend,
he abandons awe for Shadday.
[15]My brothers have broken faith like a wadi,
like the canyons with wadis that pass away,
[16]That are dark with ice,
when snow piles over them.
[17]At the time when they flow, they've expired;
in the heat, they've disappeared from their place.
[18]Caravans divert their path;
they go up into the wasteland and perish.
[19]Caravans from Tema have looked to them,
travelling groups from Sheba have hoped in them.
[20]They're confounded, because they had trusted;
they came right to it and they're shamed.

[21]Because now you've become nothing;
you see something fearful and you're afraid.
[22]Did I say to you, 'Give me –
out of your energy pay a bribe on my behalf?

[23]Save me from the hand of my adversary,
from the hand of violent people redeem me'?
[24]Instruct me, and I myself will be quiet;
enable me to understand how I've erred.
[25]How painful are upright things that have been said –
but how does reproof from you reprove?
[26]Do you think up utterances for reproof,
and are the sayings of a despairing man for the wind?
[27]Would you also make the lot fall for an orphan,
and barter over your friend?
[28]But now, show willing, turn your face to me;
if I lie to your face . . .
[29]Please turn back, there should not be evil;
turn back, my right standing is still intact.
[30]Is there evil on my tongue,
or can my palate not discern malice?

Iyyob to God: A human being has hard service on earth

7 A mere human being has hard service on earth, doesn't he,
and his days are like the days of an employee,
[2]Like a servant who longs for shadow,
and like an employee who hopes for his wages.
[3]Thus I have been given months of emptiness as my domain,
nights of oppression have been counted out for me.
[4]If I lie down, I say
'When shall I get up?'
But evening drags on,
and I am full of tossings until morning twilight.
[5]My flesh is clothed in maggots,
and clods of earth,
my skin has become broken and oozing.
[6]My days have been swifter than a weaver's shuttle,
and they've come to a finish in an absence of thread.
[7]Be mindful that my life is wind;
my eye will not again see good things.
[8]The eye that sees me will not behold me;
your eye will be on me, but I will be no more.
[9]A cloud comes to a finish and goes;
so the person who goes down to She'ol does not come up.
[10]He does not go back to his home again;
his place does not recognize him again.

Iyyob: What are human beings that you pay them so much attention?

[11]Indeed I will not hold back my mouth;
I will speak in the pressure of my spirit,
I will talk in the bitterness of my entire being.
[12]Am I the Sea or the Dragon,
that you set a watch over me?
[13]When I've said, 'My bed will comfort me,
my mattress will carry part of my talk',
[14]You scare me with dreams,
and terrify me with visions.
[15]My entire being would choose strangling,
death, away from my bones.
[16]I've rejected it, I shall not live permanently;
leave off from me, because my days are hollow.

[17]What is a mere human being that you make him great,
and that you set your mind on him,
[18]That you attend to him each morning
and test him every moment?
[19]How long will you not look away from me,
not slacken hold of me until I swallow my spit?

[20]If I've done wrong, what do I do to you,
you who preserve humanity?
Why have you made me into a target for yourself
so that I've become a burden to myself?
[21]Why do you not carry my rebellion
and let my waywardness pass?
Because I shall now lie down in the earth,
and when you look urgently for me, I will be no more.

Bildad: On learning from the past

8 Bildad the Shuhite answered:

[2]How long will you utter these things?
– the sayings of your mouth are a massive wind.
[3]Does God twist the exercise of authority,
does Shadday twist what is right?
[4]If your sons did wrong in relation to him,
he sent them into the hand of their rebellion.
[5]If you yourself look urgently for God,
and seek for grace with Shadday,
[6]If you're clean and upright,
surely he will now arise for you
and he will make good your faithful estate:
[7]your beginning may have been small,
but your end will grow very great.
[8]Because ask the former generation, please,
set your mind to what their ancestors searched out,
[9]Because we are of yesterday and we don't know,
because our days on earth are a shadow.
[10]They can instruct you, can't they, and say to you,
and get utterances out from their mind?
[11]Can papyrus get tall where there's no marsh,
can reed grow without water?
[12]While still in its shoot form when it's not cut,
it would wither before any grass does.
[13]So are the paths of all who put God out of mind;
the hope of the impious man perishes.
[14]His assurance breaks off,
his trust is a spider's house.
[15]He relies on his house but it doesn't stand;
he takes strong hold of it but it does not hold.
[16]While he may be moist before the sun,
and his shoot may go out over his garden,
[17]His roots may interweave over a heap,
may behold a house among stones,
[18]If they swallow him up from his place,
it denies him: 'I didn't see you.'
[19]There, that's the joy of his way;
and from the earth another springs.
[20]On the other hand, God does not reject the man of integrity,
and does not take strong hold of the hand of the person who acts badly.
[21]He will fill your mouth with laughter again,
and your lips will shout.
[22]The people hostile to you will clothe themselves in disgrace;
the tent of the faithless will be no more.

Iyyob: God does not answer

9 Iyyob answered:

[2]Truly I acknowledge that it is so;
but how can a mere human being be in the right with God?
[3]If he wants to argue with him,
he doesn't answer him once in a thousand.

[4]Smart in mind and firm in energy –
who has been tough with him and been at peace? –
[5]The one who moves mountains though they don't acknowledge him,
who overturns them in his anger,
[6]Who shakes the earth from its place
so that its pillars shudder,
[7]Who says to the sun that it should not shine
and seals over the stars,
[8]Who spread out the heavens by himself
and trod on the back of the sea,
[9]Who is the maker of the Bear, Orion,
Pleiades and the rooms of the South,
[10]Who does big things, beyond searching out,
extraordinary deeds, beyond numbering.
[11]If he were to pass by me, I would not see,
were he to sweep past, I would not discern him.
[12]If he were to snatch away, who could make him turn back,
who could say to him, 'What are you doing?'
[13]God – he doesn't turn back his anger;
under him Rahab's helpers bow low.
[14]How much less can I be one to answer him,
to choose words against him?
[15]Though I am in the right, I would not answer him;
I would ask for grace from the one who exercises authority for me.
[16]If I called and he answered me,
I would not trust that he would give ear to my voice,
[17]He who crushes me for a trifle,
and multiples my wounds for nothing.
[18]He doesn't let me get my breath back,
but fills me with bitterness.
[19]If it's about energy – there, he is firm;
if it's about exercising authority – who can enable me to meet him?
[20]Though I were in the right, my mouth would declare me in the wrong;
I am a man of integrity, but it could declare me crooked.

Iyyob: There is no arbiter between us

[21]Whereas I am a man of integrity, I don't acknowledge myself,
I reject my life.
[22]It's all the same, that's why I say
'He finishes off the person of integrity and the faithless.'
[23]If a scourge suddenly puts to death,
he ridicules the plight of people who are free of guilt.
[24]When the earth is given into the hand of the faithless,
he covers the face of the people who exercise authority in it –
if not he, then who is it?

[25]My days have been swifter than a runner;
as they've taken flight, they haven't seen good things.
[26]They've swept by like boats of reed,
as an eagle that swoops on prey.
[27]If my saying is, 'I'll put my talk out of mind,
I'll abandon my look and be cheerful',
[28]I'm terrified of all my pains,
I know that you won't hold me free of guilt.
[29]I am the one who'll be declared in the wrong;
why then should I get weary in vain?
[30]If I wash with soap,
and cleanse the palms of my hands with caustic,
[31]You would then dip me in a pit,
so that my clothes would take offence at me.
[32]Because he isn't a man like me so I could answer him,
should we come to make a ruling together.
[33]No, there's no arbiter between us
who might lay his hand on the two of us.

[34]Were he to remove his club from upon me,
so that dread of him might not terrify me,
[35]I would speak and not be afraid of him,
because I am not like this in myself.

10 With my entire being I loathe my life;
I shall let loose my talk for myself,
I shall speak in the bitterness of my being.
[2]I will say to God, ‘Don’t declare me in the wrong;
let me know what it is you argue with me about.
[3]Does it seem good to you that you oppress,
that you reject the labour of your fists
and smile on the counsel of faithless people?

Iyyob: Do you have eyes of flesh?

[4]Do you have eyes of flesh,
do you see as a mere human being sees?
[5]Are your days like the days of a mere human being,
are your years like the years of a man,
[6]That you seek for my waywardness,
enquire after my wrongdoings?
[7]Although you know that I’m not in the wrong,
and there’s no one who rescues from your hand.
[8]Whereas your hands shaped me and made me,
altogether, all round, you’ve swallowed me up.
[9]Be mindful, please, that you made me like mud:
but you turn me back to earth.
[10]Did you not pour me out like milk,
set me like cheese?
[11]You clothed me with skin and flesh,
wove me with bones and sinews.
[12]You showed me life and commitment,
your attention watched over my spirit.
[13]But these things you hid in your mind,
I know that this was in your thinking:
[14]If I did wrong, you would watch me,
and not hold me free of the guilt of my waywardness.
[15]If I’m in the wrong, alas for me:
but if I am in the right, I can’t lift my head,
Full of being slighted,
drenched with my humbling.
[16]Should [my head] stand high, you’d hunt me like a cub,
and again show extraordinary power against me.
[17]You bring new witnesses in front of me,
increase your vexation towards me,
changes of hard service with me.

[18]So why did you get me out of the womb?
– I could have breathed my last, and eye not seen me.
[19]I could have been as if I never was,
I could have been carried from the womb to the grave.
[20]My days are few, aren’t they, so leave off,
get away from me so I may look cheerful for a moment,
[21]Before I go (and I will not come back)
to a country of darkness and deathly shadow,
[22]A land of gloom like darkness,
deathly shadow without order,
so that it shines like dark.

Tsophar: Can you plumb God’s depth?

11 Tsophar the Na’amatite answered:

[2]Should an abundance of words not be answered,

or should a man with lip be treated as in the right?
[3]Your prattle may silence human beings,
you may ridicule and there may be no one to rebuke,
[4]You may say ‘My grasp of things is clean,
and I have been pure in your eyes’,
[5]However, would that God might speak
and open his lips with you,
[6]And tell you the secrets of being smart,
because there are two sides to adeptness and you should acknowledge
that God lets some of your waywardness be forgotten for you.

[7]Could you find God’s reaches,
or find Shadday’s completeness?
[8]The loftiness of the heavens – what can you do,
deeper than She’ol – what can you know?
[9]Its measure is longer than the earth,
wider than the sea.
[10]If he sweeps by and takes captive and congregates,
who can turn him back?
[11]Because he knows empty men;
when he sees trouble, does he not discern?
[12]A hollow man will get a mind
when a wild donkey is born a human being.
[13]If you direct your mind
and spread your palms towards him,
[14]If there is trouble in your hand, put it far away,
and don’t let evil dwell in your tents,
[15]Because then you will lift your face, free of blemish,
and you will be constrained, but you won’t be afraid.
[16]Because you yourself will put trouble out of mind,
you’ll remember it as water that has passed by.
[17]Your life span will rise brighter than noonday;
though it be gloomy, it will become like morning.
[18]You’ll be confident, because there’ll be hope;
when you search, you’ll take your rest in confidence.
[19]You’ll lie down and there’ll be no one to disturb,
and many will seek your goodwill.
[20]But the eyes of the faithless will fail,
retreat vanishes from them,
their hope is a dying breath.

Iyyob: You’re so smart

12 Iyyob answered:

[2]Truly you are the people
and smartness will die with you.
[3]I too have a mind like you, I don’t fall lower than you,
and in whose thinking are there not things like these?
[4]I shall become one who is a laughing stock to his friend,
who calls to God and he answers;
one in the right, a man of integrity, is a laughing stock.
[5]While there is contempt for calamity in the thought of the person who is secure,
it is prepared for people whose foot slips.
[6]Tents stay at ease for robbers
and people who provoke God have confidence,
as people whom God has brought into his hand.

[7]However, please ask the animals so they can instruct you,
and the birds of the heavens so they can tell you,
[8]Or talk to the earth so it may instruct you,
and so the fish of the sea can recount it to you.
[9]Who does not acknowledge, among all these,
that Yahweh’s hand has done this,
[10]The one in whose hand is the life of every living thing,

and the spirit of all human flesh?
[11]The ear tests utterances, doesn't it,
as the palate tastes food for itself.
[12]Among the aged lies smartness,
in length of days lies discernment.

[13]With him are smartness and strength,
to him belong counsel and discernment.
[14]On one hand, he tears down and it is not built up,
he locks up a man and he is not released.
[15]On the other, he holds back the water and it dries up,
he sends it off and it overwhelms the country.
[16]With him are vigour and adeptness,
to him belong the person who goes astray and the one who leads astray.

Iyyob: Just listen, will you?

[17]He makes counsellors go stripped,
makes people who exercise authority go crazy.
[18]He loosens the bond put on by kings,
ties a belt round their hips.
[19]He makes priests go stripped,
overthrows the enduring.
[20]He removes speech from trustworthy men,
takes the discretion of elders.
[21]He pours contempt on leaders,
slackens the belt of the strong.
[22]He reveals mysteries from the darkness,
gets deathly shadow out into the light.
[23]He lifts up nations and obliterates them,
expands nations and leads them.
[24]He removes the mind from the heads of a country's people,
and makes them wander in a wasteland where there's no way.
[25]They grope in the darkness where there is no light,
and he makes them wander like a drunk.

13 There, my eye has seen all this,
my ear has heard and understood it.
[2]Corresponding to your knowledge, I too know;
I don't fall lower than you.
[3]However, I myself will speak to Shadday,
I want to reprove God.
[4]However, you are smearers of falsehood,
non-entity physicians, all of you.
[5]If only you would simply be quiet;
it would be smartness for you.
[6]Please listen to my reproof,
heed the arguments from my lips.
[7]Is it for God that you speak evil,
or for him that you speak deceitfully?
[8]Is it for him that you show regard,
or for God that you argue?
[9]Would it be good if he searched you out,
would you play about with him as one plays about with a mere human being?
[10]He would reprove you strongly,
even if you covertly show regard.
[11]His dignity would terrify you, wouldn't it,
and dread of him would fall on you.
[12]Your reminders are aphorisms made of ash,
your responses are responses made of mud.

[13]Be quiet for me and I myself will speak;
there will befall me whatever may.
[14]Why do I lift my flesh between my teeth,
put my life into the palms of my hands?

[15]There, though he may slay me, I will not wait,
yet I will defend my ways to his face.
[16]That, too, will be deliverance for me,
that an impious person does not come before him.
[17]Listen attentively to my utterances,
to my declaration in your ears.

Iyyob: God, why do you conceal your face?

[18]Here, please, I have lined up a case;
I know that I am the one who will prove to be in the right.
[19]Who is the one who will argue with me?
– because now I would be quiet and breathe my last.
[20]Yet don't do two things with me,
then I need not conceal myself from your face:
[21]Take the palm of your hand far from me;
may dread of you not scare me.
[22]Call and I will be the one who answers,
or I will speak and you speak back to me.
[23]How many are my acts of waywardness and my wrongdoings?
– make known to me my rebellion and my wrongdoing.

[24]Why do you conceal your face,
and think of me as an enemy to you?
[25]Do you frighten a leaf that's being blown away,
do you pursue dried-up chaff,
[26]That you should write down bitter things for me
and make me own the wayward acts of my youth,
[27]Put my feet in the stocks,
keep watch on all my paths,
put a mark on the roots of my feet?

[28]And that is one who wears out like something rotten,
like a garment moth has eaten.

14 A human being, born of a woman,
is short in days and full of turmoil.
[2]Like a flower, he comes up but withers,
takes flight like a shadow and does not stand.
[3]Yes, at this person you open your eye,
and bring me into making a ruling with you.
[4]Who can bring clean from defiled?
– not one person.
[5]If his days are determined, the number of his months is with you,
you have set his limits and he cannot pass them,
[6]Turn away from him so that he may leave off,
until he's happy with his day, like an employee.

Iyyob: If only you would hide me in She'ol

[7]Because there is hope for a tree;
if it is cut down, it can renew itself again,
and its sucker will not leave off.
[8]If its root grows old in the earth,
and its stump dies in the earth,
[9]At the scent of water it will bud
and make a shoot like a plant.
[10]But a man – he dies and is prostrate;
a human being breathes his last, and where is he?
[11]The water goes from a sea,
a river becomes parched and dry,
[12]And a man lies down and does not get up,
until the heavens are no longer.
They don't wake up,
they don't rise from their sleep.

[13]If only you would hide me in She'ol,
conceal me until your anger turns back,
Set a limit for me and be mindful of me:
[14]if a man were to die, could he come to life?
All the days of my hard service
I would wait until my renewal came.
[15]You would call and I myself would answer you;
for the making of your hands you would long.
[16]Because now when you counted my steps,
you would not keep watch for my wrongdoings.
[17]My rebellion would be sealed up in a pouch;
you would coat over my waywardness.

[18]However, a falling mountain crumbles,
and a crag dislodges from its place,
[19]Water wears away stones,
its torrents wash away the earth from the ground:
And you obliterate a mere human being's hope;
[20]you overpower him permanently and he goes;
you alter his face and send him off.
[21]His sons find honour but he doesn't know,
or they are insignificant and he doesn't discern it.
[22]Only, his flesh hurts him
and his own self grieves for him.

Eliphaz: Are you really so smart?

15 Eliphaz the Temanite answered:

[2]Would a smart man answer with windy knowledge,
fill his belly with the east wind,
[3]Argue with talk that's no use,
and utterances by which he cannot profit?
[4]Indeed you – you contravene awe,
you restrain talk before God.
[5]Because your waywardness teaches your mouth,
you choose the tongue of shrewd people.
[6]Your mouth declares you in the wrong, not I;
your lips testify against you.

[7]Are you the first human being who was born,
or were you birthed before the hills?
[8]Do you listen in God's cabinet,
or do you restrain smartness to yourself?
[9]What do you know and we don't know it,
or understand and it is not in our possession?
[10]Among us are a grey-haired man, an old man,
mightier in days than your father.
[11]Are God's comforts too small for you,
a word in gentleness with you?
[12]Why does your mind capture you,
why do your eyes flash,
[13]That you turn back your spirit on God
and let out your utterances from your mouth?
[14]What is a human being that he should be clean,
one born of woman that he should be in the right?
[15]There, in his sacred ones he does not trust,
and the heavens are not clean in his eyes.
[16]How much less one offensive and foul,
a man drinking evil like water.
[17]I will explain, listen to me,
and what I have beheld I will recount,
[18]Things that smart people tell,
and have not concealed, from their ancestors.
[19]To them alone the land was given,

when no stranger passed among them.

Eliphaz: What happens to the faithless

[20]All the days of the faithless man, he writhes,
the number of years that are hidden for the violent man.
[21]Dreadful sounds are in his ears;
when he is doing well, a robber comes upon him.
[22]He is not sure of coming back from darkness;
he is spied over for the sword.
[23]He wanders about for bread, where is it?
– he knows that the day of darkness is prepared, at his hand.
[24]Pressure terrifies him, anguish overwhelms him,
like a king ready to attack.
[25]Because he stretched out his hand against God,
acted the strong man against Shadday.
[26]He runs against him head down
with the thickness of his shields' backs,
[27]Because he has covered his face with fat
and put brawn on his thighs.
[28]But he will dwell in ruined towns,
houses that people don't live in,
that have prepared to be heaps.
[29]He will not be wealthy, his resources will not rise up;
their gains will not extend over the land.
[30]He will not depart from darkness,
flame will wither his shoot;
he will depart by the wind from his mouth.

[31]He should not trust in emptiness, leading himself astray,
because emptiness will be his recompense.
[32]Before his time he will wither;
his branches will not be verdant.
[33]He will do violence to his unripe grapes like a vine,
he will throw off his blossom like an olive tree.
[34]Because the impious man's assembly is barren,
and fire consumes the tents of one who gives bribes.
[35]He conceives oppression and gives birth to trouble;
their womb prepares guile.

Iyyob: Comforters? More like troublemakers

16 Iyyob answered:

[2]I have heard many things like these;
all of you are oppressive comforters.
[3]Is there a limit to windy words –
what ails you that you answer?
[4]I too could speak like you
if you yourselves were in my own place.
I could sound out against you in utterances
and shake my head over you.
[5]I could firm you up with my speech;
the moving of my lips could hold things back.

[6]If I speak, my hurt does not hold back;
but if I leave off, what goes from me?
[7]Indeed he has now worn me out;
you have desolated my whole assembly.
[8]You have shrivelled me, it's become a witness;
my gauntness rises up against me, it testifies against me.
[9]His anger has torn and been hostile to me,
he's gnashed his teeth at me.
My adversary sharpens his eyes towards me;
[10]people have gaped at me with their mouth.

With reviling they've struck me on the cheek,
they mass together against me.
[11]God has delivered me up to an evildoer,
thrown me into the hands of the faithless.
[12]I was at ease, but he's shattered me,
he's grasped me by the neck and smashed me,
He's set me up for himself as a target,
[13]his archers surround me.
He pierces my kidneys and doesn't spare;
he pours my bile on the earth.
[14]He assaults me, with assault on top of assault;
he runs at me like a strong man.

[15]I've sewn sack over my skin
and buried my horn in the earth.
[16]My face is red from crying
and over my eyelids is deathly shadow,
[17]Although there was no violence in my fists
and my plea was clean.

Iyyob: A witness in the heavens?

[18]Earth, don't cover my blood;
there must not be a place for my cry.
[19]Even now, there – my witness is in the heavens,
my advocate is on high.
[20]Though my friends are people who scorn me,
my eye pours out to God.
[21]He will issue reproof for a man with God
[as] a human being does for his friend.
[22]Because numbered years will come
and I will go the path on which I shall not come back.

17 My spirit is broken, my days are extinguished,
the graves are for me.
[2]If it's not the case that mockeries are with me,
and on their recalcitrance my eye lodges . . .
[3]Please put my pledge by you –
who is the one who will clap my hand?
[4]Because you've hidden their mind from insight;
therefore you will not be exalted.
[5]'For a meal he tells on friends,
and his children's eyes fail':
[6]He has made me a proverb for peoples,
I shall become something at which to spit in the face.
[7]My eye has grown dim from provocation,
my limbs are like a shadow, all of them.

[8]The upright are desolate at this,
the one who is free of guilt arises against the impious.
[9]The faithful person grasps his way;
the man who is pure of hands grows firmer.
[10]However, all of you, please come back again –
but I will not find a smart man among you.
[11]My days have passed, my strategies have snapped,
the desires of my heart.
[12]They make night into day;
light is nearer than darkness.
[13]If I hope for She'ol as my home,
lay out my bed in the darkness,
[14]I call out to the Pit, 'You are my father',
to the worm, 'My mother', 'My sister'.
[15]Where then is my hope,
who can behold my hope?
[16]Will they go down to the poles of She'ol,

will we descend together to the earth?

Bildad: Reaffirming the moral foundation of the world

18 Bildad the Shuhite answered:

[2]How long until you put an end to utterances?
– consider, and afterwards we will speak.
[3]Why are we thought of as cattle,
stupid in your eyes?
[4]One who tears himself apart with his anger –
for your sake will the earth be abandoned,
will a crag dislodge from its place?

[5]Yes, the light of the faithless goes out,
the flame of his fire doesn't shine.
[6]Light darkens in his tent,
his lamp above him goes out.
[7]His vigorous steps become short,
his own counsel throws him down,
[8]Because he's thrust into a net by his own feet;
he walks about on to the mesh.
[9]A trap grasps him by the heel,
clamps get strong hold of him.
[10]A rope for him is hidden in the earth,
a trap for him on the trail.
[11]All around, terrors terrify him,
shatter him at his feet.
[12]Trouble is hungry for him,
disaster has prepared for his stumbling.
[13]It consumes his skin-covered limbs;
death's firstborn consumes his limbs.
[14]His confidence tears away from his tent,
and it marches him to the king of terrors.
[15]Fire dwells in his tent,
sulphur scatters over his home.
[16]Below, his roots dry up;
above, his foliage withers.
[17]Commemoration of him perishes from the country,
and he has no name in the outside world.
[18]They thrust him out from light to darkness,
drive him out of the world.
[19]He has no posterity, no offspring, among his people,
and he has no survivor in his place where he resided.
[20]At his day people in the west are desolate,
people in the east grasp horror.
[21]Indeed, these are the dwellings of the evildoer,
this is the place of the one who did not acknowledge God.

Iyyob: Ten times you've shamed me

19 Iyyob answered:

[2]How long will you torment my entire being,
crush me with utterances?
[3]These ten times you have shamed me;
you feel no disgrace when you abuse me.
[4]Yet truly, should I have erred,
my error lodges with me.
[5]If you truly magnify yourselves above me,
and argue with me on the basis of my reviling,
[6]Acknowledge here that God has put me in the wrong,
has put siege works round me.
[7]If I cry out 'Violence', I don't get an answer;
if I call for help, there's no exercise of authority.

[8]He's barred my path and I can't pass,
and he sets darkness over my trails.
[9]He's stripped my splendour from me,
removed the crown on my head.
[10]He tears me down all round, and I am gone;
he uproots my hope like a tree.
[11]He makes his anger rage against me;
he thinks of me as like his adversaries for him.
[12]His raiding gangs come on all together,
they've built up their way against me,
they've camped at my tent all round.

Iyyob: I know that my restorer lives, but . . .

[13]He's put my brothers far from me;
my acquaintances have indeed become strangers to me.
[14]The people near to me and the people I knew have left off,
the people residing in my house have put me out of mind.
[15]My servant girls think of me as a stranger;
I've become a foreigner in their eyes.
[16]I've called to my servant but he doesn't answer,
when with my own mouth I ask him for grace.
[17]My breath is strange to my wife,
I'm loathsome to my siblings.
[18]Even little children have rejected me;
when I get up, they speak against me.
[19]All my confidential friends have taken offence at me,
and those I've been loyal to have turned against me.
[20]My bone sticks to my skin and my flesh,
and I've escaped by the skin of my teeth.

[21]Be gracious to me, be gracious to me, you're my friends,
because God's hand has touched me.
[22]Why do you pursue me like God,
and why aren't you full of my flesh?
[23]If only here my utterances were written down,
if only they were inscribed in a document,
[24]With an iron pen and lead,
engraved on a crag permanently.
[25]But I myself know that my restorer is alive,
and as the last will get up on the earth.
[26]After my skin has thus been stripped,
away from my flesh I will behold God,
[27]Whom I will behold for myself;
my eyes will have seen him, and not a stranger.
My inner being within my chest fails,
[28]when you say, 'How have we pursued him?'
The root of the thing is found in me;
[29]be terrified of the sword for yourselves.
Because your wrath is wayward acts that deserve the sword,
in order that you may acknowledge that there is judgement.

Tsophar: My uneases

20 Tsophar the Na'amatite answered:

[2]This is why my uneases make me speak back,
because of my feelings within me.
[3]When I hear correction that shames me,
a spirit from my understanding makes me answer.

[4]Do you acknowledge this: from of old,
from the placing of humanity on the earth,
[5]That the resounding of faithless people is of the briefest,
the rejoicing of the impious is for a moment.

[6]If his exaltation climbs to the heavens
and his head touches the clouds,
[7]Like his dung he perishes permanently;
people who saw him say, ‘Where is he?’
[8]Like a dream he flies away and people cannot find him;
he is driven away like a night vision.
[9]Though an eye looked on him, it does not do so again;
his place beholds him no more.
[10]His children seek the grace of poor people,
his hands give back his vigour.
[11]His bones were full of his youthfulness,
but with him it lies down in the earth.
[12]If something bad is sweet in his mouth
as he hides it under his tongue,
[13]As he spares it and does not abandon it,
but holds it back inside his palate,
[14]His food in his stomach turns
into the venom of asps within him.
[15]The resources he has swallowed he vomits,
as God discharges it from his insides.

Tsophar: How wickedness gets its reward

[16]He sucks the poison of asps,
the viper’s tongue kills him.
[17]He is not to see the streams,
the rivers, the wadis of syrup and cream.
[18]He gives back the gains and doesn’t swallow,
he doesn’t exult in the very resources from his trading.
[19]Because he crushed, abandoned poor people,
seized a house when he was not building it,
[20]Because he doesn’t know ease inside him,
he doesn’t let any of what he desired escape.
[21]There’ll be no survivor to eat it;
therefore his good things will not endure.
[22]When his abundance is full, pressure will overtake him;
every hand of the oppressor will come upon him.
[23]May he be for the filling of his belly,
send off on him his angry rage,
and rain it upon him as his food.

[24]When he takes flight from an iron weapon,
a copper arrow will pass through him.
[25]When he pulls it out and it comes out of his body,
the shining thing out of his gall bladder,
Dreads come upon him,
[26]all darkness is hidden up for his treasures.
Fire will consume him, unfanned;
may it pasture on the survivor in his tent.
[27]The heavens will reveal his waywardness,
the earth is going to rise up for him.
[28]May a flood exile his household,
torrents on the day of his anger.
[29]This is the faithless person’s share from God,
the domain spoken of by God.

Iyyob: If only wickedness did get its reward!

21 Iyyob answered:

[2]Listen properly to my utterance;
may this be the comfort you offer.
[3]Bear with me while I myself speak,
and after I have spoken, you may ridicule.
[4]Am I: is my talk towards a human being,

so why should my spirit not be short?
[5]Turn your face to me and be desolated,
put your hand on your mouth.

[6]If I am mindful, I am terrified;
trembling grasps my flesh.
[7]Why do faithless people live on,
as they grow older, also get stronger in resources?
[8]Their offspring are established before them, with them,
their descendants are before their eyes.
[9]Their households are doing well, without fear;
with no club of God on them.
[10]His bull breeds and does not fail;
his cow delivers and does not miscarry.
[11]They send off their little ones like sheep,
their children skip about.
[12]They lift their voice to tambourine and guitar,
rejoice to the sound of the pipe.
[13]They finish their days with good things,
and in peace go down to She'ol.
[14]They say to God, 'Depart from us,
we don't want to acknowledge your ways.
[15]What is Shadday that we should serve him,
and how do we profit when we pray to him?'
[16]There, are their good things not in their own hand,
though the counsel of faithless people is far away from me.

Iyyob: Your words of comfort are hollow

[17]How often does the lamp of faithless people go out,
and the disaster due to them come upon them,
the destiny he shares out in his anger.
[18]They should be like straw before wind,
like chaff that a tempest seizes.
[19]Whereas God may hide up his trouble for his children,
he should make it good to him, so that he acknowledges it.
[20]His eyes should see his destruction;
he should drink Shadday's wrath.
[21]Because what will he want for his household after him,
when the number of his months has been curtailed?

[22]Can one teach God knowledge,
when he is the one who exercises authority over people on high?
[23]One person dies in his full strength,
all peaceable and at ease.
[24]His pails are full of milk
and the marrow in his bones is juicy.
[25]Another person dies bitter in himself;
he has not tasted good things.
[26]All together they lie down in the earth
and worms cover over them.

[27]There, I know your intentions,
the strategies with which you will do violence against me,
[28]That you will say, 'Where is the leader's house,
where is the tent that was the dwelling of the faithless people?'
[29]Have you not asked people who pass by on the way,
not recognized their evidences,
[30]That on the day of disaster a bad person is held back,
on the day when outbursts are carried along.
[31]Who tells of his conduct to his face;
when he has acted, who makes good to him?
[32]When he is carried along to the graves,
and someone watches over his tomb,
[33]The clods in the wadi are sweet to him;

behind him everyone follows,
and there is no numbering those before him.
[34]So how can you comfort me with hollowness?
– the things that you say back: trespass remains.

Eliphaz rewrites Iyyob's life

22 Eliphaz answered:

[2]Is a man useful to God,
that a person of insight should be of benefit to him?
[3]Is it a delight to Shadday when you are in the right,
or is there profit when you show integrity in your ways?
[4]Is it because of your awe that he reproves you,
comes to make a ruling with you?
[5]Are your bad ways not great,
and is there no end to your acts of waywardness?
[6]Because you take pledges from your brothers for nothing,
you strip the clothes of the naked.
[7]You don't give water to the weary person,
you hold back bread from the hungry,
[8]As a strong man to whom the land belongs,
a man held in high regard who lives on it.
[9]Widows you've sent off empty,
the strength of orphans is crushed.
[10]That's why traps are all round you,
and sudden dread frightens you,
[11]Or darkness when you cannot see,
and a flood of water that covers you.

[12]God is lofty in the heavens, isn't he;
see the peak of the stars, how high!
[13]You've said, 'What does God know,
can he exercise authority through the thundercloud?
[14]The clouds are a screen for him and he doesn't see,
as he goes about the circuit of the heavens.'

Eliphaz: Come back!

[15]Do you keep watch on the age-old path
that men of trouble have trod,
[16]Who were shrivelled up when it was not time,
whose foundation was washed away in a river,
[17]People who said to God, 'Depart from us',
and 'What will Shadday do for them?'
[18]But he was the one who filled their houses with good things;
the counsel of faithless people is far away from me.
[19]Faithful people see and celebrate,
the one who is free of guilt ridicules them:
[20]'Is it not the case that those who rose against us have disappeared,
and what was left of them the fire has consumed?'

[21]Please be of benefit to him and be at peace;
by these things good will come to you.
[22]Please take instruction from his mouth
and lay up in your mind the things he said.
[23]If you come back to Shadday you'll be built up,
when you move evil far from your tent.
[24]You'll regard precious metal as earth,
Ophir gold as a crag in the wadis.
[25]Shadday will be your precious metal,
choice silver for you,
[26]When you then revel in Shadday,
and lift your face to God.
[27]You'll pray to him and he will listen to you,

and you'll make good your pledges.
[28]You'll determine something and it will arise for you,
and on your ways light will shine.
[29]When people make others fall, you'll say 'Lift them up',
and he'll deliver the downcast of eyes.
[30]He'll rescue one who is not free of guilt –
he'll find rescue through the cleanness of your palms.

Iyyob: Who moved?

23 Iyyob answered:

[2]My talk is indeed rebellious today,
though my hand is heavy with my groaning.
[3]If only I knew how I could find him,
could come as far as his established place.
[4]I'd lay out my case before him,
fill my mouth with reproofs.
[5]I'd get to know the utterances he would answer me,
I'd understand what he'd say to me.
[6]Would he argue with me with abundance of energy?
– no, surely he'd set his mind on me.
[7]There it would be an upright man who would enter into reproof with him,
and I would survive permanently from the one who exercises authority over me.

[8]If I go east, he is not there,
and west, I don't discern him,
[9]North where he acts, I don't behold him;
he may turn south, but I don't see him.
[10]But he knows the way that is mine;
if he tests me, I'll come out as gold.
[11]My foot has grasped his track,
I've kept his way and not turned aside.
[12]From the order of his lips I haven't moved away,
I've hidden up the sayings of his mouth more than my portion of food.
[13]He is one; who can turn him back?
– what he himself desires, he does,
[14]Because he'll bring to completion what was decreed regarding me,
and there are many things like these in his mind.
[15]Therefore I'm fearful of his presence;
when I consider, I'm in dread of him.
[16]God has made my mind soft;
Shadday has made me fearful,
[17]But I haven't expired before the darkness;
from before me he has covered the gloom.

Iyyob: Why are times not kept by Shadday?

24 Why are times not hidden up by Shadday?

– those who acknowledge him do not behold his days.
[2]People remove boundary stones,
seize a flock and pasture it,
[3]Drive away the orphans' donkey,
take the widow's bull as a pledge,
[4]Turn aside the needy from the road:
the humble in the land have been made to hide together.
[5]There, they're wild donkeys in the wilderness,
who go out in the course of their work.
Looking urgently for prey, the steppe belongs to it,
food for the boys.
[6]In the open country they harvest its fodder,
and glean the vineyard of the faithless.
[7]They stay the night naked, without clothing;
there's no covering against the cold.

[8]They get wet from the mountain rain,
and without a shelter they embrace a crag.
[9]People seize the orphan from the breast,
take the baby of a humble person as a pledge.
[10]They go about naked, without clothing,
and hungry, though they carry sheaves.
[11]Between their terraces they press oil,
and they tread the winepresses, but they are thirsty.
[12]From the town men groan,
the entire being of people run through cries for help,
but God does not lay a charge of corruptness.

Iyyob: Who can prove me a liar?

[13]Those people – they are among those who are rebels against the light,
they don't recognize its ways,
they don't live in its trails.
[14]At first light the murderer gets up
so he may slay the humble and needy,
And in the evening become like a thief,
[15]while the eye of the adulterer watches for dusk,
Saying 'No eye will behold me',
and he puts a cover on his face.
[16]He breaks into houses in the dark,
by day they shut themselves in; they don't acknowledge light.
[17]Because for them, all together, morning is deathly shadow,
because he recognizes deathly shadow's terrors.

[18]He should be a slight thing on the face of the water,
their domain in the land should be slighted;
no one should turn his face by way of their vineyards.
[19]Both drought and heat seize snow water,
and She'ol, people who have done wrong.
[20]The womb should put him out of mind,
the worm should find him sweet.
No longer should he be kept in mind;
evil should break like a tree.
[21]He deals badly with the infertile woman, who does not give birth,
he does no good to the widow.
[22]He drags off the sturdy by means of his energy;
he rises up, and he should not trust in his life.
[23]He gives himself confidence and leans on it,
and his eyes are on their ways.

[24]They are on high for a while, then there is nothing of them;
they are brought low, like a mallow they shrivel,
like a head of grain they wither.
[25]If it is not so, who can prove me a liar,
make my utterance into nothing?

Bildad: Even the stars are not clean

25 Bildad the Shuhite answered:

[2]Rule and dread are with him;
he brings about well-being in his heights.
[3]Is there any numbering of his raiding gangs,
or on whom does his light not rise?
[4]And how can a mere human being be right with God,
how can someone born of a woman be clean?
[5]There, even the moon is not bright
and the stars are not clean in his eyes.
[6]How much less a mere human being, a worm,
or a man, a maggot.

Iyyob: The edges of his ways

26 Iyyob answered:

[2]How you have helped someone without energy,
delivered an arm without vigour!
[3]How you have counselled someone without smartness,
and made known adeptness in abundance!
[4]With whom have you told utterances,
and whose breath came out from you?

[5]The ghosts are made to writhe
beneath the water, with those who dwell in it.
[6]She'ol is naked in front of him,
there is no cover for Abaddon.
[7]The one who stretched out the north over the waste,
suspended earth over nothingness,
[8]Wrapped the water in his clouds
(and the thundercloud did not break beneath them),
[9]Enclosed the view of his throne,
spread his thundercloud over it.
[10]He drew a borderline on the face of the water
at light's boundary with darkness.
[11]The heavens' pillars quake,
they are aghast at his reprimand.
[12]By his energy he stirred up the sea,
by his understanding he hit Rahab.
[13]By his wind the heavens became clear;
his hand ran through the twisting snake.
[14]There, these are the edges of his ways,
and what a whisper is the word that we hear of him,
so who understands the thunder of his strength?

Iyyob: I do identify with the people of integrity

27 Iyyob again took up his poem:

[2]By the life of God who has dismissed the exercise of authority for me,
Shadday who has made my life bitter,
[3]All the while there is breath in me,
and God's spirit is in my nostrils,
[4]If my lips speak evil,
or my tongue – if it murmurs deceit . . .
[5]Far be it from me that I should say you are right;
until I breathe my last I will not dismiss my integrity from me.
[6]I hold strongly to my being in the right and I will not slacken hold of it;
my conscience does not revile me for any of my days.

[7]May my enemy be like the faithless,
may the one who rises against me be like the evildoer.
[8]Because what is the hope of the impious man when he is cut down,
when God requires his life?
[9]Will God listen to his cry,
when pressure comes upon him,
[10]Or will he revel in Shadday,
call God at any time?
[11]I will instruct you in God's hand,
what is with Shadday I will not hide.
[12]There, you have beheld, all of you,
so why this total hollowness you manifest?

Iyyob: And I do affirm that wicked people get their deserts

[13]This is the share of the person who is faithless with God,
the domain that violent people get from Shadday.

[14]If his children are many – it is for the sword,
and his descendants will not be full of bread.
[15]The people who survive him will be buried by death,
and their widows will not cry.
[16]If he heaps up silver like earth,
and prepares clothing like mud,
[17]He may prepare, but a faithful person will wear,
and a person free of guilt will share out the silver.
[18]He has built a house like a nest,
like the bivouac a watchman makes,
[19]He may lie down a wealthy man but he will not do so again;
when he opens his eyes, there is none of it.
[20]Terrrors overtake him like water;
by night a tempest has seized him.
[21]The east wind lifts him and he has gone;
it sweeps him from his place.
[22]It throws itself at him and does not spare,
though he takes flight urgently from its hand.
[23]It claps the palms of its hands at him
and whistles at him from its place.

Interlude: There is a mine for silver . . .

28 Indeed there is a source for silver,
a place for gold that people will refine.
[2]Iron is taken from the earth,
stone that someone pours as copper.
[3]He has put an end to darkness,
and to every limit, he was searching out.
Stone in darkness and deathly shadow
[4]has been broken open by a wadi, away from any resident.
Forgotten people, away from anyone's foot, have dangled,
away from a human being they've swayed.
[5]Earth from which food comes forth
has been changed like fire below it.
[6]Its stones were the place of sapphire,
and it had gold dust.
[7]The bird of prey did not know the trail,
the falcon's eye has not gazed on it.
[8]Majestic beasts have not made a way to it,
the cub has not advanced on it.
[9]Someone has put out his hand against the flint,
overturned the mountains by the root,
[10]He has split channels through the crags
and his eye has seen every precious thing.
[11]He has dammed up the sources of the rivers
so that he might bring hidden things out into the light.

. . . . but where can wisdom be found?

[12]But smartness: from where can it be found,
where is understanding's place?
[13]No human being can know its comparative value,
and it's not found in the country of the living.
[14]The deep says, 'It's not in me';
the sea says, 'It's not with me.'
[15]Fine gold can't be given in its place;
silver can't be weighed out as its price.
[16]It can't be balanced against Ophir gold,
against precious onyx or sapphire.
[17]Gold or crystal can't compare with it,
or containers of fine gold be its exchange.
[18]Coral and jasper can't be brought to mind;
a pouch of smartness is more than rubies.
[19]Topaz from Kush [Sudan] cannot compare with it;

it can't be balanced against pure gold.

[20]So smartness: from where does it come,
where is understanding's place?
[21]It hides from the eyes of every living thing;
from the birds in the heavens it conceals itself.
[22]Abaddon and death say,
'With our ears we've heard report of it.'

[23]God understands the way to it;
he's the one who knows its place.
[24]Because he's the one who looks to the ends of the earth,
sees beneath all the heavens.
[25]In setting a weight for the wind,
and establishing the water by measure,
[26]When setting a decree for the rain
and a way for the bolt of thunder,
[27]Then he saw it and took account of it,
established it and also searched it out.

[28]And he said to humanity:
'There, smartness is awe for the Lord,
understanding is departing from evil.'

Iyyob: The way things were (1)

29 Iyyob again took up his poem:

[2]If only it was like the months of the past,
like the days when God was keeping watch over me,
[3]When his lamp was shining over my head,
when I was walking through the darkness with his light,
[4]As I was in my days early in the year,
when God's confidences were at my tent,
[5]When Shadday was still with me,
my boys were round me,
[6]When my steps bathed in cream,
and the crag poured streams of oil for me.
[7]When I went out of the township gateway,
set my seat in the square,
[8]Boys saw me and withdrew,
old men got up, stood.
[9]Officials held back utterances,
put the palm of their hand to their mouth.
[10]The voices of rulers were quiet,
their tongue stuck to their palate.
[11]When the ear heard, it wished me good fortune;
when the eye saw, it testified to me.

Iyyob: The way things were (2)

[12]Because I rescued the humble person crying for deliverance,
the orphan and the one who had no one to help.
[13]The blessing of the person who was perishing would come upon me;
I made the heart of the widow resound.
[14]I clothed myself in faithfulness so that it clothed itself in me;
the [proper] exercise of authority by me was coat and turban.
[15]I was eyes to the blind person,
I was feet to the lame.
[16]I was father to the needy;
I sought out the argument of the person I did not know.
[17]I broke the jaws of the evildoer
and threw the prey from his teeth.

[18]I said, 'I shall breathe my last with my nest,

I shall make my days as many as the phoenix,
[19]My root opened to the water,
dew lodging in my branches,
[20]My splendour fresh with me,
my bow renewing itself in my hand.'

[21]People listened to me and waited,
they kept themselves quiet for my counsel.
[22]After my utterance they would not speak again;
upon them my word would drop.
[23]They would wait for me as for rain,
they would open their mouth as for the late rain.
[24]When I would make fun with them, they would not believe it;
the light of my face they would not discount.
[25]I would choose the way for them and sit as head,
I would dwell like a king among his troops,
like one who comforts mourners.

Iyyob: The way things are (1)

30 But now people make fun of me,
people younger than me in days,
People whose fathers I would have rejected
from putting with my sheep dogs.
[2]Indeed, what use would the energy of their hands be to me,
when their vigour has perished from them,
[3]People who in want and desolate hunger flee,
to the arid ground, the edge of devastating devastation,
[4]Who pick the saltwort on bushes;
the root of broom is their food.
[5]They are driven out from society,
people shout at them like a thief,
[6]So they dwell in the gully of wadis,
holes in the earth and rocks.
[7]They bray among the bushes,
huddle under the thistles,
[8]Villains, yes, nameless people,
they are struck down from the country.
[9]And now I've become their song,
I've become something to talk about for them.

[10]People take offence at me, they stay far from me,
but they don't hold back spit from my face.
[11]Because someone has loosened my bow and humbled me,
before me they've let loose restraint.
[12]When a brood arises at my right,
they let my feet loose,
and build up their paths to disaster against me.
[13]They break down my trail to express malice to me;
they profit though they have no helper.
[14]They come as through a wide breach,
beneath the devastation they roll in.
[15]Terrors are turned upon me;
like the wind it pursues my honour.
My deliverance passes on like a cloud,
[16]so now my life pours out for me.
Days of humbling grasp me,
[17]night pierces my bones for me,
and the things that gnaw at me don't rest.

Iyyob: The way things are (2)

[18]With abundance of energy he grasps my clothing,
belts me like the neck of my garment.
[19]He has thrown me into the mud,

and I've come to resemble earth and ashes.

[20]I cry for help to you but you don't answer me,
though I stood, and you considered me.
[21]You turn into someone cruel to me;
with the might of your hand you're hostile to me.
[22]You lift me to the wind, make me ride on it,
and dissolve me with a crash.
[23]Indeed I know you'll take me back to death,
to the appointed home for every living person.
[24]Surely no one puts out his hand against a ruin,
if in his calamity there is a cry for help regarding these things.
[25]If I did not cry for one whose day was tough –
my entire being grieved for the needy.
[26]Indeed I hoped for good things, but bad things came;
I waited for light, but darkness came.
[27]My insides churn and don't stop,
my days of humbling meet me.
[28]I walk about dark, without warmth;
when I get up in the congregation I cry for help.
[29]I've become a brother to jackals,
a friend to ostriches.
[30]My skin turns black on me,
my bones burn with heat.
[31]My guitar has become for mourning,
my pipe for the sound of people crying.

Iyyob: The way I have walked (1)

31 I sealed a pact for my eyes,

so how could I consider a girl?
[2]What is the share that God gives from above,
the domain that Shadday gives from the heights?
[3]It's disaster for the evildoer, isn't it,
ruin for the people who devise trouble.
[4]He himself sees my ways, doesn't he,
takes account of all my steps?
[5]Have I walked with emptiness,
has my foot hastened after guile?
[6]He should weigh me on faithful scales,
so that God may acknowledge my integrity.

[7]If my step turns aside from the way,
or my mind has gone after my eyes,
or a blemish has stuck to my palms,
[8]May I sow but another eat,
may my descendants be uprooted.

[9]If my mind has been enticed by a woman
or I have lain in wait at my neighbour's door,
[10]May my wife grind for another,
and over her may other men kneel,
[11]Because this would have been a deliberate wickedness;
it would be waywardness for the mediators to deal with,
[12]Because it is a fire that consumes to Abaddon,
and it would uproot my entire yield.

Iyyob: The way I have walked (2)

[13]If I've rejected the case of my servant or my maidservant
when they argued with me,
[14]What will I do when God arises;
when he pays attention, what will I say back?
[15]Didn't my maker make him inside his mother,

didn't one person prepare us in the womb?

[16]If I hold back from the want of poor people,
or let a widow's eyes fail,
[17]And eat my bit of food alone,
so that the orphan has not eaten of it,
[18]Because from my youth he has grown up with me like a father,
and I have guided her from my mother's womb;
[19]If I see someone perishing for lack of clothing,
and a needy person has no covering,
[20]If his insides have not blessed me
when he would get warm from the shearing of my sheep;
[21]If I have shaken my hand against the orphan
because I could see that I had help at the gateway;
[22]My shoulder blade should fall from the shoulder,
my forearm break from the joint,
[23]Because disaster from God would be dread to me
and I could not endure his dignity.

Iyyob: The way I have walked (3)

[24]If I've made gold my assurance
or said to fine gold, 'My confidence',
[25]If I rejoice because my resources are great,
because my hand has found a massive amount,
[26]If I see light when it shines,
or the bright moon going,
[27]And my mind was enticed in secret
and my hand kissed my mouth,
[28]That, too, would be waywardness calling for mediation,
because I would have been deceiving God above.

[29]If I rejoice in the calamity of someone hostile to me
or thrill when bad fortune found him –
[30]But I haven't given my mouth to wrongdoing,
to asking for his life by a curse.
[31]If the men in my tent have not said,
'If only there was someone who had not been full of his meat!'
[32]No stranger lodges in the street;
I open my doors to the path.
[33]If I covered my rebellion like Adam,
hiding my waywardness in my heart,
[34]Because I fear the great horde,
and the contempt of kin-groups would terrify me,
so that I would keep quiet and not go out of my entrance . . .

[35]If only I had someone listening to me:
here is my mark – Shadday should answer me,
the one who argues with me should write a document.
[36]If I did not carry it on my shoulder,
bind it on me as my crown.
[37]I would tell him the number of my steps,
present it as to a ruler.

[38]If my land cries out against me
and its furrows weep together,
[39]If I have consumed its energy without silver
and made its owners sigh,
[40]In place of wheat may thistle come up,
in place of barley, stinkweed.
The words of Iyyob have come to an end.

Elihu: The angry young man

32 These three men stopped answering Iyyob, because he was in the right in his eyes. [2]But anger raged in Elihu ben Barak'el

the Buzite, of the family of Ram. His anger raged at Iyyob because he thought himself more in the right than God, [3]and his anger raged at his three friends because they didn't find an answer although they declared him in the wrong. [4]While Elihu had waited for Iyyob with his words because they were older than him in years, [5]Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of the three men, and his anger raged. [6]So Elihu ben Barak'el the Buzite answered:

I am young in years
    and you are old.
For this reason I hesitated and was afraid
    of explaining what I know to you.
[7]I said, 'Age should speak,
    abundance of years should make smartness known.'
[8]Nevertheless it is the spirit in a human being,
    the breath of Shadday, that gives understanding.
[9]It's not the advanced people who are smart
    or the elders who understand the exercise of authority.
[10]Therefore I say, 'Listen to me,
    I myself will explain what I know, I as well.'
[11]There, I've waited for your words,
    I've given ear to your understanding.
While you searched out utterances,
    [12]I was giving consideration to you.
But there, there is no one who has reproved Iyyob,
    none of you has answered the things he said.
[13]Beware that you say, 'We've found smartness;
    God must blow him away, not a human being.'
[14]He did not line up utterances for me,
    and I shall not give back reply to him with the things you said.

[15]Because they are fearful, they haven't answered any more;
    utterances have moved on from them.
[16]I waited when they didn't speak,
    when they halted, they didn't answer any more.
[17]I myself will answer, I too, with my share,
    I will declare what I know, I too.
[18]Because I am full of utterances;
    the spirit in my insides constrains me.
[19]There, my insides are like wine that isn't open,
    like skins of new wine that burst.
[20]I must speak so it will relieve me,
    I shall open my lips and answer.
[21]Please, I will not show regard for anyone
    or give titles to any person.
[22]Because I don't know how to give titles;
    my maker would soon carry me off.

Elihu: Don't argue with God

33 However, please listen to my utterances, Iyyob,
    give ear to all I have to say.
[2]Here, please, I'm opening my lips,
    my tongue is speaking in my palate.
[3]The things I say are the uprightness of my mind;
    my lips utter knowledge, purified.
[4]God's spirit made me;
    Shadday's breath keeps me alive.
[5]If you can, speak back to me;
    lay it out before me, take your stand.
[6]Here am I, the same as you to God;
    I was nipped from clay, I too.
[7]There, dread of me should not terrify you;
    pressure from me should not be heavy on you.

[8]You indeed have said in my ears,
    I could hear the sound of the utterances:
[9]'I am clean, without rebellion;

I am pure and there's no waywardness in me.
[10]There, he finds occasions for opposition to me,
he thinks of me as his enemy.
[11]He puts my feet in the stocks,
he watches all my paths.'
[12]There, in this you're not in the right;
I shall answer to you, that God is greater than a mere human being.
[13]Why do you argue with him,
because he doesn't answer any of someone's words?
[14]Because God speaks once,
and twice, though he does not behold it.

Elihu: How God tries to win us back

[15]In a dream, a vision in the night,
when deep sleep falls on people,
during slumbers in bed,
[16]Then he opens the ear of people,
and in disciplining them perturbs them,
[17]To turn a person away from an action
and cover a man's majesty from him.
[18]He holds his life back from the Pit,
his existence from crossing the River.
[19]He is reproved by pains on his bed,
constant argument in his bones.
[20]His existence makes him loathe bread,
his life desirable food.
[21]His flesh fails so that it cannot be seen,
his bones that could not be seen are laid bare.
[22]His life draws near to the Pit,
his existence to the bringers of death.
[23]If there is an envoy by him,
one spokesperson from the thousand,
To tell of the person's uprightness,
[24]and be gracious to him and say,
'Redeem him from going down to the Pit,
I have found a ransom':
[25]His flesh healthier than his youth,
he will go back to his young days.
[26]He will pray to God and he will accept him;
he will see his face with a shout.
So he will give back his right standing to the person;
[27]he will sing to people and say,
'I did wrong and twisted what was upright,
and it was not advantageous for me.
[28]He redeemed my life from passing into the Pit;
my existence will see light.'
[29]There, God does all these things,
twice, three times with a man,
[30]To bring him back from the Pit
so that he may be alight with the light of life.

[31]Heed, Iyyob, listen to me;
be quiet, and I will speak.
[32]If there are things to say, speak back;
speak, because I want you to be in the right.
[33]If there are not, you listen to me;
be quiet, and I will teach you smartness.

Elihu: Drinking ridicule like water

34 Elihu answered:

[2]Listen to my utterances, you smart people;
give ear to me, you who have knowledge.

[3]Because the ear tests utterances,
as the palate tastes something to eat.
[4]Let's choose a ruling for ourselves,
let's acknowledge between ourselves what is good.
[5]Because Iyyob has said, 'I'm in the right;
God has turned aside the case about me.
[6]Regarding the case about me, I declare it a lie,
my arrow-wound grave, without having rebelled.'
[7]What man is like Iyyob,
who drinks ridicule like water?
[8]He travels in company with people who devise trouble,
and he walks with faithless people,
[9]Because he's said, 'There's no benefit to a man,
in his being accepted with God.'

[10]Therefore, you sensible people,
listen to me.
Far be it for God to act in faithlessness,
for Shadday to do evil.
[11]Because he makes good for a person's action to him,
and in accordance with an individual's path he makes him meet with things.
[12]Indeed, in truth God does not act faithlessly;
Shadday does not twist the exercise of authority.
[13]Who appointed the earth to him,
who set the world [to him], all of it?
[14]If he sets his mind to it,
he can gather his spirit and his breath to him.
[15]All flesh would breathe their last together
and humanity go back to earth.
[16]So if there is to be understanding, listen to this,
give ear to the sound of my utterances.
[17]Is someone indeed in control who is hostile to the [proper] exercise of authority
– do you declare the faithful, strong one to be in the wrong?
[18]He is the one who says to a king, 'Scoundrel',
to rulers, 'Faithless',
[19a]Who does not show regard to officials
and does not recognize the important person before the poor.

Elihu: Tested to the limit

[19b]Because all of them are the making of his hands;
[20]suddenly they die, in the middle of the night.
A people is in turmoil and they pass away;
a sturdy person is removed, not by human hand.
[21]Because his eyes are on an individual's ways;
he sees all his steps.
[22]There is no darkness, there is no deathly shadow,
for people who devise trouble to hide there.
[23]Because he doesn't lay down a set time for an individual
to go to God for a ruling.
[24]He shatters strong people without searching out,
and puts others in place instead of them.
[25]Thus he recognizes their deeds;
he overturns them in the night and they collapse.
[26]He pummels them among the faithless
in a place where people see.
[27]Because of the fact that they have departed from following him;
they have not had insight into any of his ways,
[28]So as to cause the cry of the poor to come to him,
so that he listens to the cry of the humble.
[29]Should he be calm, who can call him faithless,
should he hide his face, who can behold him?
He is over nation and over individual together,
[30]to stop the impious person reigning,
to stop a people's traps.

[31]Because has someone said to God,
‘I will carry it, I will not act ruinously.
[32]What I cannot behold, instruct me in yourself;
if I have done evil, I will not do so again’?
[33]Is he to make good in the way you think, when you’ve rejected him?
– because you should choose, not I;
speak what you know.
[34]People with sense say to me,
a smart man listening to me:
[35]‘Iyyob doesn’t speak with knowledge,
his words are not with insight.
[36]Would that Iyyob were tested to the limit,
about replies befitting people who devise trouble.
[37]Because he adds to his wrongdoing:
he abounds in rebellion among us,
and multiplies the things he says to God.’

Elihu: What difference do you make to God?

35 Elihu answered:

[2]Do you think this is a good ruling,
when you say, ‘I am more in the right than God’?
[3]When you say, how does it benefit you –
‘How do I profit more than from wrongdoing?’
[4]I myself will make utterances back to you,
and your friends with you.
[5]Look to the heavens and see,
behold the skies that are lofty above you.
[6]If you have done wrong, what do you do to him,
and if your rebellions have been many, what do you do to him?
[7]If you are in the right, what do you give him,
or what does he get from your hand?
[8]Your faithlessness affects a person like yourself,
your being in the right affects a human being.

[9]Because of the multitude of the oppressed, people cry out;
they cry for help because of the power exercised against so many,
[10]But no one says, ‘Where is God my maker,
who gives melodies in the night,
[11]Who teaches us more than the animals of the earth,
makes us smarter than the birds in the heavens?’
[12]They cry out there but he does not answer
before the majesty of bad people.
[13]Indeed God does not listen to emptiness,
Shadday does not behold it.
[14]How much less when you say you don’t behold him,
your case is before him, and you wait for him,
[15]And now that his anger has given no attention,
and he has not given much acknowledgement to rebellion.
[16]Iyyob opens his mouth with hollowness,
multiplies words that are without knowledge.

Elihu: The God who opens our ear

36 Elihu again spoke:

[2]Wait for me a little and I will explain to you,
because there are yet utterances to be said for God.
[3]I will carry my knowledge from far away,
and I will ascribe faithfulness to my maker.
[4]Because truly my utterances are not false;
one with integrity in knowledge is with you.

[5]There, God is strong but he doesn’t reject –

strong in energy of mind.
[6]He doesn't let the faithless person live,
and he gives a ruling for the humble people.
[7]He doesn't hold back his eyes from faithful people,
but seats them with kings on a throne,
permanently, and they are lofty.

[8]If people are bound in chains,
caught in humbling bonds,
[9]He tells them what they've done,
and their acts of rebellion, that they acted big.
[10]He opens their ear to correction
and says how they should turn back from trouble.
[11]If they listen and serve,
they'll finish their days with good things,
their years in happiness.
[12]But if they don't listen, they'll cross the River,
they'll breathe their last without knowledge.
[13]But the impious of mind lay up anger,
they don't cry for help when he binds them.
[14]They die in youth,
their existence among the hierodules.
[15]He pulls the humble person out through his humbling,
and opens their ear through affliction.

Elihu: God is great, and we cannot know

[16]Indeed, he has drawn you away from the brink of pressure,
to a broad place where there is no constraint, instead of it,
and what is laid on your table is full of richness.
[17]But you're full of the judgement due to the faithless person;
judgement and the exercise of authority take hold.
[18]Because wrath mustn't draw you away through wealth;
a large amount of ransom money must not turn you aside.
[19]Would your wealth line up, without pressure,
and all your energetic efforts?
[20]Don't long for the night,
to take up peoples where they are.
[21]Keep watch, don't turn your face to trouble,
because you've chosen this rather than humbling.
[22]There, God towers in his energy;
who is an instructor like him?
[23]Who has appointed his way for him,
who has said, 'You've done evil'?
[24]Be mindful that you should exalt what he does,
which people have sung about.

[25]All humanity has beheld it;
a human being looks at it from afar.
[26]There, God is great, and we cannot know –
of the number of his years there is no searching out.
[27]Because he draws up the drops of water
that distil as rain in his mist,
[28]Which the skies pour down,
dispense upon humanity as a shower.
[29]Indeed, can one understand the spreading of cloud,
the thunders from his bivouac?
[30]There, he spreads his lightning over it,
he uncovers the roots of the sea.
[31]Because by these things he governs peoples,
gives food in abundance.
[32]He covers over the palms of his hands with lightning,
and orders it against its mark.
[33]His thunder tells of him,
his angry passion against evil.

Elihu: The awe-inspiring Creator

37 Indeed at this my heart trembles and leaps from its place.

[2]Listen, listen to the raging of his voice,
the murmur that comes out from his mouth.
[3]Beneath the entire heavens he lets it loose,
and his lightning over the corners of the earth.
[4]After it, a voice roars;
he thunders with his majestic voice.
He doesn't hold them back
when his voice makes itself heard;
[5]God thunders with his voice in extraordinary ways.
does great things that we cannot know,
[6]When he says to the snow,
'Fall on the earth',
And the downpour of rain,
his vigorous downpour of the rains.
[7]On every human being's hand he imposes a seal,
so that everyone may acknowledge what he does.
[8]Living things come into the lair,
lie down in their den.
[9]The tempest comes out of its room,
the cold from the driving winds.
[10]By God's breath he makes ice,
and the expanse of water into something frozen.
[11]He also loads the cloud with moisture,
scatters his lightning thundercloud,
[12]And it turns round and round at his directions,
so that they do all that he commands them.
Over the face of the earthly world,
[13]either for the exercise of his club, or for the sake of his earth,
or for the sake of his commitment – he makes them happen.

[14]Give ear to this, Iyyob;
stand and consider God's extraordinary deeds.
[15]Do you know how God lays things upon them,
how the lightning from his thundercloud shines out?
[16]Do you know about the balancing of the clouds,
the extraordinary deeds of the one who is perfect in knowledge,
[17]You whose clothes become hot,
when the earth is calm because of the south wind?
[18]Could you spread the skies with him,
hard like a mirror of cast metal?
[19]Help us know what we're to say to him;
we can't lay it out, from before darkness.
[20]Will it be announced to him that I shall speak,
has someone said that he is confused?
[21]But now, people cannot look at the light,
when it is bright in the skies.
And the wind has passed and cleared them,
[22]when gold comes from the north.
God On High, awe-inspiring in grandeur,
[23]Shadday: we couldn't find him.
Great in energy and in the exercise of authority,
but with abundance of faithfulness, he doesn't humble.
[24]Therefore people live in awe of him,
though he doesn't look at any of the smart-minded.

Yahweh: You need to accept your limits

38 Yahweh answered Iyyob from a hurricane:

[2]Who is this who darkens counsel
by utterances without knowledge?

[3]Belt up your thighs like a man, please,
so I can ask you and you can let me know.

[4]Where were you when I founded the earth?
– tell, if you know and understand.
[5]Who set its dimensions, since you will know,
or who stretched a line over it?
[6]On what were its bases sunk,
or who threw its cornerstone,
[7]When the morning stars resounded together
and all the divine beings shouted?

[8]And who shut the sea in with doors,
when it gushed from the womb it came out of,
[9]When I made cloud its clothing,
thundercloud its blanket,
[10]Decreed my limit for it,
set a bar and doors,
[11]And said, 'You may come as far as this,
but not go further;
here it's set, at the majesty of your waves'?

[12]Since your days began, have you ordered morning,
let the dawn know its place,
[13]For it to grasp the earth by the corners,
so that faithless people shake out of it?
[14]It turns like clay under a seal,
so that they stand out like a garment.
[15]From faithless people their light holds back,
and their high arm breaks.

[16]Have you come to the springs of the sea,
or walked about through the reaches of the deep?
[17]Have the gateways of death opened to you,
or can you see the gateways of deathly shadow?
[18]Have you considered the expanses of the earth?
– tell, if you know it all.

Yahweh: What do you really know?

[19]Where is the way to where light dwells,
and darkness – where is its place,
[20]That you may take it to its territory,
and understand the trails to its home?
[21]You know, because you were coming to birth then,
and the number of your years is many.

[22]Have you come to the storehouses of snow,
or can you see the storehouses of hail,
[23]Which I have held back for the time of pressure,
for the day of drawing near and of battle?
[24]Where then is the way to where lightning is shared out,
where the east wind is scattered over the earth?
[25]Who cut a channel for the torrent,
and a way for the bolt of thunder,
[26]To rain on land with no people,
wilderness with no one in it,
[27]To satisfy the devastated devastation,
and make a crop of grass flourish?
[28]Does the rain have a father,
or who fathered the drops of dew?
[29]From whose womb did the ice come out,
the frost from the heavens, who fathered it,
[30]When water hardens like stone,
and the surface of the deep freezes?

[31]Can you tie Pleiades' bonds,
or loose Orion's belt?
[32]Can you lead out Mazzarot at its time,
or lead out the Bear with its children?
[33]Do you know the decrees of the heavens,
or can you implement its authority on earth?

[34]Can you lift up your voice to the cloud,
so that a flood of water may cover you?
[35]Can you send off shafts of lightning so that they go,
and say to you, 'Here we are!'
[36]Who put smartness in the ibis,
or who gave understanding to the cockerel?
[37]Who can give an account of the skies with smartness,
and tilt the water skins in the heavens,
[38]When earth pours into a mass,
and clods are made to stick together?

Yahweh: Could you care for nature?

[39]Can you hunt prey for a lion,
and fill the appetite of whelps,
[40]When they crouch in dens,
lie in wait in a bivouac?
[41]Who prepares its provision for the raven
when its young cry for help to God
and wander without food?

39 Do you know the time for the mountain goats to give birth,
keep watch as the deer goes into labour?
[2]Do you count the months they complete,
or know the time for their giving birth?
[3]They crouch so that they may deliver their young,
as they send off their pains.
[4]Their offspring become strong, they grow up in the open,
they go out and don't come back to them.

[5]Who sends off the wild donkey, free,
and who looses the ropes of the wild mule,
[6]Whose home I made the steppe,
its dwellings the salty land?
[7]It makes fun of the uproar of the township;
it doesn't listen to the shouts of a driver.
[8]It ranges mountains as its pasture,
and searches after any green thing.
[9]Is an oryx willing to serve you,
will it lodge by your feeding trough?
[10]Can you hold an oryx with a harness to the furrow,
will it till the vales behind you?
[11]Can you rely on it because its energy is great,
and abandon your toil to it?
[12]Can you trust it that it will bring back your seed,
and gather it to your threshing floor?

[13]The wing of the screechers exults:
is it a stork's wing and plumage?
[14]Because she abandons her eggs on the earth,
lets them get warm on the earth,
[15]And puts out of mind that a foot may crush it,
or a creature of the wild trample it.
[16]She's tough with her offspring so that they are not hers,
her toil is in vain, without dread.
[17]Because God made her forget smartness,
didn't give a share of understanding to her.
[18]At the time when she flaps on high,

she makes fun of the horse and its rider.

Yahweh: So many extraordinary creatures!

[19]Do you give the horse its strength,
do you clothe its neck with a mane?
[20]Do you make it quiver like a locust?
– the grandeur of its snort is a dread.
[21]They paw with force; it rejoices in its energy,
as it goes out to meet the weapons.
[22]It makes fun of dread, doesn't frighten,
doesn't turn back from the face of the sword.
[23]By it a quiver resounds,
a flash of lance and javelin.
[24]With shaking and raging it swallows the earth,
and it can't stand firm when there's the sound of the horn.
[25]At the blast of the horn it says, 'Ah',
and from far away it smells battle,
the thunder of the officers, and the shout.

[26]Is it by your understanding that the hawk takes flight,
spreads its wings to the south?
[27]Is it at your bidding that the eagle is lofty,
and that it puts its nest high?
[28]It dwells on the cliff,
and lodges on an outcrop of the cliff, a stronghold.
[29]From there it searches for food,
from far away its eyes look out,
[30]So its young drink blood;
where there are people who have been run through, there it is.

40 Yahweh answered Iyyob:

[2]Does the person who argues with Shadday correct him?
– the one who reproves God must answer it.

[3]Iyyob answered Yahweh:

[4]There, I am slight, what could I say back?
– I put my hand to my mouth.
[5]I have spoken once, and I will not answer –
twice, and I will not do so again.

Yahweh: Think about the Great Creature

[6]But Yahweh answered Iyyob from a hurricane:

[7]Belt up your thighs like a man, please,
so I can ask you and you can let me know.
[8]Would you indeed contravene my exercise of authority,
declare me in the wrong in order that you may be in the right?
[9]Do you have an arm like God,
or can you thunder with a voice like his?
[10]Adorn yourself with majesty and loftiness, please,
clothe yourself in splendour and grandeur.
[11]Scatter your angry outbursts about,
see every majestic person and bring him low.
[12]See every majestic person and make him bow down,
throw down the faithless where they stand.
[13]Bury them in the earth all together,
conceal their faces in the hidden place.
[14]And I too will confess you,
that your right hand can bring deliverance to you.

[15]There, please, is the Great Creature, which I made along with you,
which eats grass like cattle.

[16]There, please, its energy is in its insides,
its vigour in the muscles of its stomach.
[17]It hangs its tail like a cedar,
the sinews of its thighs are intertwined.
[18]Its bones are tubes of copper,
its limbs like a bar of iron.
[19]It is the first of God's ways;
its maker can draw near with his sword.

[20]Because the mountains carry produce for it,
and all the animals of the wild have fun there,
[21]It lies down underneath the lotuses,
in the cover of the reeds and in the marsh.
[22]The lotuses screen it as its shade,
the willows of the wadi surround it.
[23]There – when the river gushes, it doesn't make haste;
it's confident that Yarden [Jordan] bursts forth at its bidding.
[24]Can someone take it by its eyes
or pierce its nose, in traps?

Yahweh: Think about Livyatan

41 Can you pull in Livyatan with a fishhook
or tie down its tongue with a rope?
[2]Can you put a reed in its nose
or pierce its jaw with a hook?
[3]Will it make many prayers for grace to you,
will it speak smooth words to you?
[4]Will it seal a pact with you
that it will be taken as a lifelong servant?
[5]Will you have fun with it like a bird
or put it on a leash for your girls?
[6]Will partners barter over it,
will they divide it up among the dealers?
[7]Can you fill its skin with harpoons
or its head with fish spears?
[8]Lay your fist on it,
be mindful of the battle, don't do it again.
[9]There, hope for [capturing] it tells a lie
– isn't one even overwhelmed at the sight of it?
[10]No one is so cruel that he gets it to rise;
so who is the one who takes a stand before me?
[11]Who confronts me so that I make good?
– under the entire heavens, things are mine.

[12]I will not be silent about its limbs or its strong word,
or the grace of its frame.
[13]Who has stripped off the surface of its garment,
who can come with a double bridle for it?
[14]Who has opened the doors of its face?
– its teeth all round are a dread.
[15]Its back is rows of shields,
shut up with a tight seal.
[16]One comes up to the other;
a breath could not come between them.
[17]They stick each one to its brother;
they clasp each other and cannot separate.
[18]Its sneezes flash lightning,
its eyes are like the eyelids of dawn.
[19]From its mouth go torches,
sparks of fire escape.
[20]From its nostrils smoke goes out,
like a pot heated, with rushes.
[21]Its breath sets coals on fire;
flame goes out from its mouth.

Iyyob relents

22 In its neck vigour lodges;
dismay leaps before it.
23 The folds of its flesh stick;
it is cast on it, it doesn't slip.
24 Its heart is cast like stone,
cast like a bottom millstone.
25 At its rising up, divine beings are in dread;
at its crashes, they fail.
26 The sword that reaches it does not prevail –
spear, dart or lance.
27 It thinks of iron as straw,
of copper as rotten wood.
28 Arrow doesn't make it take flight;
sling stones turn into chaff for it.
29 A club is thought of as chaff;
it makes fun of the shaking of a javelin.
30 Its underparts are sharp bits of pot;
it spreads a threshing sledge on mud.
31 It makes the deep boil like a pot,
it makes the sea like a pot of ointment.
32 Behind it, it lightens a trail;
one would think the deep to be white hair.
33 There is no one on the earth to rule it,
made without fright.
34 It sees everything lofty;
it is king over all noble creatures.

42 Iyyob answered Yahweh:

2 I acknowledge that you can do anything;
no strategy is impracticable for you.
3 'Who is this who darkens counsel without knowledge?'
– thus I told of things that I did not understand,
things too extraordinary for me, that I did not know.
4 'Listen, please, and I myself will speak;
I will ask and you can let me know.'
5 I have listened to you with the listening of an ear,
and now my eye has seen you.
6 Therefore I reject and find consolation
about earth and ashes.

So they all lived happily ever after

7 After Yahweh had spoken these words to Iyyob, Yahweh said to Eliphaz the Temanite, 'My anger rages against you and against your two friends, because you haven't spoken to me what is established truth, like my servant Iyyob. 8 So now get yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, go to my servant Iyyob and offer up a burnt offering on your behalf. Iyyob my servant can plead for you, because I will show regard to him so as not to act with you in the light of your villainy, because you haven't spoken to me what is established truth, like my servant Iyyob.' 9 Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Tsophar the Na'amatite went and did as Yahweh spoke to them.

Yahweh showed regard to Iyyob. 10 When Yahweh restored Iyyob's fortunes after he pleaded on behalf of his friends, Yahweh increased all that Iyyob had to double. 11 All his brothers and all his sisters and all his former acquaintances came and ate a meal with him at his house. They consoled and comforted him for all the bad things that Yahweh had brought on him, and they gave him a piece of silver each and a gold ring each.

12 When Yahweh blessed the latter part of Iyyob's life more than the former, he had 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 yoke of cattle and 1,000 donkeys. 13 He had seven sons and three daughters. 14 He named the first Yemimah, the second Ketsiyah and the third Qeren Happuk. 15 There could not be found women as beautiful as Iyyob's daughters in the entire country. And their father gave them a domain among their brothers.

16 Afterwards, Iyyob lived 140 years, and saw his sons and his grandsons, four generations. 17 Iyyob died old and full of years.

Psalms

The book of Psalms is a collection of 150 things that we can say to God. In putting it that way, I oversimplify slightly, as a few psalms have God speaking to us, but the vast majority are prayers and praises addressed to God. You could say that they are Israel's hymn book and prayer book.

They are divided into five books – English translations make that point explicit with the headings 'Book One' (at the beginning), 'Book Two' (at Psalm 42), and so on. The five books of Psalms thus parallel the five books of the Torah. The Torah comprises teaching on what God has done for Israel and on the life God expects of Israel. The Psalms comprise teaching on the nature of praise and prayer. But they teach not by giving instructions but by giving examples. The examples divide into a few main types.

1. There are hymns of praise for who God is and for the great things God has done in creation and for his people. They refer to the exodus and to God's involvement in Israel's subsequent story. But they also emphasize how all the nations should therefore come to acknowledge this God.
2. There are prayers of protest about the way things are now working out, which contrasts with the affirmations appearing in the praise hymns. There are protests that belong on the lips of the people as a whole, of their leader and of individuals. They describe how Israel itself has been defeated, how its leader is under attack, and how an individual is overwhelmed by people's attacks or accusations. One noteworthy feature is the amount of space they give to description of the plight and suffering of the people who are praying; they are much less specific about what they expect God to do beyond acting to rescue. While formulating this description no doubt offers release for them, its more direct point is to get God to notice and take action. And sometimes before these psalms end, they already express the conviction that God has heard the pleas, so that the person praying can look forward to the act of God that will follow.
3. There are some prayers that presuppose the reality of that kind of experience but are more dominated by a note of trust and hope.
4. There are songs of praise that testify to the way God has responded to a prayer of this kind and has delivered the people or the leader or the individual. A noteworthy feature of them is the way they mingle addressing God in thanksgiving and addressing other people in testimony. They are designed both to glorify God and to build up the faith and trust of people who have not had this experience of deliverance.

A few psalms don't fit into these categories. Some speak from God or from a human teacher to the community rather than from human beings to God. The first two psalms are examples, Psalm 1 being a challenge to faithful living, Psalm 2 a declaration about God's faithfulness to the Davidic king. Such psalms remind worshippers that they can't be involved in praise or prayer unless they are people living faithful lives. And they remind them that the God of whom the psalms speak is one involved in the political affairs of the nation and committed to fulfilling his purpose in the world. The fact that there was no Davidic king after the fall of Jerusalem meant that the psalms' references to the king became promises and declarations of hope about the Davidic king that God would surely enthrone again one day, and this development is part of the background to references to them in the New Testament.

The Davidic king is an important figure in the Psalms, though the references to David in the introductions to the psalms don't imply that he wrote them. The introductions relate to ways in which the Psalms were used in worship (e.g. tunes), and we don't understand many of the terms they use. However many psalms David may have written, his position as the patron of the Temple means that they all appear under his sponsorship. The key to using the Psalms is the realization that they are designed for ongoing use by the people of God and by individuals, so that who wrote them is not very important.

Psalm 1 You have a choice

[1] The blessings of someone who has not walked
by the counsel of the faithless,
Or stood on the way of wrongdoers,
or lived in the settlement of the arrogant!
[2]Rather, his delight is in Yahweh's instruction,
and he murmurs about his instruction day and night.
[3]He's like a tree planted by channels of water,
which gives its fruit in its time,
And its foliage doesn't fade;
all that he does succeeds.
[4]Not so the faithless people;
rather, they're like the chaff that the wind blows away.
[5]Therefore the faithless don't rise up when a ruling is given,
nor wrongdoers in the assembly of the faithful.
[6]Because Yahweh acknowledges the way of the faithful,
but the way of the faithless perishes.

Psalm 2 God laughs on his people's behalf

[1]Why have nations crowded together,

and peoples murmur about something empty,
[2]Earth's kings take a stand,
leaders made plans together,
against Yahweh and against his anointed –
[3]'We'll break off their means of discipline,
throw off their ropes from us'?
[4]The one who sits in the heavens makes fun;
the Lord ridicules them.
[5]Then he speaks to them in his anger,
terrifies them with his rage.
[6]'But I myself installed my king on Tsiyyon [Zion],
my sacred mountain!'
[7]I shall recount Yahweh's decree:
he said to me,
'You're my son;
today I myself have fathered you.
[8]Ask of me and I'll make nations your domain,
earth's ends your holding.
[9]You'll smash them with an iron club,
shatter them like an object made by a potter.'
[10]So now, show some insight, you kings,
accept discipline, you people who exercise authority in the earth.
[11]Serve Yahweh with awe,
rejoice with trembling, surrender sincerely,
[12]So that he doesn't get angry
and you perish as regards the way,
Because his anger will soon burn up;
the blessings of all who take shelter with him!

Psalm 3 You're not alone

A composition. For David when he took flight from Abshalom his son.

[1]Yahweh, how many are my adversaries;
many people are rising up against me.
[2]Many people are saying of me,
'There's no deliverance in God for him!' *(Rise)*
[3]But you are Yahweh, a shield about me,
my splendour, the one who lifts my head high.
[4]With my voice I would call to Yahweh,
and he's answered me from his sacred mountain. *(Rise)*
[5]I myself have lain down and slept;
I've woken up, because Yahweh sustains me.
[6]I'm not afraid of a company of myriads
that has set itself against me all round.

[7]Rise up, Yahweh,
deliver me, my God,
Because you've struck all my enemies on the jaw;
you've smashed the teeth of the faithless.
[8]Deliverance belongs to Yahweh,
your blessing is on your people. *(Rise)*

Psalm 4 Who can I turn to?

The leader's. With strings. A composition. David's.

[1]When I call, answer me,
my faithful God!
Under pressure you widened me;
be gracious to me and listen to my plea!

[2]You people, how long will the one I honour be for shaming,
will you be loyal to something empty, will you seek a lie? *(Rise)*
[3]So acknowledge that Yahweh has distinguished the committed person for himself;
Yahweh is the one who listens when I call to him.

[4]Tremble and don't do wrong;
say it in your heart on your bed and be quiet. *(Rise)*
[5]Offer faithful sacrifices,
and put your confidence in Yahweh.
[6]Increased numbers of people are saying,
'Who will enable us to see good fortune?
– the light of your face has fled from upon us, Yahweh.'
[7]You've put rejoicing in my heart
from the time when their grain and their new wine has increased.
[8]In well-being I will lie down and sleep, all at once,
because you alone are Yahweh;
you enable me to live in confidence.

Psalm 5 Pleading with the King

The leader's. To flutes. A composition. David's.

[1]Give ear to the things I say, Yahweh,
consider my murmur.
[2]Heed the sound of my cry for help,
my King and my God, because it's with you I plead.
[3]Yahweh, at morning may you listen to my voice,
at morning I lay it out to you and wait.
[4]Because you're not a God who delights in faithlessness;
that which is bad can't reside with you.
[5]Wild people can't take their stand in front of your eyes;
you're hostile to all who devise trouble.
[6]You obliterate people who speak a lie;
at someone of blood and guile, Yahweh takes offence.

[7]But I myself will come to your house through the abundance of your commitment;
I will bow low to your sacred palace in awe of you.
[8]Yahweh, lead me in your faithfulness
for the sake of the people who are watching for me;
make your way direct before me.
[9]Because there's no established truth in their mouth;
their inner being is malice.
Their throat is an opened grave,
they're slippery with their tongue.
[10]Have them make restitution, God;
they should fall by means of their own counsels.
Because of the abundance of their rebellions drive them out,
because they've defied you.
[11]But may all the people who take shelter with you rejoice,
may they resound permanently.
As you protect them,
may the people who are loyal to your name triumph in you.
[12]Because you yourself bless the faithful person, Yahweh;
you surround him with acceptance like a body-shield.

Psalm 6 The way prayer makes a difference

The leader's. With strings. On the eighth [tone]. A composition. David's.

[1]Yahweh, don't reprove me in your anger,
don't discipline me with your wrath.
[2]Be gracious to me, Yahweh, because I'm faint;
heal me, Yahweh, because my bones shake in fearfulness.
[3]My entire being shakes in great fearfulness,
and you, Yahweh – how long?
[4]Turn back, Yahweh, pull me out,
deliver me for the sake of your commitment!
[5]Because there's no commemoration of you in death;
in She'ol who confesses you?
[6]I'm weary of my groaning, I make my bed swim every night,
I melt my mattress with my tears.

[7]My eye has wasted away through provocation,
grown old because of all my adversaries.

[8]Depart from me, all you who devise trouble,
because Yahweh has heard the sound of my crying.
[9]Yahweh has heard my prayer for grace;
Yahweh receives my plea.
[10]All my enemies will be shamed and be very fearful;
they will turn back and be shamed instantly.

Psalm 7 The Judge is on your side

Lament. David's, which he sang for Yahweh concerning the Kushite [Sudanese] words. The Binyaminite.

[1]Yahweh my God, in you I take shelter
– deliver me from all the people who are pursuing me, rescue me,
[2]So that one doesn't tear me apart like a lion,
ripping me to pieces when there's no one to rescue.
[3]Yahweh my God, if I did this,
if there's evil in the palms of my hands,
[4]If I have dealt something bad to my friend,
but pulled out my adversary without reason,
[5]May the enemy pursue me and overtake me,
may he trample my life to the ground,
may he lay down my splendour in the dirt. *(Rise)*

[6]Rise up, Yahweh, in your anger;
lift yourself up at the great outburst of my adversaries.
Awake, my God, you must order the exercise of authority;
[7]the assembly of the nations should come round you.
Take your seat over it on high;
[8]Yahweh must rule the peoples.
Exercise authority for me, Yahweh,
in accordance with my faithfulness and with my integrity, over me.
[9]The bad ways of faithless people must please come to an end,
and you must establish the faithful person.

The faithful God
is one who tests minds and inner being.
[10]God is my shield on high,
one who delivers people who are upright in mind.
[11]God exercises authority for the faithful person;
God condemns each day.
[12]If someone doesn't turn back, he whets his sword;
he's directed his bow and fixed it.
[13]He's fixed deadly weapons for himself,
he makes his arrows into flames.
[14]There, someone twists with trouble,
he's pregnant with oppression, he gives birth to falsehood.
[15]He's dug a cistern and made it deep,
but he's fallen into the hole he makes.
[16]His act of oppression comes back on to his own head,
his violence comes down on his own skull.

[17]I will confess Yahweh in accordance with his faithfulness
and make music to the name of Yahweh, the One on High.

Psalm 8 Thus far and no further

The leader's. On the Gittite. A composition. David's.

[1]Yahweh our God,
how august is your name in all the earth,
You who put your grandeur above the heavens
[2]by the mouth of babies and sucklings.
You founded something vigorous to deal with your adversaries,

to stop the enemy and the person taking redress.
[3]When I see the heavens, the things that your fingers made,
moon and stars that you established,
[4]What are people that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you attend to them?
[5]But you made them fall short of God by a little,
and you crown them with honour and magnificence.
[6]You let them rule over the things that your hands made;
you put everything under their feet –
[7]Sheep and cattle, all of them,
and the animals of the wild, too,
[8]The birds of the heavens, the fish of the sea,
what passes over the paths in the seas.
[9]Yahweh our God,
how mighty is your name in all the earth!

Psalm 9 Praise and thanksgiving as a key to prayer

The leader's. Secrets. The son's. A composition. David's.

[1]I will confess you, Yahweh, with my whole mind,
I will recount all your extraordinary deeds.
[2]I will rejoice and exult in you,
I will commemorate your name, the One on High.
[3]When my enemies turn back,
they collapse and perish before you,
[4]Because you exercised authority for me and made a judgement for me;
you sat on your throne as one who exercises authority in faithfulness.
[5]You reprimanded nations, you obliterated the faithless person,
you wiped out their name for ever and ever.
[6]The enemy is finished, ruins permanently;
you uprooted towns, their commemoration perished.
Them! [7]But Yahweh sits for ever;
he established his throne for exercising authority.
[8]He's the one who exercises authority for the world with faithfulness,
he gives judgement for the peoples with uprightness.
[9]Yahweh became a turret for the downtrodden person,
a turret for times of pressure,
[10]So that people who acknowledge your name will rely on you,
because you didn't abandon people who enquired of you, Yahweh.

[11]Make music for Yahweh who sits in Tsiyyon,
tell among the peoples of his deeds,
[12]Because the one who enquires about bloodshed was mindful of them,
he didn't put out of mind the cry of the humble.
[13]Be gracious to me, Yahweh,
see my humbling at the hand of the people hostile to me,
you who lift me up from death's gateways,
[14]In order that I may recount all your praiseworthy acts;
in the gateways of Miss Tsiyyon I will rejoice in your deliverance.
[15]Nations plunged into the pit they made;
in the net that they hid, their foot caught.
[16]Yahweh caused himself to be acknowledged, he made an authoritative decision;
by the act of his own fists the faithless person trapped himself. *(Recitation. Rise)*
[17]Faithless people should turn back to She'ol,
all the nations that put Yahweh out of mind,
[18]Because the needy person will not be out of mind without end,
or the hope of the humble perish permanently.
[19]Rise up, Yahweh, a human being should not exercise power,
nations should enter into judgement in your presence.
[20]Appoint something fearful for them, Yahweh;
nations should acknowledge that they are human beings. *(Rise)*

Psalm 10 The wretched of the earth

[1]Why do you stand far off, Yahweh,
hide in times of pressure?
[2]When the faithless person in his position of majesty hounds the humble,
they should catch themselves by the strategies that they have thought up.
[3]Because the faithless person has praised the longing of his appetite
and blessed the greedy person.
The faithless person has disdained Yahweh,
[4]in accordance with the loftiness of his look.
'God won't enquire, he's not here';
in all his strategies [5]his ways are profane.
All the time your acts of authority are high up, at a distance from him;
all his adversaries – he snorts at them.
[6]He's said to himself, 'I shall not slip, generation after generation';
'I shall not be in bad circumstances', [7]he's sworn.
His mouth is full of acts of guile and repression;
under his tongue are oppression and trouble.
[8]He lives in a hiding place in the villages,
so that in complete secret he can kill someone free of guilt.
His eyes watch for the wretched person;
[9]he waits in secret like a lion in its lair.
He waits to catch the humble;
he catches the humble by dragging him in his net.
[10]The wretched, collapsing, sinks down,
and falls because he is so numerous.
[11]He's said to himself, 'God has put it out of mind,
he's hidden his face, he's never looked.'
[12]Rise up, Yahweh;
God, lift your hand,
don't put the humble out of mind.
[13]Why has the faithless person disdained God,
said to himself, 'He does not enquire'?
[14]You've seen, because you yourself
look out at oppression and vexation.
Giving it into your hand, the wretched abandons it to you;
the orphan – you're the one who has been a helper.
[15]Break the arm of the faithless and the bad person,
so that when you enquire after his faithlessness, you will not find it.

[16]Yahweh will be king for ever and ever;
the nations will have perished from his country.
[17]When you've heard the longing of the humble, Yahweh,
you establish their mind, you bend your ear,
[18]To exercise authority for orphan and downtrodden;
no one from the earth will frighten ever again.

Psalm 11 Flee or stay?

The leader's. David's.

[1]With Yahweh I take shelter;
how can you say to me,
'Flit to your mountain, bird,
[2]because there – the faithless direct a bow.
They've set their arrow on a string,
to shoot in the shadow at the people who're upright in mind.
[3]When the foundations are torn down,
the faithful person – what can he do?'

[4]Yahweh is in his sacred palace,
Yahweh whose throne is in the heavens.
His eyes behold,
his eyelids examine human beings.
[5]Yahweh examines the faithful person,
and the faithless, and the ones who love violence –
his entire being is hostile to them.
[6]He rains coals of fire and sulphur on the faithless people;

a scorching wind is the portion in their cup.
[7]Because Yahweh is faithful, he loves faithful deeds;
the upright person – his face beholds him.

Psalm 12 Sometimes God speaks

The leader's. On the eighth [tone]. A composition. David's.

[1]Deliver, Yahweh, because the committed person has come to an end,
because the people who are true have vanished from among humankind.
[2]An individual speaks emptiness to his neighbours;
with smooth lip through a double mind they speak.
[3]Yahweh should cut off all the smooth lips,
the tongue that speaks big things,
[4]The people who've said, 'With our tongues we will be strong:
our lips will be with us – who will be lord over us?'

[5]'Because of the destruction of the humble, because of the cry of the needy,
now I will rise up', Yahweh says.
'I will set myself up as deliverance',
he testifies to him.

[6]Yahweh's words are pure words,
silver purified in a furnace on the ground,
refined seven times.
[7]Yahweh, you will keep them;
you will preserve us from the generation that lasts permanently.
[8]All round, the faithless walk about,
as flimsiness stands high for humankind.

Psalm 13 How long, how long, how long, how long?

The leader's. A composition. David's.

[1]How long, Yahweh: will you put me out of mind permanently,
how long will you hide your face from me?
[2]How long must I lay up [people's] plans in my entire being,
sadness in my heart day by day,
– how long will my enemy stand high over me?
[3]Look out, answer me, Yahweh my God;
give light to my eyes, so that I don't sleep in death,
[4]So that my enemy doesn't say, 'I've finished him off',
my adversaries celebrate because I slip.
[5]But I myself trust in your commitment;
my heart will celebrate your deliverance.
I will sing to Yahweh,
because he has dealt to me.

Psalm 14 What a rogue says to himself

The leader's. David's.

[1]A villain has said to himself,
'There's no God here.
People have become devastating, offensive, in their action;
there's no one doing good here.'
[2]From the heavens Yahweh has looked out
at humankind,
To see if there is someone insightful,
enquiring of God.
[3]Everyone has departed, altogether they're foul;
there's no one doing good here, there isn't even one.
[4]They don't acknowledge him, do they, all the people devising trouble,
who eat my people.
They've eaten food;
they haven't called Yahweh.

[5]They're experiencing dreadful terror there,
because God is among the faithful circle.
[6]You people may shame the humble person's counsel,
but Yahweh is his shelter.

[7]If only there were deliverance for Yisra'el from Tsiyyon,
when Yahweh turns back his people's fortunes.
Ya'aqob [Jacob] will celebrate,
Yisra'el will rejoice!

Psalm 15 How to dwell with God

A composition. David's.

[1]Yahweh, who may reside in your tent,
who may dwell on your sacred mountain?
[2]One who walks with integrity, acts with faithfulness,
and speaks truth inside.
[3]He has not gone about talking,
has not done wrong to his neighbour,
has not taken up reviling against someone near him.
[4]In his eyes a contemptible person is to be rejected,
but he honours people who live in awe of Yahweh;
he has sworn to bring about something bad and not changed it.
[5]He has not given his silver on interest,
and not taken a bribe against someone free of guilt;
one who does these things, who does not slip ever.

Psalm 16 I've set Yahweh in front of me

An inscription. David's.

[1]Keep me, God,
because I take shelter with you.
[2]I've said of Yahweh,
'My Lord, you are my good, none above you',
[3]To the sacred ones who are in the country,
and the august ones in whom is all my delight.
[4]Their pains will be many,
the people who attend to another [god].
I will not pour their blood libations;
I will not take up their names on my lips.
[5]Yahweh, my allocated share, my cup,
you're the one who takes hold of my lot.
[6]Apportionments have fallen to me in lovely places;
yes, a perfect domain for me.
[7]I will bless Yahweh who has counselled me;
yes, by night my inner being disciplines me.
[8]I have set Yahweh in front of me continually;
because he's at my right hand, I shall not slip.
[9]Therefore my entire being rejoices,
my spirit celebrates,
yes, my flesh will dwell in confidence.
[10]Because you won't abandon my life to She'ol,
you won't give over someone committed to you to see the Abyss.
[11]You will let me know the path to life,
joyful fulfilment with your face,
lovely things at your right hand permanently.

Psalm 17 Go on, look into my heart

A plea. David's.

[1]Listen in faithfulness, Yahweh,
heed my resounding cry.
Give ear to my plea,

on lips that are without guile.
[2]May an authoritative ruling for me go out from your presence;
may your eyes behold what is upright.
[3]Were you to test my mind, visit me by night,
try me, you wouldn't have found [anything]
– I had determined that my mouth would not transgress.
[4]As for human actions, in accord with the word of your lips,
I myself have kept watch on the paths of the robber.
[5]My steps have taken hold of your tracks,
my feet have not slipped.
[6]I myself call you, because you will answer me, God;
bend your ear to me, listen to my word.
[7]Act in an extraordinary way with deeds of commitment,
you who deliver those who take shelter with you
from the people who rise up against them, by your right hand.
[8]Keep me like the apple of your eye,
in the shadow of your wings hide me,
[9]From the faithless who've destroyed me,
the enemies of my life who surround me.
[10]They've closed their minds,
with their mouth they have spoken with majesty.
[11]Our steps – they've now surrounded us;
their eyes – they set them to extend through the country.
[12]His appearance is like a lion that's eager to tear,
like a whelp that sits in ambush.
[13]Rise up, Yahweh,
meet him face to face, bring him down!
Enable me to survive from the faithless with your sword,
[14]from human beings with your hand, Yahweh.
From human beings – in their lifetime will you fill their belly,
with their share in life and with what you have stored up.
Their children are to be full,
and they are to leave what they have over to their own young.
[15]When I behold your face in faithfulness,
I will be full with your form when I awake.

Psalm 18.1–24 Rescued from death

The leader's. Yahweh's servant's. David's, who spoke to Yahweh the words of this song on the day Yahweh rescued him from the fist of all his enemies and from the hand of Sha'ul [Saul]. He said:

[1]I dedicate myself to you, Yahweh, my strength,
[2]Yahweh my cliff, my fortress, the one who enables me to survive,
My God, my crag in which I take shelter,
my shield, the horn that delivers me, my turret.
[3]As one to be praised, I called Yahweh,
and from my enemies I found deliverance.
[4]Death's ropes have overwhelmed me,
Beliyya'al's wadis terrified me,
[5]She'ol's ropes have surrounded me,
death's snares have confronted me.
[6]In my pressure I called on Yahweh,
I cried for help to my God.

[7]And the earth has quaked and rocked,
the mountains' foundations shook.
They've quaked because it enraged him;
[8]smoke has gone up in his anger.
Fire from his mouth consumed,
coals have burned up from him.
[9]He's spread the heavens and come down,
with thundercloud beneath his feet.
[10]He's ridden on a sphinx and flown,
swooped on the wings of the wind.
[11]He's made darkness his hiding place round him,

his bivouac water cloud, masses of mist.
[12]From the brightness in front of him, through his masses there have passed
hail and fiery coals.
[13]Yahweh has thundered in the heavens,
the One on High gave out his voice.
Hail and fiery coals:
[14]he's sent off his arrows and scattered them,
shot lightning and routed them.
[15]Canyons of water have appeared,
the world's foundations have come into sight,
At your reprimand, Yahweh,
at the breath of your angry wind.

[16]He sent from on high, he got me,
he drew me out of much water.
[17]He rescued me from my vigorous enemy,
from people hostile to me, because they stood too firm for me.
[18]They met me on the day of my disaster,
but Yahweh has become a support for me.
[19]He's brought me out into a roomy place;
he's pulled me out because he delighted in me.
[20]Yahweh has dealt to me in accordance with my faithfulness;
in accordance with the purity of my hands he gave back to me,
[21]Because I have kept Yahweh's ways
and not been faithless to my God.
[22]Because all his rulings have been in front of me;
his decrees I didn't let depart from me.
[23]I've been a person of integrity with him;
I've kept myself from waywardness I might have done.
[24]So Yahweh has given back to me in accordance with my faithfulness,
in accordance with the purity of my hands before his eyes.

Psalm 18.25–50 The one who keeps my lamp alight

[25]With the committed person you show commitment;
with the man of integrity you show integrity.
[26]With the pure you show yourself pure;
with the crooked you show yourself refractory.
[27]Because you're one who delivers a humble people
but puts down exalted eyes.
[28]Because you're the one who keeps my lamp alight;
it's Yahweh my God who illumines my darkness.
[29]Because with you I can rush at a barricade;
with my God I can scale a wall.
[30]God: his way has integrity;
Yahweh's word is proven.
He is a shield
to all who take shelter with him.
[31]Because who is God apart from Yahweh,
who is a crag except our God?
[32]God is the one who belts me with forcefulness,
and makes my way one that has integrity,
[33]Who fashions my feet like a deer,
enables me to stand on the heights,
[34]Who trains my hands for battle,
so that my arms could bend a copper bow.

[35]You've given me your shield that delivered;
your right hand sustained me, your avowal made me great.
[36]You widened my step beneath me;
my ankles have not slipped.
[37]I pursued my enemies so that I could overtake them;
I didn't turn back until I finished them off.
[38]I hit them and they couldn't get up;
they fell beneath my feet.

[39]You've belted me with forcefulness for battle;
you bent down beneath me the people who rose up against me.
[40]My enemies you've made turn tail for me;
the people who were hostile to me – I wiped them out.
[41]They cried for deliverance, but there was no deliverer –
[cried] to Yahweh, but he has not answered them.
[42]I ground them fine like earth before the wind,
flattened them like mud in the streets.
[43]You enabled me to survive from arguments with the people,
you set me as head of nations.
A people I did not acknowledge serve me;
[44]on hearing with the ear, they listened to me.
Foreigners wither before me,
[45]foreigners wilt and come quaking out of their strongholds.

[46]Yahweh lives, my crag be blessed,
may my God who delivers be exalted,
[47]The God who gives me total redress,
and subjects peoples under me,
[48]Who enabled me to escape from my enemies,
yes, exalts me above the people who rise up against me,
rescues me from the violent man!

[49]Therefore I will confess you, Yahweh, among the nations,
and make music for your name,
[50]The one who gives great acts of deliverance to his king,
acting with commitment to his anointed,
to David and to his offspring permanently!

Psalm 19 The mystery of sin

The leader's. A composition. David's.

[1]The heavens are recounting God's splendour,
the sky is telling of what his hands made.
[2]Day by day it pours out speech,
night by night it proclaims knowledge.
[3]There's no speech, there are no words,
whose voice does not make itself heard.
[4]In all the earth their noise has gone out,
at the end of the world their utterances.
For the sun he put a tent in them;
[5]it's like a groom going out of his dressing room.
It rejoices to run the path, like a strong man,
[6]as its going out is from the end of the heavens.
Its completed circuit is at their [other] end,
and there's nothing hidden from its heat.

[7]Yahweh's instruction has integrity,
bringing life back.
Yahweh's affirmation is trustworthy,
making the naïve smart.
[8]The things Yahweh has determined are upright,
rejoicing the mind.
Yahweh's order is clean,
enlightening the eyes.
[9]Awe for Yahweh is pure,
standing permanently.
Yahweh's rulings are true;
they're faithful altogether.
[10]They're more desirable than gold,
than much pure gold,
sweeter than syrup,
than the juice of honeycombs.
[11]Yes, your servant takes warning through them,
and in keeping them there are great results.

[12]Who can understand mistakes?
– free me from things that are hidden;
[13]yes, hold your servant back from assertive deeds.
May they not rule over me, then I'll be whole,
and free of great rebellion.
[14]May the sayings of my mouth be acceptable to you,
and the murmur of my mind before you,
Yahweh, my crag and my restorer.

Psalm 20 Chariotry, horses, Yahweh

The leader's. A composition. David's.

[1]May Yahweh answer you on the day of pressure,
the name of Ya'aqob's God set you on high.
[2]May he send your help from the sacred place,
support you from Tsiyyon.
[3]May he be mindful of all your offerings,
enrich your burnt sacrifice. *(Rise)*
[4]May he give to you what is in accordance with your mind,
fulfil every counsel of yours.
[5]May we resound at your deliverance,
in the name of our God we'll lift our banners:
may Yahweh fulfil all your requests.

[6]Now I acknowledge
that Yahweh has delivered his anointed.
He answers him from his sacred heavens,
with the mighty acts of deliverance of his right hand.
[7]These people [make mention] of chariotry, those people of horses,
but as for us – we make mention of the name of Yahweh our God.
[8]Those people have bent down and fallen,
but as for us – we've risen up and taken our stand.
[9]'Yahweh, deliver the king!'
– may he answer us on the day we call.

Psalm 21 An embodiment of blessing

The leader's. A composition. David's.

[1]Yahweh, the king rejoices in your vigour,
how greatly he takes joy in your deliverance!
[2]You gave him the longing of his heart;
the request of his lips you didn't deny.
[3]Because you meet him with blessings of good,
set on his head a crown of pure gold.
[4]When he asked for life from you, you gave him,
length of days for ever and ever.
[5]Great is his splendour through your deliverance,
grandeur and magnificence you bestow on him.
[6]Because you make him [an embodiment of] blessing permanently,
you gladden him with rejoicing at your presence.
[7]Because the king trusts in Yahweh
and by the commitment of the One on High he doesn't slip.

[8]Your hand finds all your enemies,
your right hand finds the people hostile to you.
[9]You make them like a blazing furnace
at the time of your appearing.
Yahweh in anger swallows them up;
fire consumes them.
[10]Their posterity you destroy from the earth,
their offspring from among humanity.
[11]When they've directed something bad against you,
thought up a strategy, they don't succeed.
[12]Because you set them back

when you aim at their faces with your bows.
[13]Be on high, Yahweh, in your vigour
– we will sing and make music about your strength.

Psalm 22.1–18 My God, my God, why?

The leader's. On Dawn Help. A composition. David's.

[1]My God, my God, why have you abandoned me,
far away from delivering me, from the word I yell?
[2]My God, I call by day but you don't answer,
and by night – there's no quietness for me.

[3]But you sit as the sacred one,
the great praise of Yisra'el.
[4]In you our ancestors trusted;
they trusted and you enabled them to survive.
[5]To you they cried out and they escaped;
in you they trusted and they were not shamed.

[6]But I'm a worm, not a person,
an object of reviling for human beings, an object of contempt for the people.
[7]All who see me ridicule me,
open their mouth, shake their head.
[8]'He should commit it to Yahweh, he must enable him to survive,
he must rescue him, because he delights in him.'

[9]Because you're the one who enabled me to break out of the womb,
enabled me to trust at my mother's breast.
[10]On you I was thrown from birth;
from my mother's womb you were my God.

[11]Don't be far away from me,
because pressure is near, and there's no one to help.
[12]Many bulls have surrounded me,
sturdy Bashan steers have encircled me.
[13]Tearing and roaring lions
have opened their mouth at me.
[14]I've spilled out like water,
all my bones have become loose.
My mind's become like wax;
it's melted inside me.
[15]My energy's withered like a piece of pot,
my tongue sticks to my palate.
You've put me into death's earth,
[16]because dogs have surrounded me.
An assembly of bad people has hemmed me in;
my hands and feet have shrivelled.
[17]I can count all my bones,
while those people look out and see me.
[18]They divide my clothes for themselves;
for my garments they let lots fall.

Psalm 22.19–31 When you know that God has heard

[19]But you, Yahweh, don't be far away
– my strength, come quickly as my help.
[20]Rescue my life from the sword,
my very self from the dog's power.
[21]Deliver me from the lion's mouth;
may you have answered me from the oryxes' horns.

[22]I will recount your name to my brothers;
in the middle of the congregation I will praise you.
[23]You who live in awe of Yahweh, praise him,
all Ya'aqob's offspring, honour him!

Revere him,
all Yisra'el's offspring!
[24]Because he hasn't despised, he hasn't treated as abominable,
the lament of the humble.
He hasn't hidden his face from him
but listened to his cry for help to him.
[25]From you will be my praise in the great congregation;
my pledges I will make good in front of the people who live in awe of him.
[26]Humble people will eat and be full;
people who enquire of Yahweh will praise him
– may your heart live permanently.
[27]All the ends of the earth will be mindful and turn back to Yahweh;
all the kin-groups of the nations will bow low before you.
[28]Because kingship belongs to Yahweh;
he rules over the nations.
[29]All the enriched of the earth have eaten, and bowed low;
before him all the people who are going down into the earth will kneel,
and the person who hasn't been able to keep himself alive.
[30]Offspring will serve him;
a generation to come will be told of my Lord.
[31]They will recount his faithfulness to a people to be born,
because he has acted.

Psalm 23 In the dark of the canyon

A composition. David's.

[1]My shepherd being Yahweh, I don't lack;
[2]he enables me to lie down in grassy pastures.
He leads me to settled water;
[3]he turns my life back.
He guides me in faithful tracks
for the sake of his name.
[4]Even when I walk in a deathly dark ravine,
I'm not afraid of bad fortune,
Because you're with me;
your club and your cane – they comfort me.

[5]You spread a table before me
in front of my adversaries.
You've enriched my head with oil;
my cup fills me up.
[6]Yes, goodness and commitment pursue me
all the days of my life.
I shall go back to Yahweh's house
for long days.

Psalm 24 Will God let you in? Will you let God in?

David's. A composition.

[1]The earth and what fills it are Yahweh's,
the world and the people who live in it.
[2]Because he founded it on the seas,
set it on the rivers.

[3]Who goes up on to Yahweh's mountain,
who gets up in his sacred place?
[4]One clean as to the palms of his hands and pure in mind,
who has not lifted up himself to emptiness
and not sworn so as to beguile.
[5]He lifts a blessing from Yahweh
and faithfulness from his God who delivers.
[6]This is the circle of people who enquire of him,
Ya'aqob who seek your face. *(Rise)*

[7]Lift your heads, gateways;
lift yourself up, age-old doors,
so that the glorious King may come in.
[8]‘Who is he, then, the glorious King?’
– Yahweh the vigorous one and the strong man,
Yahweh the strong man in battle.
[9]Lift up your heads, gateways;
lift up, age-old doors,
so that the glorious King may come in.
[10]‘Who is that, then, the glorious King?’
– the glorious King is Yahweh of Armies. *(Rise)*

Psalm 25 I can’t wait

David’s.

[1]To you, Yahweh,
I lift my entire being, [2]my God.
I’ve trusted in you – I must not be shamed;
my enemies must not exult about me.
[3]Yes, all the people who hope in you will not be shamed;
the people who break faith without reason will be shamed.
[4]Enable me to acknowledge your ways, Yahweh,
teach me your paths.
[5]Direct me in your truthfulness and teach me,
because you’re my God who delivers;
in you I have hoped all day.
[6]Be mindful of your compassion, Yahweh, and your commitment,
because they are age-old.
[7]Don’t be mindful of the wrongs of my youth
and my acts of rebellion.
In accordance with your commitment be mindful of me yourself,
for the sake of your goodness, Yahweh.
[8]Yahweh is good and upright;
therefore he instructs wrongdoers in the way.
[9]He directs the humble by his authority,
teaches the humble his way.
[10]All Yahweh’s paths are commitment and truthfulness
to people who keep his pact, his affirmations.
[11]For the sake of your name, Yahweh,
pardon my waywardness, because it’s great.
[12]Who, then, is the individual who lives in awe of Yahweh?
– he instructs him in the way he should choose.
[13]His life lodges in goodness,
and his offspring possess the country.
[14]Yahweh’s confidences are with people who live in awe of him,
and his pact, in enabling them to acknowledge him.
[15]My eyes are continually towards Yahweh,
because he’s the one who gets my feet out of the net.
[16]Turn your face to me and be gracious to me,
because I’m alone and humble.
[17]The pressures in my mind have widened;
get me out from my straits.
[18]Look at my humbling and oppression;
carry all my wrongdoings.
[19]Look at my enemies, how they are many,
and at the violent hostility they show to me.
[20]Keep my life, rescue me;
I must not be shamed, because I’ve taken shelter with you.
[21]Integrity and uprightness must preserve me,
because I’ve hoped in you.
[22]God, redeem Yisra’el
from all its pressures.

Psalm 26 I wash my hands in innocence

David's.

[1]Exercise authority for me, Yahweh,
because I – I have walked in integrity.
In Yahweh I've trusted;
I don't slip.
[2]Probe me, Yahweh, try me,
test my inner being and my mind.
[3]Because your commitment is in front of my eyes;
I walk about by your truthfulness.
[4]I haven't sat with empty men;
I don't come with deceitful people.
[5]I'm hostile to the congregation of people who deal badly;
I don't sit with the faithless.
[6]I wash the palms of my hands with freedom from guilt
so that I may go about your altar, Yahweh,
[7]To let people hear the sound of confession,
to recount all your extraordinary deeds.
[8]Yahweh, I'm loyal to the abode that is your house,
the dwelling place of your splendour.
[9]Don't gather me up with wrongdoers,
my life with men of bloodshed,
[10]In whose hand is deliberate wickedness,
and whose right hand is full of bribes.
[11]But I'm one who walks in my integrity;
redeem me, be gracious to me!
[12]My foot has stood on level ground;
in the great congregation I will bless Yahweh.

Psalm 27 One thing

David's.

[1]Yahweh is my light, my deliverance:
of whom should I be afraid?
Yahweh is the stronghold of my life:
of whom should I be in dread?
[2]When people who deal badly drew near me,
to devour my flesh,
My adversaries and my enemies:
those people collapsed, fell.
[3]If an army camps against me,
my heart will not be afraid.
If battle arises against me,
during this I trust.

[4]One thing I've asked from Yahweh,
it's what I seek,
For me to live in Yahweh's house,
all the days of my life,
To behold Yahweh's loveliness,
and to consult each morning in his palace.
[5]Because he keeps me safe in his shelter
on the day of bad fortune.
He hides me in his tent as a hiding place;
he lifts me high on a crag.
[6]So now my head is high,
above my enemies round me.
In his tent I will offer noisy sacrifices;
I will sing and make music for Yahweh.

[7]Listen, Yahweh, to my voice when I call;
be gracious to me, answer me.
[8]For you my mind said,
'Seek my face!'
Your face I seek, Yahweh:

[9]don't hide your face from me.
Don't turn aside your servant in anger;
you've been my help.
Don't leave me, don't abandon me,
my God who delivers.
[10]When my father and my mother have abandoned me,
then Yahweh will take me in.
[11]Instruct me in your way, Yahweh,
lead me on a level path.
In view of the people watching for me,
[12]don't give me over to the will of my adversaries.
Because there have arisen against me false witnesses,
a person who testifies violence.
[13]Unless I trusted to see good things from Yahweh
in the country of the living . . .
[14]Hope in Yahweh, be strong,
may your mind stand firm, hope in Yahweh!

Psalm 28 Our vigour and God's

David's.

[1]To you, Yahweh, I call;
my crag, don't be deaf towards me,
So that you aren't silent in relation to me,
and I become like the people who go down into the Cistern.
[2]Listen to the sound of my prayers for grace,
when I cry for help to you,
When I lift up my hands
to your sacred inner room.
[3]Don't drag me off with faithless people,
with people who devise trouble,
People who speak of well-being with their neighbours,
when there is bad dealing in their mind.
[4]Give to them in accordance with their doings,
in accordance with the badness of their deeds.
In accordance with the action of their hands give to them,
give back their dealing to them.
[5]Because they don't consider Yahweh's acts,
the work of his hands;
may he tear them down and not build them up.

[6]Yahweh be blessed,
because he's heard the sound of my prayers for grace.
[7]Yahweh is my vigour and my shield;
in him my mind has trusted, and I will find help.
My mind has exulted,
and I will glorify him with my song.
[8]Yahweh is vigour for him and stronghold;
he is the great deliverance of his anointed.
[9]Deliver your people, bless your domain,
shepherd them and carry them permanently.

Psalm 29 Yahweh's voice produces convulsions

A composition. David's.

[1]Give Yahweh, you divine beings,
give Yahweh splendour and vigour.
[2]Give Yahweh the glory of his name,
bow low to Yahweh in sacred array.
[3]Yahweh's voice was over the water,
the glorious God thundered,
Yahweh over mighty water.
[4]Yahweh's voice was with energy;
Yahweh's voice was with magnificence.

[5]Yahweh's voice breaks cedars;
Yahweh breaks off cedars of Lebanon.
[6]He makes them jump like a calf,
Lebanon and Siryon like a young oryx.
[7]Yahweh's voice splits flames of fire,
[8]Yahweh's voice convulses the wilderness,
Yahweh convulses the Qadesh Wilderness.
[9]Yahweh's voice convulses oaks,
strips forests.
In his palace everyone in it says,
'In splendour [10]Yahweh sat on high;
Yahweh sat as king permanently.'
[11]Yahweh gives vigour to his people;
Yahweh blesses his people with well-being.

Psalm 30 I prayed, Yahweh answered, Yahweh acted

A composition. A song at the dedication of the house. David's.

[1]I will exalt you, Yahweh, because you put me down,
but did not let my enemies rejoice about me.
[2]Yahweh my God,
I cried for help to you, and you healed me.
[3]Yahweh, you got my life up from She'ol,
you kept me alive from going down into the Cistern.
[4]Make music for Yahweh, you who are committed to him,
confess his sacred commemoration,
[5]Because there's a moment in his anger,
a life in his acceptance.
In the evening crying lodges,
but at morning there's resounding.

[6]I – I had said when I was at ease,
'I shall not slip ever.'
[7]Yahweh, in your acceptance
you'd put in place vigour for my mountain.
You hid your face;
I became fearful.
[8]To you, Yahweh, I would call,
to my Lord I would pray for grace.
[9]'What would be the gain in my blood being shed,
in my going down to She'ol?
Can the earth confess you,
can it tell of your truthfulness?
[10]Listen, Yahweh, be gracious to me;
Yahweh, be a helper for me.'

[11]You turned my lament into dancing for me,
you undid my sack and belted me with rejoicing,
[12]so that my heart might make music and not stop;
Yahweh my God, I will confess you permanently.

Psalm 31 My times are in your hand

The leader's. A composition. David's.

[1]Since I've taken shelter with you, Yahweh,
may I never be shamed;
enable me to survive by your faithfulness.
[2]Bend your ear to me,
hurry and rescue me.
Be for me a crag, a stronghold,
a fortress to deliver me.
[3]Because you're my cliff, my stronghold;
for your name's sake lead me and guide me.
[4]Do get me out of the net that they concealed for me,

because you're my stronghold.
[5]Into your hand I assign my spirit;
you've redeemed me, Yahweh, truthful God.
[6]I'm hostile to people who keep things that are empty and hollow;
I myself trust in Yahweh.
[7]I shall celebrate and rejoice in your commitment,
you who've seen my humbling;
you've acknowledged the pressures on me.
[8]You haven't delivered me into the hand of the enemy;
you've stood my feet in a wide place.

[9]Be gracious to me, Yahweh,
because there's pressure on me.
My eye wastes away because of vexation;
my entire being and my body.
[10]Because my life comes to a finish in sadness,
my years in groaning.
My energy has collapsed because of my waywardness,
my bones waste away.
[11]Before all my adversaries I've become an object of reviling,
and very much so for my neighbours,
A dread to my acquaintances;
people who see me in the street flee away from me.
[12]I'm put out of mind like someone who's died;
I've become like a container perishing.
[13]Because I've heard the smears of many people,
alarm all round,
As they scheme together against me;
they've conspired to take my life.
[14]But I – I've trusted in you, Yahweh;
I've said, 'You are my God.'
[15]My times are in your hand;
rescue me from the hand of my enemies, from my pursuers.
[16]May your face shine upon your servant;
deliver me, in your commitment.
[17]Yahweh, may I not be shamed, because I have called you;
may the faithless people be shamed.
As they go silent to She'ol,
[18]may false lips be quiet,
Which speak arrogantly against the faithful,
with majesty and contempt.
[19]How much good you have,
which you've stored up for those who live in awe of you,
With which you've acted towards those who take shelter with you,
in front of people.
[20]You hide them in a hiding place in your presence
from human plots.
You conceal them in a bivouac
from arguing tongues.

[21]Yahweh be blessed,
because he has been extraordinary in his commitment to me,
as a town besieged.
[22]I myself had said in my haste,
'I'm cut off at a distance from your eyes.'
On the contrary, you heard my voice praying for grace,
when I cried out for help to you.
[23]Be loyal to Yahweh, all you who are committed to him;
Yahweh preserves the people who are true,
but makes good plentifully to the person who acts with majesty.
[24]Be strong; your mind should stand firm,
all you who wait for Yahweh.

Psalm 32 Love covers a multitude of sins

David's. An instruction.

[1]The blessings of the one whose rebellion is carried,
whose wrongdoing is covered!
[2]The blessings of the person
whose waywardness Yahweh does not think about,
in whose spirit there is no deceit!
[3]When I was silent,
my bones wasted away with my anguish all day.
[4]Because day and night your hand was heavy on me;
my strength was sapped [as] in summer drought. *(Rise)*
[5]I acknowledged my wrongdoing to you;
I didn't cover my waywardness.
I said, 'I shall confess my rebellions to Yahweh',
and you yourself carried the waywardness of my wrongdoing. *(Rise)*
[6]Because of this everyone who is committed should plead with you,
at the time when he is found out.
Yes, when much water overwhelms,
it will not reach him.
[7]You're a hiding place for me, you preserve me from trouble,
you surround me with survival shouts.

[8]'I shall give you insight, instruct you in the way you should go;
I shall offer counsel, my eye on you.
[9]Don't be like a horse,
like a mule that has no understanding,
Whose advance requires curbing with bit and bridle,
or there is no coming near you.'

[10]Many are the pains of the faithless,
but the person who trusts in Yahweh – commitment surrounds him.
[11]Rejoice in Yahweh, celebrate, you faithful;
shout, all you upright of mind.

Psalm 33 God's commitment fills the earth

[1]Resound, faithful people, in Yahweh;
praise is fitting for the upright.
[2]Confess Yahweh with the mandolin;
make music for him with the ten-stringed guitar.
[3]Sing him a new song;
do well in playing, with a shout.
[4]Because Yahweh's word is upright,
and every act of his is done in truthfulness.
[5]He's loyal to faithfulness in exercising authority;
Yahweh's commitment fills the earth.
[6]By Yahweh's word the heavens were made,
by the breath of his mouth all their army,
[7]Gathering the sea's water as in a dam,
putting the deeps in treasuries.

[8]All the earth is to live in awe of Yahweh;
all the world's inhabitants are to revere him.
[9]Because he's the one who spoke, and it happened;
he's the one who ordered, and it stood up.
[10]Yahweh has contravened the nations' counsel,
frustrated the peoples' intentions.
[11]Yahweh's counsel stands permanently,
the intentions of his mind for generation after generation.
[12]The blessings of the nation for which Yahweh is its God,
the people he chose as a domain for himself!
[13]From the heavens Yahweh has looked,
seen all humanity.
[14]From the established place where he lives he's gazed
at all the people who live on the earth,
[15]The one who shapes their mind, all together,
who considers all their actions.

[16]There is no king who delivers himself by the abundance of his resources;
a strong man doesn't rescue himself by the abundance of his energy.
[17]The horse is a falsehood for deliverance,
and by the abundance of its forcefulness it doesn't provide escape.
[18]There, it's Yahweh's eye that's on people who live in awe of him,
people who wait for his commitment,
[19]To rescue their life from death,
and keep them alive in famine.
[20]Our entire being hopes for Yahweh;
he is our help and our shield.
[21]Because in him our heart rejoices;
because in his sacred name we've trusted.
[22]May your commitment be over us, Yahweh,
as we've waited for you.

Psalm 34 Look to him and become bright

David's. When he concealed his sanity before Abimelek so that he drove him out, and he went.

[1]I will bless Yahweh all the time;
his praise will be in my mouth continually.
[2]In Yahweh my entire being takes pride;
the humble should listen and rejoice.
[3]Magnify Yahweh with me;
we'll exalt his name together.
[4]I enquired of Yahweh and he answered me,
and rescued me from all my terrors.
[5]People look to him and become bright;
their faces need not be confounded.
[6]This humble man called and Yahweh himself listened,
and delivered him from all his pressures.
[7]Yahweh's envoy camps round the people who live in awe of him
and pulls them out.
[8]Taste and see that Yahweh is good;
the blessings of the man who takes shelter with him!
[9]Live in awe of Yahweh, you who are his sacred ones,
because there's no lack for people who live in awe of him.
[10]Lions are destitute and starve,
but people who enquire of Yahweh don't lack any good thing.
[11]Come, children, listen to me;
I'll teach you about awe for Yahweh.
[12]Who's the individual who delights in life,
who loves days for seeing good fortune?
[13]Preserve your tongue from what is bad,
your lips from speaking a lie.
[14]Depart from what's bad and do what's good;
seek well-being, pursue it.
[15]Yahweh's eyes are on the faithful,
his ears are to their cry for help.
[16]Yahweh's face is against people who do what's bad,
to cut off their commemoration from the country.
[17]People cry out, and Yahweh listens,
and rescues them from all their pressures.
[18]Yahweh is near to the people who are breaking inside,
and delivers the people who are crushed in spirit.
[19]When the bad things that come to the faithful person are many,
Yahweh rescues him from them all.
[20]He keeps all his bones;
not one of them breaks.
[21]Bad fortune brings the death of the faithless person,
and the people who are hostile to the faithful incur liability.
[22]Yahweh redeems the life of his servants,
and none who take shelter with him incur liability.

Psalm 35.1–16 Argue for me

David's.

[1]Argue with the people who argue with me, Yahweh,
battle with the people who battle me.
[2]Take strong hold of hand-shield and body-shield,
and arise as my help.
[3]Draw lance and pike
to meet my pursuers.
Say to me,
'I am your deliverance.'
[4]They must be shamed and disgraced,
the people seeking my life.
They must turn backwards and be confounded,
the people thinking up something bad for me.
[5]They must be like chaff before the wind,
with Yahweh's envoy chasing.
[6]Their way must be darkness and slipperiness,
with Yahweh's envoy pursuing them.
[7]Because for nothing they've hidden their net's pit for me,
for nothing they dug it for my life.
[8]Devastation must come that he doesn't know,
his own net that he hid must catch him,
as devastation may he fall into it.
[9]But my entire being will rejoice in Yahweh,
it shall be glad at his deliverance.
[10]All my bones will say,
'Yahweh, who is like you,
One who rescues the humble person from the one stronger than him,
the humble and needy person from the robber?'

[11]Violent witnesses arise,
people who ask me about what I don't acknowledge.
[12]They make good to me with bad for good,
mourning for my entire being.
[13]But I – when they were ill,
my clothing was sack.
I humbled myself with fasting,
and my plea would turn back to my heart.
[14]I walked about as if it was my friend, as if it was a brother;
as if I were a mother grieving, mourning, gloomy.
[15]But at my stumbling they've rejoiced and gathered,
gathered against me as assailants.
People I didn't know
have torn at me and not stopped.
[16]As the most profane twisted people who ridicule,
they have ground their teeth against me.

Psalm 35.17–28 'We've swallowed him up!'

[17]Lord, how long until you see?
– bring back my life from their devastation,
my dear life from the lions.
[18]I shall confess you in the great congregation,
among a numerous people I shall praise you.
[19]My lying enemies must not rejoice at me,
the people hostile to me for nothing, who glint their eyes.
[20]Because they don't speak of peace;
they're against the quiet people in the country.
They think up false statements,
[21]and they've widened their mouth against me.
They have said,
'Ah, ah, our eye has seen it!'
[22]You've seen, Yahweh, don't be silent;
Lord, don't be far away from me!

[23]Stir yourself, wake up, to exercise authority for me,
to argue for me, my God and Lord!
[24]Exercise authority for me in accordance with your faithfulness,
Yahweh my God; they mustn't rejoice over me.
[25]They must not say inside, 'Ah, our desire!'
– they must not say, 'We've swallowed him up!'
[26]They must be shamed and confounded altogether,
the people who rejoice at bad fortune coming to me.
They must be clothed in disgrace and shame,
the people who act big over me.
[27]They must resound and rejoice,
the people who delight in the faithfulness shown me,
So that they will say continually, 'Yahweh is great,
the one who delights in the well-being of his servant.'
[28]And my tongue will tell of your faithfulness,
of your praise all day.

Psalm 36 Your truthfulness reaches to the skies

The leader's. Yahweh's servant's. David's.

[1]A rebellious utterance by a faithless person
is in my mind.
There is no reverence for God
in front of his eyes.
[2]Because he flatters himself in his own eyes,
about being found out for his waywardness, about meeting hostility.
[3]The words of his mouth are trouble and deceit;
he's left off having insight, doing good.
[4]He thinks up trouble on his bed,
he takes his stand on a no-good way, he doesn't reject what is bad.

[5]Yahweh, your commitment is in the heavens,
your truthfulness reaches as far as the skies.
[6]Your faithfulness is like supernatural mountains,
your authority is like the great deep.
Human being and animal you deliver, Yahweh;
[7]how valuable is your commitment.
Divine beings and human beings
take shelter in the shadow of your wings.
[8]They feast on the richness of your house,
you let them drink from your lovely wadi.
[9]Because with you there is a living spring;
in your light we see light.

[10]Draw out your commitment to the people who acknowledge you,
your faithfulness to the upright in mind.
[11]The majestic foot must not come on me,
the hand of faithless people must not make me flee.
[12]The people who devise trouble have fallen there,
they have been thrown down, they can't get up.

Psalm 37.1–20 The humble will enter into possession of the land

David's.

[1]Don't get into a rage because of people who deal badly,
don't get passionate because of people who do evil.
[2]Because like grass they fade quickly,
like green plants they wither.
[3]Trust in Yahweh and do good,
dwell in the country and pasture on truthfulness.
[4]Revel in Yahweh,
and he'll give you the requests of your heart.
[5]Commit your way to Yahweh;
trust in him and he'll act,

[6]He'll bring out faithfulness for you like light,
exercise of authority for you like midday.
[7]Be still before Yahweh,
and wait patiently for him.
Don't get into a rage with the person who makes his way successful,
with the individual who acts on his strategies.
[8]Let go of anger, abandon wrath;
don't get into a rage, only to do something bad.
[9]Because people who deal badly will be cut off,
but those who hope in Yahweh – they'll enter into possession of the country.
[10]Yet a little while and there'll be no faithless person;
you'll consider his place, and there'll be no one.
[11]The humble – they'll enter into possession of the country
and revel in abundance of well-being.
[12]The faithless person schemes against the faithful
and grinds his teeth against him.
[13]The Lord makes fun of him,
because he's seen that his day will come.
[14]Faithless people have drawn the sword,
and directed their bow,
To make the humble and needy fall,
to slaughter people who are upright in their way.
[15]Their sword will come into their own heart,
their bows will break.
[16]Better is the little of the faithful
than the great mass of the faithless.
[17]Because the arms of the faithless will break,
but Yahweh upholds the faithful.
[18]Yahweh will acknowledge the days of people of integrity,
and their domain will last permanently.
[19]They won't be shamed at a time when things are bad,
and in days of famine they'll be full.
[20]Because faithless people will perish,
Yahweh's enemies.
They'll come to a finish like the most valuable of pastures,
come to a finish in smoke.

Psalm 37.21–40 What I've seen and not seen

[21]The faithless person borrows and cannot make good,
but the faithful person is gracious and gives.
[22]Because the people blessed by him will enter into possession of the country,
but the people slighted by him will be cut off.
[23]A man's steps are established by Yahweh,
when he delights in his way.
[24]When he falls he's not thrown headlong,
because Yahweh supports with his hand.
[25]I was young and yes, I'm old,
but I haven't seen a faithful person abandoned,
or his offspring seeking bread.
[26]All day he's gracious and lends,
and his offspring are a blessing.
[27]Depart from what's bad and do good,
and dwell permanently.
[28]Because Yahweh is loyal to the exercise of authority,
and doesn't abandon people committed to him.
They are kept watch over permanently,
but the offspring of the faithless are cut off.
[29]Faithful people will enter into possession of the country,
and dwell for ever and ever.
[30]The mouth of the faithful person murmurs smartness,
and his tongue speaks with authority.
[31]His God's instruction is in his mind;
his steps don't slip.
[32]The faithless person watches for the faithful,

and seeks to put him to death.
[33]Yahweh doesn't abandon him into his hand,
and doesn't declare him in the wrong when entering into judgement about him.
[34]Hope in Yahweh,
and keep his way.
He'll raise you up so that you enter into possession of the country;
when the faithless are cut off, you'll see.
[35]I've seen a faithless man, violent,
arousing himself like a verdant native tree,
[36]But he passed on – there, he was gone;
I sought him and he couldn't be found.
[37]Keep watch on the person of integrity, see the upright person,
because there is a future for the man of peace.
[38]But rebels are annihilated all at once;
the future of the faithless is cut off.
[39]The deliverance of the faithful comes from Yahweh,
their stronghold in time of pressure.
[40]Yahweh helps them and enables them to survive,
he enables them to survive from the faithless and delivers them,
because they take shelter with him.

Psalm 38 Suffering can sometimes link to sin

A composition. David's. For commemoration.

[1]Yahweh, don't reprove me in your fury,
or discipline me in your wrath.
[2]Because your arrows have descended on me,
your hand has descended upon me.
[3]There's no integrity in my body by reason of your condemnation;
there's no well-being in my bones by reason of my wrongdoings.
[4]Because my wayward acts have passed over my head;
like a heavy burden, they're too heavy for me.
[5]My wounds have smelled and festered
by reason of my denseness.
[6]Because I went astray, I'm utterly bowed down;
all day I've gone about gloomy.
[7]Because my thighs are full of burning,
and there is no integrity in my body.
[8]I've become numb, utterly crushed;
I howl because of the rumbling in my heart.
[9]Lord, all my longing is in front of you;
my groaning has not hidden from you.
[10]My heart has taken flight, my energy has abandoned me;
the light in my eyes – they, too, are not with me.
[11]My friends and my neighbours
stand back at a distance from my affliction.
The people near me have stood far off,
[12]and people who seek my life have laid traps.
People who enquire about something bad for me have spoken malice;
all day they murmur lies.
[13]But I myself am like a deaf person, I cannot hear,
like a dumb person who cannot open his mouth.
[14]I've become like someone who doesn't hear;
there's no reproof in my mouth.
[15]Because I've waited for you, Yahweh;
you – you will answer, Lord my God.
[16]Because I said, 'They must not rejoice about me;
when my foot slipped, they acted big over me.'
[17]Because I am set for stumbling;
my pain is in front of me continually.
[18]Because I tell of my waywardness,
I'm anxious because of my wrongdoings.
[19]My mortal enemies are numerous,
the people hostile to me with falsehood are many.

[20]The people who make good with something bad for something good
attack me on account of my pursuing what is good.
[21]Don't abandon me, Yahweh;
my God, don't be far from me.
[22]Hurry to my help,
Lord my deliverance.

Psalm 39 Just a breath

The leader's. Yedutun's. A composition. David's.

[1]I said, 'I shall keep watch on my ways,
so that I don't do wrong with my tongue.
I shall keep a muzzle on my mouth,
as long as a faithless person is in front of me.'
[2]I was dumb, in silence;
I was quiet, more than it was good.
And as my pain stirred,
[3]my mind became heated inside me.
As I murmured, fire burned up;
I spoke out with my tongue.

[4]Get me to acknowledge my end, Yahweh,
the number of my days, what it is.
[5]There, you made my days handbreadths;
my span is as nothing in front of you.
Yes, every human being, standing firm, is simply a breath; *(Rise)*
[6]yes, it's as a shadow that a person walks about.
Yes, it's for a breath that people are in turmoil;
someone may heap up, but not know who's going to gather them in.

[7]So now, what have I hoped for, Lord?
– my waiting is for you.
[8]Rescue me from all my acts of rebellion,
don't make me an object of reviling to the villain.
[9]I was dumb, I didn't open my mouth,
because you were the one who acted.
[10]Turn away your affliction from me;
because of the blow of your hand I – I am finished.
[11]With reproofs for waywardness you've disciplined someone,
and consumed like a moth what he desires;
yes, every human being is a breath. *(Rise)*

[12]Listen to my plea, Yahweh, give ear to my cry for help,
don't be silent at my crying.
Because I'm a sojourner with you,
a transient like all my ancestors.
[13]Look away from me so that I may smile,
before I go and there is nothing of me.

Psalm 40 I didn't hide your faithfulness within my heart

The leader's. David's. A composition.

[1]I hoped and hoped in Yahweh,
and he bent to me and listened to my cry for help.
[2]He got me up from a roaring cistern,
from the overflowing mud.
He set up my feet on a cliff,
he established my steps.
[3]He put a new song in my mouth,
an act of praise to our God.
Many could see it and live in awe,
and trust in Yahweh.

[4]The blessings of the man
who makes Yahweh his trust

And has not turned his face to the arrogant
or to people who follow a lie!
[5]You, Yahweh, my God,
have done many things.
Your extraordinary deeds and your intentions for us
– there is no one to set alongside you.
Were I to tell and speak,
they are too numerous to recount.
[6]Sacrifice and offering you didn't want
– you dug ears for me;
burnt offering and purification offering you didn't ask for.
[7]Then I said, 'Here, I've come;
in a written scroll it is inscribed for me.'
[8]I wanted to do what's acceptable to you, my God;
your instruction was within my inmost self.
[9]I announced the news of your faithfulness in the great congregation;
there – I wouldn't close my lips,
as, Yahweh, you yourself know.
[10]I didn't hide your faithfulness within my heart;
I told of your truthfulness and your deliverance.
I didn't conceal your true commitment
before the great congregation.

[11]You, Yahweh,
may you not close up your compassion from me;
may your true commitment preserve me continually.
[12]Because bad experiences have surrounded me,
beyond numbering.
My wayward acts have caught up with me;
I haven't been able to see.
They're more numerous than the hairs on my head;
my mind has abandoned me.
[13]Show acceptance, Yahweh, by rescuing me;
Yahweh, hurry to my help.
[14]May they be shamed and reviled altogether,
the people who seek my life, to destroy it.
May they turn backwards and be confounded,
the people who want what is bad for me.
[15]May they be desolate on account of their shame,
the people who say to me 'Ah, ah!'
[16]May they celebrate and rejoice in you, all the people who seek you;
may they say continually 'Yahweh is great',
the people loyal to your deliverance.

[17]But I'm humble and needy;
may my Lord take thought for me.
You're my help and the one who enables me to survive;
my God, don't delay!

Psalm 41.1–12 Learning from the poor

The leader's. A composition. David's.

[1]The blessings of the one who has insight into the poor person,
whom Yahweh saves on the day when bad things happen!
[2]Yahweh keeps watch over him and keeps him alive,
and blesses him in the country,
and you won't give him to the appetite of his enemies.
[3]Yahweh sustains him on his sickbed;
his entire bed you've transformed, in his illness.

[4]I myself said, 'Yahweh, be gracious to me;
heal me, because I have done wrong in relation to you.'
[5]My enemies speak of bad fortune for me:
'When will he die, and his name perish?
[6]If he comes to see [someone],
he speaks emptiness.

His mind collects trouble for himself,
which he speaks when he goes outside.'
[7]All the people hostile to me whisper together against me;
they think up bad things for me.
[8]'A lethal pestilence besets him;
in that he has lain down, he won't get up again.'
[9]Even my friend whom I trusted,
one who eats bread with me,
has acted big against me as a cheat.
[10]But you, Yahweh, be gracious to me,
raise me up, and I'll make good to them.

[11]Through this I have acknowledged that you delighted in me,
because my enemy does not shout over me,
[12]And I – in my integrity you've taken hold of me,
and stood me up before you permanently.

Psalm 41.13 An interim closing act of praise

[13]Yahweh the God of Yisra'el be blessed,
from age to age,
Amen, amen.

Psalm 42 Where is your God?

The leader's. An instruction. The Qorahites'.

[1]Like a deer that strains towards water canyons,
so my entire being strains towards you, God.
[2]My entire being is thirsty for God,
for the living God;
When will I come
and appear before God?
[3]My crying has become my food,
day and night,
While people say to me all day,
'Where is your God?'
[4]These things I shall bring to mind,
as I pour out my entire being within me:
That I shall pass along in the shelter,
lead people right to God's house,
With a voice of resounding and confession,
the festive crowd.
[5]Why do you bow low, my entire being,
[why] are you in turmoil within me?
Wait for God, because I shall yet confess him
for the deliverance that comes from his face.

[6]My God, my entire being bows low within me;
therefore I bring you to mind,
From the Yarden [Jordan] region and the Hermons,
from Little Mountain.
[7]Deep is calling to deep,
in the sound of your waterfalls.
All your breakers and your waves
have passed over me.
[8]By day may Yahweh order his commitment,
and by night may his song be with me.
A plea to my living God:
[9]I will say to God, my cliff,
'Why have you put me out of mind,
why do I go about gloomy,
With affliction from an enemy,
[10]with murder in my bones?
My adversaries have reviled me,
while they say to me all day,
'Where is your God?'

[11]Why do you bow low, my entire being,
and why are you in turmoil within me?
Wait for God, because I shall yet confess him,
as the deliverance of my face and my God.

Psalm 43 God's light and truthfulness to lead me

[1]Exercise authority for me, God,
argue for my cause.
From a nation that is not committed,
from a deceitful and evil individual, enable me to survive.
[2]Because you are God my stronghold;
why have you rejected me?
Why do I go about gloomy,
through an enemy's affliction?
[3]Send your light and your truthfulness, they will lead me;
they will bring me to your sacred mountain, to your great dwelling,
[4]So that I can come to God's altar,
to the God in whom I rejoice joyfully,
And confess you with the guitar,
God my God.
[5]Why do you bow low, my entire being,
and why are you in turmoil within me?
Wait for God, because I shall yet confess him
as the deliverance of my face and my God.

Psalm 44.1–16 It's not in my bow that I trust

The leader's. The Qorahites.' An instruction.

[1]God, we've heard with our ears,
our ancestors have recounted to us,
The deed you did in their days, in past days,
[2]you yourself with your own hand.
You dispossessed nations and planted them;
you brought bad fortune on peoples and sent them off.
[3]Because it was not by their sword that they entered into possession of the country,
it was not their arm that delivered them,
But your hand and your arm, and the light of your face,
because you accepted them.
[4]You are my king, God;
order Ya'aqob's deliverance!
[5]Through you we charge at our adversaries,
by your name we tread down our attackers.
[6]Because it's not in my bow that I trust;
my sword doesn't deliver me.
[7]Because you've delivered us from our adversaries,
and shamed the people hostile to us.
[8]God is the one whom we praise all day;
your name we shall confess permanently. *(Rise)*

[9]Yet you've rejected and disgraced us,
and you don't go out with our armies.
[10]You turn us back from the adversary,
and the people hostile to us have plundered us at will.
[11]You make us like sheep for food,
and you've scattered us among the nations.
[12]You sell your people without profit;
you didn't go high in their price.
[13]You make us an object of reviling to our neighbours,
an object of ridicule and derision to the people round us.
[14]You make us an object lesson among the nations,
something to shake the head at among the peoples.
[15]All day my disgrace is in front of me;
the shame of my face has covered me,
[16]At the voice of the person reviling and insulting,

at the presence of the enemy exacting redress.

Psalm 44.17–26 Wake up, God!

[17]All this has come upon us and we haven't put you out of mind;
we haven't been false to your pact.
[18]Our mind has not turned backwards;
our steps have not deviated from your path,
[19]That you should have crushed us into the place of jackals,
covered us over with deathly darkness.
[20]If we'd put our God's name out of mind,
and spread our palms to a foreign god,
[21]God would search this out, wouldn't he,
because he knows the mind's secrets.
[22]Rather, it's because of you that we've been run through all day;
we have been thought of as sheep for slaughter.

[23]Rise up, why do you sleep, Lord?
– wake up, don't reject permanently!
[24]Why do you hide your face,
put our humbling and affliction out of mind?
[25]Because our being bows down in the earth,
our heart clings to the ground.
[26]Get up as our help,
redeem us for the sake of your commitment!

Psalm 45 The marriage challenge

The leader's. On Lotuses. The Qorahites'. An instruction. A love song.

[1]My mind stirs with a fine message;
I'm speaking my work to a king,
my tongue is the pen of a speedy secretary.
[2]You're the most handsome of human beings;
grace is poured on to your lips
– therefore God has blessed you permanently.
[3]Wrap your sword on to your side,
strong man, with your grandeur and magnificence,
[4]and in your magnificence win.
Ride in the cause of truthfulness and faithful lowliness,
so that your right hand directs you to awe-inspiring deeds.
[5]Your arrows are sharpened;
peoples are beneath you.
They fall in the heart of the king's enemies;
[6]your throne, God's, is lasting and permanent.
Your royal club is an upright club;
[7]you're loyal to faithfulness and you're hostile to faithlessness.
Therefore God, your God,
has anointed you with celebratory oil beyond your companions.
[8]All your clothes are myrrh, aloes and cassia;
from your great ivory palace strings entertain you.
[9]The great princess stands in your jewels,
the queen at your right hand in gold of Ophir.

[10]Listen, young lady, look, bend your ear;
put out of mind your people, your father's household.
[11]The king will desire your beauty;
because he's your lord, bow low to him.
[12]The daughter-town of Tsor [Tyre] will seek your goodwill with a gift,
the wealthiest of the people [13]with all splendour.

To the inside, the princess, with her gold embroidery,
her dress [14]of coloured cloth, will be taken to the king,
The girls behind her, her friends,
will be brought to you.
[15]They'll be taken with joyful celebration;

they'll come into the king's palace.
[16]In place of your ancestors will be your sons;
you will appoint them as officials throughout the country.

[17]I shall make mention of your name in every generation after generation;
therefore peoples will confess you lastingly, permanently.

Psalm 46 Be still and know that I am God

The leader's. The Qorahites'. On Secrets. A song.

[1]God is for us shelter and vigour,
a help in pressures, readily to be found.
[2]Therefore we're not afraid when the earth moves,
when mountains slip into the middle of the seas.
[3]Its water may be in turmoil and foam,
the mountains may quake when it lifts up high. *(Rise)*

[4]A river with its streams rejoices God's town,
the sacred place where the great dwelling of the One on High is.
[5]God being in the middle of it, it will not slip;
God helps it as morning turns its face.
[6]Nations are in turmoil, kingdoms slip;
when he gives his voice, earth dissolves.
[7]Yahweh of Armies is with us;
Ya'aqob's God is a turret for us. *(Rise)*

[8]Go behold the deeds of Yahweh,
who is causing great destruction in the earth,
[9]Stopping battles
as far as the end of the earth,
When he breaks up the bow and snaps the lance,
burns chariots in the fire.
[10]'Relax, and acknowledge that I am God;
I will be high among the nations, I will be high in the earth.'
[11]Yahweh of Armies is with us;
Ya'aqob's God is a turret for us. *(Rise)*

Psalm 47 The outrageous confession

The leader's. The Qorahites'. A composition.

[1]All you peoples, clap the palms of your hands,
shout to God with a resounding voice.
[2]Because Yahweh, the One on High, is awe-inspiring,
the great king over all the earth.
[3]He subdues peoples under us,
nations under our feet.
[4]He chooses our domain for us,
the majesty of Ya'aqob to whom he is loyal. *(Rise)*
[5]God has gone up with a shout,
Yahweh with the sound of a horn.

[6]Make music for God, make music;
make music for our king, make music.
[7]Because God is king of all the earth;
make music with insight.
[8]God has become king over the nations;
God has sat on his sacred throne.
[9]The leaders of the peoples have gathered,
the people of Abraham's God.
Because the shields of the earth belong to God;
he has gone up very high.

Psalm 48 Our town

A song. A composition. The Qorahites'.

[1]Yahweh is great, and much to be praised,
in our God's town.
His sacred mountain [2]is a beauty of a height,
the greatest joy in all the earth.
The heights of Tsaphon are Mount Tsiyyon,
the great king's town.
[3]In its citadels God
has caused himself to be acknowledged as a turret.
[4]Because there – the kings assembled,
passed along together.
[5]When those men saw, they were stunned,
they were frightened, they made haste.
[6]Trembling grasped them there,
writhing like a woman in labour.
[7]With an east wind
you break up Tarshish ships.
[8]As we've heard, so we've seen,
in Yahweh of Armies' town,
In our God's town,
which God will establish permanently. *(Rise)*
[9]God, we have reflected on your commitment,
within your palace.
[10]God, like your name,
so your praise reaches to the ends of the earth.
Your right hand is full of faithfulness;
[11]Mount Tsiyyon will rejoice.
Yehudah's towns will celebrate
on account of your rulings.
[12]Go round Tsiyyon, circle it,
count its towers.
[13]Set your mind on its rampart,
tour its citadels,
So that you can recount to a future age
[14]that this is God,
Our God lastingly and permanently
– he will direct us against death.

Psalm 49 You can't take it with you

The leader's. The Qorahites'. A composition.

[1]Listen to this, all you peoples;
give ear, all you inhabitants of the world,
[2]Both ordinary people and important people,
wealthy and needy together.
[3]My mouth will speak smartness,
the murmur from my mind will be understanding.
[4]I shall bend my ear to a poem,
resolve my conundrum with the guitar.

[5]Why should I be afraid in bad days,
when the waywardness of people cheating me surrounds me,
[6]People who trust in their resources,
and take pride in the abundance of their wealth?
[7]Huh; it definitely can't redeem someone;
it can't give God his ransom.
[8]The redemption of his life would be expensive;
it would be insufficient permanently,
[9]So that he should live on permanently,
not see the Pit.
[10]Because one can see that smart people die,
the dimwit and stupid person perish together.
They abandon their resources to others,
[11]whereas their inward thought is that their home will be permanent,

Their dwelling to generation after generation
– they had called lands by their names.
[12]A human being does not lodge in honour;
he is like cattle that are terminated.
[13]This is the way things are for them, the people characterized by dim-wittedness,
and after them the people who accept their talk. *(Rise)*
[14]Like sheep they've headed for She'ol;
death shepherds them.
The upright hold sway over them at morning,
and their form is for wasting in She'ol,
away from its lofty home.

[15]Yet God will redeem my life from the hand of She'ol,
because he will take me. *(Rise)*
[16]Don't be afraid when someone becomes wealthy,
when the splendour of his house becomes great,
[17]Because when he dies he doesn't take it all;
his splendour doesn't go down after him.
[18]If he blesses himself in his lifetime,
and people confess you, that you do well for yourself,
[19]He comes to the circle of his ancestors;
never does he see the light.
[20]A human being in honour but who does not have understanding
is like cattle that are terminated.

Psalm 50 Keep it simple

A composition. Asaph's.

[1]God, Yahweh God, has spoken,
and called the earth from the rising of the sun as far as its going down.
[2]From Tsiyyon, the fullness of beauty,
God has shone out; [3]our God comes and cannot be silent.
Fire devours before him,
and round him it has stormed greatly.
[4]He calls to the heavens above,
and to the earth for a judgement about his people.
[5]'Gather to me the people committed to me,
the people who sealed a pact with me over a sacrifice.'
[6]The heavens have told of his faithfulness,
because he is a God who exercises authority. *(Rise)*

[7]Listen, my people, and I will speak;
Yisra'el, and I will testify against you –
I am God, your God.

[8]About your sacrifices I don't reprove you,
and your burnt offerings are continually in front of me.
[9]I would not take a bull from your house,
goats from your pens.
[10]Because every animal in the forest is mine,
the cattle on a thousand mountains.
[11]I know every bird in the mountains,
and every creature of the wild is with me.
[12]If I were hungry, I would not say so to you,
because the world and what fills it is mine.
[13]Do I eat the flesh of the sturdy
or drink the blood of goats?
[14]Sacrifice a thank-offering to God,
and make good your pledges to the One on High.
[15]Call me on the day of pressure;
I'll pull you out, then you'll honour me.

[16]But to the faithless person, God has said:
What's your business, recounting my decrees,
and taking my pact on to your mouth,

[17]When you're one hostile to discipline,
and you throw my words behind you?
[18]If you've seen a thief, you've accepted him,
and your lot has been with adulterers.
[19]You've given your mouth to bad dealing;
you harness your tongue to deceit.
[20]As you sit you speak against your brother,
with your mother's son you find fault.
[21]These things you've done and I have been silent;
you've thought I really was like you.
I reprove you and lay it out before your eyes;
[22]please consider this, you who put God out of mind,
so that I don't tear you apart and there's no one to rescue.

[23]The person who sacrifices a thank-offering honours me,
and the person who directs his way
– I let him see God's deliverance.

Psalm 51 Teach me to repent

The leader's. A composition. David's. When Natan the prophet came to him as he had come to Bat-sheba.

[1]Be gracious to me, God, in accordance with your commitment.
in accordance with the abundance of your compassion wipe away my rebellions.
[2]Wash me thoroughly from my waywardness,
cleanse me from my wrongdoing.
[3]Because I myself acknowledge my rebellions;
my wrongdoing is in front of me continually.
[4]In relation to you alone have I acted wrongly,
and done what is bad in your eyes,
In order that you are faithful in your speaking,
clean in your exercise of authority.
[5]On one hand, in waywardness I was birthed,
in wrongdoing my mother conceived me.
[6]On the other, you delight in truthfulness in hidden places;
in the secret place you make me acknowledge smartness.
[7]Remove my wrongdoing with hyssop so I'm pure,
wash me so I'm whiter than snow.
[8]Let me listen to joy and rejoicing;
may the bones you've crushed celebrate.
[9]Hide your face from my wrongdoings,
wipe away all my wayward acts.
[10]Create for me a pure mind, God;
renew an established spirit within me.
[11]Don't throw me out of your presence;
don't take your sacred spirit from me.
[12]Give back to me the joy of being delivered by you;
may your generous spirit sustain me.

[13]I will teach rebels your ways,
and wrongdoers will turn back to you.
[14]Rescue me from shed blood, God,
the God who delivers me;
my tongue will resound concerning your faithfulness.
[15]Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will tell of your praise.
[16]Because you wouldn't delight in a sacrifice, were I to give it;
you wouldn't accept a burnt offering.
[17]Godly sacrifices are a broken spirit;
a broken, crushed mind, God, you would not despise.

[18]Do good to Tsiyyon through your acceptance;
build up Yerushalaim's walls.
[19]Then you will delight in faithful sacrifices,
burnt offering and whole offering;
then people will take bulls up on to your altar.

Psalm 52 How to stand tall

The leader's. An instruction. David's. When Do'eg the Edomite came and told Sha'ul, 'David came to Ahimelek's house.'

[1]Why do you take pride in what is bad, strong man,
when God's commitment holds all day?
[2]Your tongue thinks up malice,
like a sharpened razor, you who're acting with deceit.
[3]You're loyal to what is bad rather than what is good,
to falsehood rather than faithful words. *(Rise)*
[4]You're loyal to all devouring words,
you deceitful tongue.
[5]God will indeed tear you down permanently,
break you and pull you from your tent,
uproot you from the land of the living. *(Rise)*

[6]Faithful people will see and be in awe,
and make fun of him:
[7]'There's the man
who didn't make God his stronghold,
But trusted in the abundance of his wealth,
found vigour in his malice.'
[8]But I'm like a verdant olive tree
in God's house.
I have trusted in God's commitment lastingly and permanently;
[9]I will confess you permanently, because you've acted.
And I will hope in your name, because it's good,
in front of the people committed to you.

Psalm 53 There's no God here

The leader's. On Pipe. An instruction. David's.

[1]A villain has said to himself,
'There's no God here.'
People have been devastating and offensive in evil;
there's no one doing good here.
[2]From the heavens God has looked out
at human beings,
To see if there is someone insightful,
enquiring of God.
[3]The whole of it has turned backwards, altogether they're foul;
there's no one doing good, there isn't even one.
[4]They don't acknowledge, do they, the people devising trouble,
who eat my people?
They've eaten food;
they haven't called God.

[5]They're experiencing dreadful terror there,
when there had been no terror.
Because God is scattering the bones of the one camping against you;
you've shamed them, because God has rejected them.

[6]If only there were deliverance for Yisra'el from Tsiyyon,
when God turns back his people's fortunes.
Ya'aqob will celebrate,
Yisra'el will rejoice!

Psalm 54 With a free offering I will sacrifice to you

The leader's. With strings. An instruction. David's. When the Ziphites came and told Sha'ul, 'David's hiding with us, isn't he.'

[1]God, deliver me by your name,
by your strength give judgement for me.
[2]God, listen to my plea,
heed the sayings of my mouth.
[3]Because aliens have risen up against me,

frightening people have sought my life,
people who haven't put God in front of them.
[4]Here – God is my helper,
my Lord is the very sustainer of my life.
[5]May he make the bad experience come back to the people who are watching for me;
in your truthfulness wipe them out.
[6]With a free offering I will sacrifice to you,
I will confess your name, Yahweh, because it's good.
[7]Because it has rescued me from every pressure,
and my eye has looked at my enemies.

Psalm 55 Throwing things on to God

The leader's. With strings. An instruction. David's.

[1]God, give ear to my plea,
don't hide from my prayer for grace.
[2]Heed me and answer me;
I'm frantic in my talking and I reel,
[3]At the voice of the enemy,
in the face of the oppression of the faithless.
Because they make trouble fall down on me,
and in anger they harass me.
[4]My mind whirls within me,
deathly dreads have fallen upon me.
[5]Fear and trembling come into me,
horror has covered me.
[6]I said, 'If only I had wings;
like a pigeon I could fly and dwell somewhere.'
[7]There, I would go far away in flight,
I would lodge in the wilderness. *(Rise)*
[8]I would hurry to a place where I could survive,
from the sweeping wind, from the hurricane.

[9]Lord, swallow up, divide their speech,
because I've seen violence and argument in the town.
[10]Day and night they go round it on its walls,
while trouble and oppression are inside it.
[11]Malice is within it;
repression and deceit don't move away from its square.
[12]Because it's not an enemy that reviles me, which I could bear,
or someone hostile to me that has acted big over me,
from whom I could hide,
[13]But you, a person of my kind,
my companion, someone I knew,
[14]Together we would enjoy confidences
as we walked about in the throng into God's house.

[15]Great desolation on them,
they should go down to She'ol alive,
because there are bad dealings in their residence, among them.
[16]I am one who calls to God;
Yahweh will deliver me.
[17]Evening and morning and noon I talk,
and I am in turmoil, but he has listened to my voice.
[18]He has redeemed my life in well-being from my encounter,
because many indeed were with me.
[19]God listens and puts them down,
the one who sits of old, *(Rise)*
The one in whom there are no changes;
but they had no awe of God.
[20]He put out his hand against his friends,
he violated his pact.
[21]The butter in his mouth was smooth,
but encounter was in his mind.
His words were softer than oil,

but they – they were unsheathed swords.

[22]Throw on to Yahweh what is given you,
and he himself will sustain you.
He will never let
the faithful person fall down.
[23]God, you yourself will bring them down,
to the deepest pit,
The people of bloodshed and deceit
will not have half their days,
but I – I will trust in you.

Psalm 56 I am afraid, I'm not afraid

The leader's. On the Silent Pigeon of Far-off Places. David's. An inscription. When the Pelishtites [Philistines] seized him in Gat.

[1]Be gracious to me, God, because a man has hounded me;
all day a man of battle afflicts me.
[2]The people watching for me have hounded me all day,
because those battling me from a lofty position are many.
[3]On the day I am afraid,
I do trust in you.
[4]In God whose word I praise,
in God I've trusted.
I'm not afraid:
what can flesh do to me?
[5]All day they pervert my words;
all their intentions to deal badly are against me.
[6]They stir up strife, they lie in ambush, those people,
they keep watch on my steps,
as if they're hoping for my life.
[7]For the trouble they devise, reduce them to survivors,
in anger put the peoples down, God.

[8]You've recorded my lamenting,
you yourself have put my tears into your flask;
they're in your record, aren't they.
[9]Then my enemies will turn back
on the day I call;
I know this, because God is mine.
[10]In God whose word I praise,
in Yahweh whose word I praise,
[11]In God I've trusted, I'm not afraid:
what can a human being do to me?
[12]Given that pledges to you are binding upon me, God,
I shall make good my thank-offerings to you,
[13]Because you've rescued my life from death,
my foot from tripping up, haven't you,
So that I might walk about before God,
in the light of life.

Psalm 57 My mind is set

The leader's. Do Not Destroy. David's. An inscription. When he fled from before Sha'ul into the cave.

[1]Be gracious to me, God, be gracious to me,
because my life has taken shelter with you,
And in the shadow of your wings I shall take shelter
until malice passes.
[2]I will call to God, the One on High,
to God who is going to bring it to an end for me.
[3]May he send from the heavens and deliver me,
as he reviles the one who hounds me. *(Rise)*
May God send his commitment
and his truthfulness [4]to my life.
I shall lie down among lions,

devouring human beings,
Their teeth a pike and arrows,
their tongue a sharp sword.
[5]Rise above the heavens, God,
your splendour above all the earth.

[6]People set a net for my feet;
my life was bowing down.
They dug a pit before me;
they fell right into it. *(Rise)*
[7]My mind is set, God,
my mind is set.
I shall sing and make music;
[8]wake up, my heart.
Wake up, mandolin and guitar;
I shall wake up the dawn.
[9]I will confess you among the peoples, Lord,
I will make music for you among the nations.
[10]Because your commitment is big, as far as the heavens,
your truthfulness as far as the skies.
[11]Rise above the heavens, God,
your splendour above all the earth.

Psalm 58 A challenge to the principalities and powers

The leader's. Do Not Destroy. David's. An instruction.

[1]You gods, do you truly speak with faithfulness,
exercise authority for human beings with uprightness?
[2]Actually, with your mind you devise acts of evil in the country;
with your hands you deal out violence.
[3]Faithless people go astray from the womb;
people who speak lies are wayward from birth.
[4]Their poison is like snake poison,
like a deaf viper that blocks its ear,
[5]That does not listen to the voice of the charmers,
the expert weaver of spells.
[6]God, smash their teeth in their mouth;
break the fangs of the lions, Yahweh.
[7]They should vanish like water when it goes away;
when one aims his arrows, so should they dry up.
[8]Like a snail that vanishes as it goes,
like a woman's stillbirth, they should not behold the sun.
[9]Before your pots sense the thorn,
as a living person, so should rage whirl them off.
[10]The faithful person will rejoice when he beholds redress,
when he bathes his feet in the blood of the faithless.
[11]Someone will say, 'Yes, there is fruit for the faithful,
yes, there are gods exercising authority in the country.'

Psalm 59 My turret

The leader's. Do Not Destroy. David's. An instruction. When Sha'ul sent and watched his house so as to put him to death.

[1]Rescue me from my enemies, my God;
do set me on high above the people who rise up against me.
[2]Rescue me from those who devise trouble,
deliver me from people of bloodshed.
[3]Because there, they lie in wait for my life;
vigorous people stir up strife against me.
Not for my rebellion, not for my wrongdoing, Yahweh,
[4]nor for my waywardness, do they run and set themselves up.
Stir yourself to meet me, and look,
[5]yes, you, Yahweh God Armies,
God of Yisra'el.
Wake up to attend to all the nations;

don't show grace to any of the people who break faith who devise trouble. *(Rise)*

[6]They come back at evening,
they howl like a dog and go round the town.
[7]There, they bellow with their mouth,
swords on their lips, because who is listening?
[8]But you, Yahweh, make fun of them,
you ridicule all the nations.
[9]My vigour, I keep watch for you,
because God is my turret.
[10]The God committed to me will meet me,
God will enable me to look at the people who are watching for me.
[11]Don't kill them, in case my people are unmindful;
by your resources, make them wander.
Put them down, Lord our shield,
[12]for the wrongdoing of their mouth, the word of their lips.
So that they are caught by their majesty
and by the oath and by the lie they recount.
[13]Finish them off in wrath,
finish them off so they are no more,
So that people may acknowledge that God rules in Ya'aqob,
to the ends of the earth. *(Rise)*
[14]They come back at evening,
they howl like a dog and go round the town.
[15]Those people – they wander about for food;
if they are not full they stay the night.
[16]But I – I will sing about your vigour,
I will resound at morning about your commitment.
Because you've become my turret,
a retreat on the day when I was under pressure.
[17]My vigour, to you I will make music,
because God is my turret,
the God committed to me.

Psalm 60 How to deal with unfulfilled promises

The leader's. On The Lotus of Testimony. An inscription. David's. For teaching. When he fought Aram-of-the-Two-Rivers and Aram Tsobah, and Yo'ab went back and struck down Edom in Salt Ravine, 12,000 men.

[1]God, you've rejected us, broken us,
been angry – turn back to us!
[2]You've shaken the country, torn it open
– mend its splits, because it's slipped.
[3]You've made your people see tough things,
you've made us drink wine that caused us to stagger.
[4]You have given people who live in awe of you a banner to flee to
because of the bow. *(Rise)*
[5]In order that your beloved people may pull out,
deliver with your right hand, answer me.

[6]God had spoken by his sacredness:

'I will exult as I allocate Shekem
and measure out Sukkot Vale.
[7]Gil'ad will be mine,
Menashsheh will be mine,
Ephrayim will be a stronghold for my head,
Yehudah my sceptre,
[8]Mo'ab will be my washbasin,
against Edom I will throw my boot;
raise a shout against me, Peleshet [Philistia]!
[9]Who will conduct me to the fortified town,
who would lead me to Edom?'

[10]You yourself have rejected us, God, haven't you,
you don't go out with our armies, God.

[11]Grant us help against the adversary,
given that human deliverance is empty.
[12]Through God we will act with forcefulness;
he's the one who will trample on our adversaries.

Psalm 61 How to pray with your leader

The leader's. On a stringed instrument. David's.

[1]Listen to my resounding noise, God,
heed my plea.
[2]From the end of the earth I call to you,
while my heart flags.
To a crag that rises high above me may you lead me,
[3]because you've been a shelter for me,
a vigorous tower before the enemy.

[4]I shall reside in your tent permanently,
I shall shelter in the hiding place of your wings. *(Rise)*
[5]Because you, God, have listened to my pledges;
you gave their possession to the people who hold your name in awe.
[6]You will add days to the king's days;
his years will be like generation after generation.
[7]He will live permanently before God;
appoint commitment and truthfulness so they may preserve him.
[8]Thus I shall make music to your name permanently,
in making good my pledges day by day.

Psalm 62 Silence towards God

The leader's. On Yedutun. A composition. David's.

[1]Indeed, towards God my entire being is silent;
from him my deliverance comes.
[2]Indeed, he is my crag and my deliverance,
my turret – I shall not slip far.
[3]How long will you attack someone,
commit murder, all of you?
Like a bent wall, a fence that's been pulled down
– [4]indeed, they have taken counsel so as to pull him down from his dignity.
They accept lying;
they bless with their mouth, but inside they slight. *(Rise)*

[5]Indeed, be silent towards God, my entire being,
because from him my hope comes.
[6]Indeed, he's my crag, my deliverance,
my turret – I shall not slip.
[7]On God rests my deliverance and my splendour;
my strong rock, my shelter, is God in person.
[8]Trust in him at all times, you people,
pour out your heart before him;
God is our shelter. *(Rise)*

[9]Indeed, human beings are hollow,
people are a lie.
Going up on scales,
they're less than hollow, altogether.
[10]Don't trust in fraud, don't put hollow hopes in robbery;
resources – when they bear fruit, don't set your mind on them.
[11]God spoke of one thing,
two things that I heard:
That God has vigour [12]and you, Lord, have commitment,
that you yourself make good for someone in accordance with his action.

Psalm 63 I am mindful of you on my bed

A composition. David's. When he was in the Wilderness of Yehudah.

[1]God, you are my God, I look urgently for you,
my whole person thirsts for you.
My body aches for you,
in a dry, faint country without water.
[2]Yes, in the sacred place I've beheld you,
seeing your vigour and your splendour.
[3]Because your commitment is better than life;
my lips will extol you.
[4]Yes, I shall bless you throughout my life;
in your name I shall lift up the palms of my hands.
[5]As with juiciness and richness my appetite will be full,
and with resounding lips my mouth will give praise,
[6]If I am mindful of you on my bed,
murmur about you during the watches.
[7]Because you've been my help,
and in the shade of your wings I shall resound.
[8]My whole person has clung after you;
your right hand has taken hold of me.

[9]But those people, who seek devastation for my life,
will come into the depths of the earth.
[10]The people who hurl someone on to the edges of the sword
will be the prey of jackals.
[11]But the king – he will rejoice in God;
everyone who swears by him will take pride,
because the mouth of people who speak falsehood is stopped up.

Psalm 64 The failure of the well-plotted plot

The leader's. A composition. David's.

[1]Listen to my voice, God, as I talk,
may you preserve my life from the enemy's terror.
[2]May you hide me from the council of people dealing badly,
from the crowd of people devising trouble,
[3]Who have whetted their tongue like a sword,
who have directed their bitter word like arrows,
[4]To shoot from hiding at the person of integrity
– they shoot at him suddenly and they're not afraid.
[5]They take strong hold for themselves of a word about bad dealing,
they recount it, in hiding traps.
They've said 'Who will see them?'
[6]as they plot evil.
'We have completed a plot that's well plotted;
the inner thinking of a person and his mind are deep.'

[7]But God has shot them with an arrow;
suddenly the blows that strike them down have come.
[8]They've made it collapse on themselves with their tongue;
all who look at them shake their head.
[9]Everyone was in awe; they've told of God's act,
they've gained insight into his deed.
[10]The faithful person rejoices in Yahweh
and takes shelter with him;
all the upright in mind take pride.

Psalm 65 The God of atonement and the God of the harvest

The leader's. A composition. David's. A song.

[1]To you silence is praise,
God in Tsiyyon.
To you a pledge is made good,
[2]the one who listens to a plea.

All flesh come right to you
[3]with wayward words.
Whereas our rebellions would have been too strong for me,
you yourself expiate them.
[4]The blessings of the person you choose and bring near,
so that he dwells in your courtyards!
May we be full with the good things of your house,
your sacred palace.
[5]Answer us with awe-inspiring deeds in faithfulness,
God who delivers us!

Object of trust for all the ends of the earth
and the far-off sea,
[6]Who established the mountains by his energy,
who is belted with strength,
[7]Who stills the din of the seas,
the din of their waves, yes, the tumult of the peoples.
[8]The people who live at the ends are in awe at your signs;
you make the entry points of morning and evening resound.

[9]You've attended to the earth and watered it;
you greatly enrich it.
God's channel is full of water;
you prepare their grain.
Because in this way you prepare it:
[10]saturating its furrows, smoothing its ridges,
You soften it with rains,
you bless its growth.
[11]You've crowned the year with your good things;
your cart tracks flow with richness.
[12]The pastures of the wilderness flow,
the hills wrap on celebration.
[13]The meadows put on flocks,
the vales envelop themselves in wheat,
they shout, and sing too.

Psalm 66 I shall make good my pledges

The leader's. A song. A composition.

[1]Shout for God, all the earth,
[2]make music for the splendour of his name!
Make his praise splendour,
[3]say to God, 'How awe-inspiring are your acts!
At the abundance of your vigour
your enemies wither before you.
[4]All the earth bow low to you,
they make music to you, make music to your name!' *(Rise)*

[5]Come and see the deeds of God,
the one who is awe-inspiring for his activity in relation to human beings.
[6]He turned sea into dry land,
so they could cross the river on foot.
There let us rejoice in him,
[7]the one who rules permanently by his strength!
His eyes watch the nations;
the defiant – they should not rise up against him. *(Rise)*

[8]Peoples, bless our God,
let the sound of his praise be heard,
[9]The one who places us in life,
and doesn't give our foot to slipping.
[10]Because you've tried us, God;
you've refined us like someone refining silver.
[11]You let us come into a net,
put a constraint on our hips.

[12]You let someone ride at our head,
we've come into fire and into water,
but you've got us out into flourishing.

[13]I shall come into your house with burnt offerings,
I shall make good my pledges to you,
[14]The ones that my lips uttered,
that my mouth spoke when I was under pressure.
[15]As burnt offerings I will offer up fatlings to you,
with the aroma of rams;
I'll make ready bulls with goats. *(Rise)*
[16]Come listen and I'll recount,
all you who live in awe of God,
what he's done for me.
[17]To him with my mouth I called;
he was exalted by my tongue.
[18]If I could have seen trouble in my heart,
my Lord would not listen.
[19]In fact God listened,
heeded the sound of my plea.
[20]God be blessed,
the one who didn't turn aside my plea
or his commitment from me!

Psalm 67 Bless us, and let other peoples acknowledge it

The leader's. With strings. A composition. A song.

[1]May God be gracious to us and bless us,
may he shine his face with us, *(Rise)*
[2]For the acknowledging of your way in the earth,
your deliverance in all the nations.
[3]May peoples confess you, God,
may peoples confess you, all of them.
[4]May countries rejoice and resound,
because you exercise authority over peoples with uprightness,
you guide nations in the earth. *(Rise)*
[5]May peoples confess you, God,
may peoples confess you, all of them.
[6]As earth has given its produce,
may God, our God, bless us.
[7]May God bless us,
may all the ends of earth live in awe of him.

Psalm 68.1–18 Father of the orphan, protector of the widow

The leader's. David's. A composition. A song.

[1]When God arises, his enemies scatter,
the people hostile to him flee before him.
[2]You blow them away like smoke blowing away,
like wax melting before fire.
The faithless perish before God,
[3]but the faithful rejoice.
They exult before God,
they celebrate with rejoicing.

[4]Sing to God,
make music to his name.
Lift up the one who rides on the clouds,
whose name is Yah, and exult before him.
[5]Father for orphans, judge for widows,
is God in his sacred abode.
[6]God enables people who are alone to live at home,
brings out prisoners in chains,
yet the defiant dwell in parched land.

[7]God, when you went out before your people,
when you marched through the wilderness, *(Rise)*
[8]Earth shook, yes, heavens poured,
before God, the one of Sinay,
before God, the God of Yisra'el.
[9]You shed generous rain, God;
your own domain, when it was languishing – you yourself provided for it.
[10]Your dwelling – they've lived in it;
you provide for the humble with your goodness, God.
[11]The Lord gives a word;
the women announcing the news are a great army.
[12]Kings of armies flee, flee;
the young girls of the house share the spoil,
[13]though they stay among the sheepfolds,
The wings of a dove covered in silver,
its pinions in pale gold.
[14]When Shadday scatters kings there,
it snows on Tsalmon.
[15]Mount Bashan is a supernatural mountain,
Mount Bashan is a many-peaked mountain.
[16]Why do you keep watch, mountains, peaks,
on the mountain that God desired as his place to live?
– yes, Yahweh will dwell there permanently.
[17]God's chariotry were myriads, thousands doubled;
the Lord was among them at Sinay in sacredness.
[18]You went up on high, you took captives,
to get gifts among people,
Yes, defiant ones,
to dwell as Yah God.

Psalm 68.19–35 Kingdoms of the earth, sing to God

[19]The Lord be blessed day by day;
the God who is our deliverance supports us. *(Rise)*
[20]God is for us a God of deliverance;
to Yahweh God belong departures to death.
[21]Yes, God hits his enemies' head,
the hairy crown of the one who walks about in his great liability.
[22]The Lord said, 'I'll bring them back from Bashan,
I'll bring them back from the depths of the sea,
[23]In order that your foot may hit in blood;
your dogs' tongue – its share may be from your enemies.'

[24]People saw your journeyings, God,
the journeyings of my God, my king, into the sacred place.
[25]Singers came first, then string-players,
amid girls playing tambourines.
[26]In the great congregation that bless God,
Yahweh, you [who issued] from Yisra'el's fountain.
[27]There was little Binyamin, holding sway over them,
Yehudah's officials, their noisy crowd,
Zebulun's officials, Naphtali's officials:
[28]your God ordered vigour for you.
Be vigorous, God,
you who acted for us [29]from your palace;
Right up to Yerushalaim to you
kings will bring tribute.
[30]Reprimand the creature in the reeds,
the assembly of sturdy among the bullocks, the peoples.
Trampling on those who accept silver,
you scattered peoples who delight in confrontations.
[31]Envoys will come from Misrayim [Egypt],
Kush will run with its hands to God.

[32]Kingdoms of the earth, sing to God,

make music to the Lord, *(Rise)*
[33]To the one who rides on the highest heavens of old
– there, he gives out his voice, a vigorous voice.
[34]Give vigour to God, whose majesty is over Yisra'el,
his vigour in the skies.
[35]God, you are to be held in awe in your most sacred place,
the one who is God of Yisra'el.
He gives vigour and great might to his people;
God be blessed.

Psalm 69.1–18 Passion means persecution

The leader's. On Lotuses. David's.

[1]Deliver me, God,
because the water has come up to my neck.
[2]I've sunk in a deep flood;
there's no foothold.
I've come into torrents of water;
a deluge has overwhelmed me.
[3]I've become weary with calling,
my throat has become dry.
My eyes fail,
waiting for my God.
[4]They are more numerous than the hairs on my head,
the people hostile to me for nothing.
Numerous are the people who are trying to put an end to me,
my enemies, with falsehood.
What I haven't stolen,
then I must give back.
[5]God, you yourself know my denseness;
the things for which I'm liable are not hidden from you.

[6]The people who hope in you must not be shamed through me,
Lord Yahweh of Armies.
The people who seek you must not be disgraced through me,
God of Yisra'el.
[7]Because it's on account of you that I've carried reviling,
that disgrace has covered my face.
[8]I've become a stranger to my brothers,
an alien to my mother's children.
[9]Because passion for your house has consumed me;
the words of reviling with which people have reviled you have fallen on me.
[10]I cried with fasting, with my entire being,
and it became words of reviling for me.
[11]I made sack my clothing,
and I became an object lesson for them.
[12]The people who sit at the gateway talk about me;
– the drinkers' song.
[13]But I: my plea to you, Yahweh,
is a time of acceptance.
God, in the abundance of your commitment answer me,
in the truthfulness of your deliverance.
[14]Rescue me from the mud; I must not sink;
may I be rescued from the people hostile to me, from the torrents of water.
[15]The deluge of water must not overwhelm me,
the flood must not swallow me,
the pit must not close its mouth over me.
[16]Answer me, Yahweh, because your commitment is good;
in accordance with the abundance of your compassion turn your face to me.
[17]Don't hide your face from your servant,
because I'm under pressure, hurry, answer me.
[18]Draw near to me, restore me;
because of my enemies, redeem me.

Psalm 69.19–36 Trusting God with your anger

[19]You yourself know my reviling,
my shame, my disgrace.
All the people watching for me are in front of you;
[20]reviling has broken my spirit, and I'm ailing.
I've hoped for someone to sympathize but there's no one,
for comforters but I haven't found any.
[21]People have put poison in my food,
for my thirst they've given me vinegar to drink.
[22]May their table become a trap before them,
a snare for their allies.
[23]May their eyes go dark so they can't see,
may their hips shudder continually.
[24]Pour out your condemnation on them;
may your angry rage overtake them.
[25]May their encampment become desolate,
may there be no one living in their tents.
[26]Because you – the person you struck down, they've pursued,
and the suffering of the people run through by you, they've heralded.
[27]Put waywardness on top of their waywardness;
may they not come to your faithfulness.
[28]May they be erased from the document of living people;
may they not be written down with the faithful.
[29]When I'm humble and suffering,
may your deliverance set me on high, God.

[30]I shall praise God's name with a song,
I shall magnify it with confession.
[31]It will seem good to Yahweh more than an ox,
a bull with horns and divided hoofs.
[32]Humble people have seen and rejoiced;
you who enquire of God – may your spirit revive.
[33]Because Yahweh is going to listen to the needy,
and not despise his captives.
[34]May heavens and earth praise him,
seas and everything that moves in them.
[35]Because God will deliver Tsiyyon
and build Yehudah's towns.
People will live there and possess it,
[36]the offspring of his servants will hold it as their domain,
people who are loyal to his name will dwell in it.

Psalm 70 Telling God what to do

The leader's. David's. For commemoration.

[1]God, to rescue me,
Yahweh, to my help, hurry!
[2]They should be shamed and reviled,
the people who seek my life.
They should turn backwards and be confounded,
the people who want what is bad for me.
[3]They should turn back on account of their disgrace,
the people who say, 'Ah, ah!'
[4]They should celebrate and rejoice in you, all the people who seek you;
they should say continually, 'God is great',
the people loyal to your deliverance.
[5]But I am humble and needy –
God, hurry to me.
You're my help and the one who enables me to survive;
Yahweh, don't delay!

Psalm 71.1–16 From birth through to old age

[1]I have taken shelter with you, Yahweh;
I must not be shamed ever.

[2]In your faithfulness rescue me, enable me to survive,
bend your ear to me, deliver me.
[3]Be for me a crag,
an abode for coming to continually,
Which you've ordered to deliver me,
because you're my cliff, my fastness.
[4]My God, enable me to survive from the fist of the faithless,
from the grip of the evildoer and robber.
[5]Because you have been my hope, Lord Yahweh,
the one whom I've trusted from my youth.
[6]On you I have leaned from birth,
from my mother's womb.
You've been my support;
my praise has continually been of you.
[7]I've been a true sign for many people,
as you have been my strong shelter.
[8]My mouth is full of your praise,
of your glory all day.

[9]Don't cast me off for my old age,
when my energy is finished, don't abandon me.
[10]Because my enemies have said of me,
and people who keep watch for my life have taken counsel together:
[11]'Since God has abandoned him, pursue him,
seize him, because there's no one to rescue him.'
[12]God, don't be far from me;
my God, hurry to my help.
[13]They should be shamed and finished,
the people who attack my life.
They should dress themselves in reviling and disgrace,
the people who seek something bad for me.
[14]But I – I will wait continually,
and add to all your praise.
[15]My mouth – it will recount your faithfulness,
your deliverance all day.
Because I don't know how to write,
[16]I'll come with the mighty acts of my Lord Yahweh,
I'll make mention of your faithfulness, yours alone.

Psalm 71.17–24 You've taught me and I will tell of it

[17]God, you have taught me from my youth,
and until now I tell of your extraordinary deeds.
[18]So even until my old age and grey hair,
God, don't abandon me,
Until I tell of your strength to a generation,
[tell] to everyone who is to come your strength,
[19]and your faithfulness, God, on high.
You who have done big things, God
– who is like you?
[20]You who have let me see pressures,
many and bad,
Will give me life again,
and from the depths of the earth bring me up again.
[21]You will grant me much greatness
and turn round to comfort me.
[22]And I myself will confess you with a mandolin
for your truthfulness, God.
I will make music for you with the guitar,
sacred one of Yisra'el.
[23]My lips will resound when I make music for you,
and my entire being, which you've redeemed.
[24]Yes, my tongue will talk of your faithfulness all day,
because they have been shamed, because they have been confounded,
the people who sought something bad for me.

Psalm 72.1–17 How to pray for the government

Shelomoh's [Solomon's].

[1]God, give the king your rulings,
the royal son your faithfulness.
[2]May he give judgement for your people with faithfulness,
your humble ones with authority.
[3]May the mountains bear well-being for the people,
and the hills, in faithfulness.
[4]May he exercise authority for the humble among the people,
deliver the needy, crush the fraud.
[5]May they live in awe of you while the sun shines,
and before the moon, generation after generation.
[6]May he come down like rain on mowed grass,
like downpours, an overflowing on the earth.
[7]May the faithful person flourish in his days,
and abundance of well-being, until the moon is no more.
[8]May he hold sway from sea to sea,
from the river to the ends of the earth.
[9]May wildcats kneel before him,
may his enemies lick the dust.
[10]May the kings of Tarshish and foreign shores
bring back an offering.
May the kings of Sheba and Seba
present a gift.
[11]May all kings bow low to him,
all nations serve him.
[12]Because he rescues the needy person crying for deliverance
and the humble person who has no helper.
[13]May he have pity on poor and needy,
so that he delivers the lives of needy people.
[14]From repression and from violence may he restore their life,
and may their blood be valuable in his eyes.
[15]May he live and be given
gold from Sheba.
May pleas be said on his behalf continually;
all day may people pray for blessing for him.
[16]May there be an abundance of grain in the country,
on the top of the mountains.
May his fruit shake like Lebanon,
may people thrive from the town like the grass in the country.
[17]May his name be permanent,
before the sun may his name have offspring,
So that people may pray to be blessed through him;
may all nations count him fortunate.

Psalm 72.18–20 Another interim closing act of praise

[18]Yahweh God,
the God of Yisra'el be blessed,
the one who alone does extraordinary things.
[19]His splendid name be blessed permanently;
may the entire earth fill with his splendour.
Amen, amen.

[20]The pleas of David ben Yishay [Jesse] end.

Psalm 73.1–14 I had nearly tripped

Composition. Asaph's.

[1]Indeed, God is good to Yisra'el,
to the pure in heart.
[2]But I – my feet all but turned away,
my steps were nearly tipped out.

[3]Because I was passionate about the wild people,
the well-being of the faithless that I can see.
[4]Because there are no stresses threatening their death,
and their chest is portly.
[5]In oppression from people they have no part;
they are not afflicted like other people.
[6]Therefore majesty is round their neck;
a coat of violence wraps round them.
[7]Their eye bulges because of hardness;
the schemes in their mind have overflowed.
[8]They scoff and speak of dealing badly,
from their position on high they speak of fraud.
[9]They've set their mouth in the heavens,
and their tongue walks about on the earth.
[10]Thus hammering comes back to his people,
and full waters are drained by them.

[11]And they say, 'How does God know,
is there knowledge with the One on High?'
[12]There – these are the faithless people, at ease permanently,
as they have amassed resources.
[13]Indeed, it was with empty results that I had kept my heart clean
and washed the palms of my hands in freedom from guilt,
[14]I've come to be afflicted all day,
and my reproof happens each morning.

Psalm 73.15–28 God redeems now

[15]If I had said I would recount it thus,
there, I would have broken faith with the circle of your children.
[16]But when I thought about how to know about this,
it was oppressive in my eyes,
[17]Until I came to God's great sanctuary,
so that I might consider their end.
[18]Indeed, you will set them among deceptions;
you're making them fall to lies.
[19]How they're coming to desolation suddenly;
they're come to an end, they're finished, through terrors.
[20]Like a dream on waking, Lord,
on stirring, you will despise their shadow.

[21]When my mind is embittered,
and in my inner being I'm cut through,
[22]then I'm stupid and I don't know things;
I became an animal with you.
[23]But I've been with you continually;
you've grasped my right hand.
[24]By your counsel you lead me,
and afterwards you will take me to splendour.
[25]Whom do I have in the heavens?
– and with you, I haven't wanted anyone on the earth.
[26]Though my flesh and my mind are finished,
God is my mind's crag and my share permanently.
[27]Because there – the people who are far from you perish;
you're terminating everyone who whores in relation to you.
[28]But I – nearness to God is good for me;
I've made my Lord Yahweh my shelter,
so as to recount all your deeds.

Psalm 74 Destruction, blasphemy, villainy

An instruction. Asaph's.

[1]God, why have you rejected us permanently,
[why] does your anger smoke at the flock you pasture?

[2]Be mindful of your assembly,
which you acquired long ago,
Which you restored as the clan that was your domain,
Mount Tsiyyon, where you dwelt.
[3]Lift up your steps to the perpetual desolations,
every bad action that the enemy undertook in the sacred place.
[4]Your adversaries roared inside your appointed places,
they made their own signs into signs.
[5]It could be recognized as like someone bringing up
axes against a thicket of trees.
[6]And now its engravings altogether
they were smashing with hatchet and cleavers.
[7]They sent off your sanctuary in fire, down to the ground;
they defiled the dwelling of your name.
[8]They said to themselves, 'We'll put them down altogether';
they burned all God's appointed places in the country.
[9]We couldn't see our signs, there was no longer a prophet,
there was no one with us who knew how long.
[10]Until when, God, will the adversary blaspheme,
will the enemy revile your name permanently?
[11]Why do you turn back your hand,
withhold your right hand in the fold of your coat?

[12]But God, my king of old,
the one who effects acts of deliverance in the middle of the earth:
[13]You're the one who parted the sea by your vigour,
you smashed the dragons' heads on the water.
[14]You're the one who crushed Livyatan's heads,
so you could make it food for a company of wildcats.
[15]You're the one who split spring and wadi,
you're the one who dried up perennial rivers.
[16]Day is yours, night is also yours;
you're the one who established the light, the sun.
[17]You're the one who set all earth's boundaries;
summer and winter – you're the one who shaped them.

[18]Be mindful of this: an enemy has blasphemed, Yahweh,
a villainous people has reviled your name.
[19]Don't give the life of your dove to an animal,
don't put out of mind permanently the life of your humble ones.
[20]Look at the pact,
because the dark places in the country are full of pastures of violence.
[21]The broken must not turn back shamed;
the humble and needy should praise your name.
[22]Rise, God, argue for your judgement,
be mindful of your reviling by villains all day.
[23]Don't put out of mind the voice of your adversaries,
the din of the people who rise against you, going up continually.

Psalm 75 The promise of an intoxicating chalice

The leader's. Do Not Destroy. A composition. Asaph's. A song.

[1]We have confessed you, God, we have confessed,
and when your name drew near, people have recounted your extraordinary deeds.
[2]'Indeed I will take the set time,
when I myself will exercise authority with uprightness.
[3]Whereas earth and all its inhabitants are trembling,
I am the one who ordered its pillars. *(Rise)*
[4]I have said to the wild people, 'Don't be wild',
and to the faithless, 'Don't lift your horn.
[5]Don't lift your horn high,
[or] speak with forward neck.'

[6]Because it's not from the east or from the west,

not from the mountains' pasturage,
[7]But God exercises authority;
this person he puts down, that person he lifts up.
[8]Because there is a chalice in Yahweh's hand,
with fermented wine, full of spices.
He's pouring from it, they will indeed drain its dregs;
all the faithless on the earth will drink.
[9]But I – I will tell of it permanently,
I will make music for Ya'aqob's God.
[10]'Whereas I will cut all the horns of the faithless,
the horns of the faithful person I will lift up.'

Psalm 76 To be held in awe by earth's kings

The leader's. With strings. A composition. Asaph's. A song.

[1]God made himself be acknowledged in Yehudah,
in Yisra'el his name is great.
[2]His shelter came to be in Shalem,
his abode in Tsiyyon.
[3]There he shattered the bow's flames,
shield, sword and battle. *(Rise)*
[4]You were resplendent,
august on the mountains of prey.
[5]The sturdy-hearted let themselves be plundered,
they fell into a deep sleep,
None of the forceful men could lift their hands
[6]at your reprimand, God of Ya'aqob.
Both chariot and horse lay stunned;
[7]you – you were to be held in awe.
Who can stand before you
in the time of your anger?
[8]From the heavens you let your judgement be heard;
the earth was in awe and was still,
[9]When God rose to exercise authority,
to deliver all the humble in the land. *(Rise)*
[10]Because human wrath confesses you;
you wrap on the remainder of your wrath.

[11]Give pledges and make them good, to Yahweh your God;
all those round him bring tribute to the one who is to be held in awe.
[12]He curbs the spirit of leaders;
he is to be held in awe by earth's kings.

Psalm 77 Has God changed?

The leader's. On Yedutun. Asaph's. A composition.

[1]With my voice to God, yes, I will cry out;
with my voice to God, yes, so that he may give ear to me.
[2]On the day when I was under pressure,
I have enquired of my Lord.
My hand has reached out by night and does not grow numb;
my entire being refuses to find comfort.
[3]I shall be mindful of God and be in turmoil,
I shall talk as my spirit faints. *(Rise)*
[4]You've grasped the guards on my eyes;
I've been constrained and I can't speak.
[5]I've thought of days of old,
years of ages past.
[6]I shall be mindful of my song by night,
as I murmur in my heart, and my spirit has sought hard.
[7]Will it be permanently that my Lord rejects,
and never again shows acceptance?
[8]Has his commitment ceased to exist permanently,
his word come to an end for generation after generation?

[9]Has God put out of mind the showing of grace,
or shut off his compassion in anger? *(Rise)*

[10]I said, ‘That has distressed me:
the change in the right hand of the One on High.’
[11]I shall be mindful of Yah’s deeds;
yes, I shall be mindful of your extraordinary deeds of old.
[12]I shall murmur about your every act,
I shall talk of your deeds.
[13]God, your way is characterized by sacredness;
who is a god as great as God?
[14]You are the God who performs extraordinary deeds;
you caused your vigour to be acknowledged among the peoples.
[15]You restored your people with your arm,
the descendants of Ya’aqob and Yoseph. *(Rise)*
[16]Water saw you, God;
when water saw you, it would convulse.
Yes, deeps would tremble;
[17]clouds poured down water.
Skies gave voice;
yes, your arrows would go about.
[18]The sound of your thunder was in the whirlwind,
lightning lit up the world.
The earth trembled and shook;
[19]your way was in the sea.
Your paths were in mighty water,
though your steps were not acknowledged.
[20]You led your people like a flock
by the hand of Mosheh [Moses] and Aharon [Aaron].

Psalm 78.1–11 Pass on the story

An instruction. Asaph's.

[1]Give ear to my instruction, my people;
bend your ear to the sayings of my mouth.
[2]I shall open my mouth with a poem,
pour out conundrums from of old.
[3]Things that we have heard and acknowledged,
that our ancestors have recounted to us,
[4]We will not hide from their descendants,
recounting to the next generation,
The praises of Yahweh and his vigour,
the extraordinary things that he did.

[5]He implemented an affirmation in Ya'aqob,
put instruction in Yisra'el,
Which he ordered our ancestors
to get their descendants to acknowledge,
[6]In order that the next generation might acknowledge them,
descendants who would be born,
So they might rise up and recount them to their descendants,
[7]so they might put their assurance in God,
And not put out of mind God's acts,
but observe his orders,
[8]And not become like their ancestors,
a defiant and rebellious generation,
A generation that did not set its mind,
and whose spirit was not true to God.

[9]The Ephrayimites, equipped as archers,
turned back on the day of meeting [in battle].
[10]They didn't keep God's pact
but refused to walk by his instruction.
[11]They put out of mind his deeds,
the extraordinary things that he had let them see.

Psalm 78.12–31 God's generosity and people's response

[12]In the sight of their ancestors he had done something extraordinary,
in the country of Misrayim, in the region of Tso'an.
[13]He divided the sea and enabled them to pass through it,
he made the water stand like a mound.
[14]He led them by means of a cloud by day,
and all night by means of a fiery light.
[15]He divided crags in the wilderness,
and enabled them to drink like the deeps, abundantly.
[16]He got streams out from a cliff,
and made water flow down like rivers.
[17]But they went on repeatedly doing wrong in relation to him,
and defying the One on High in the desert.
[18]They tested God with [deliberation of] their mind,
in asking food for themselves.
[19]They spoke against God:
'Can God lay a table in the wilderness?
[20]Yes, he struck a crag and water flowed,
wadis gushed.
Can he also give bread,
or provide meat for his people?'
[21]Therefore Yahweh listened and raged;
fire broke out against Ya'aqob,
and also anger arose against Yisra'el,
[22]Because they didn't trust in God,
they didn't rely on his deliverance.
[23]So he ordered the skies above,
opened the doors of the heavens.
[24]He rained *maan* [manna] on them to eat,
gave them grain from the heavens.

[25]Each one ate food fit for the sturdy;
he sent them provisions to fill them.
[26]He He would make the east wind move in the heavens,
he drove the south wind by his vigour.
[27]He rained meat on them like earth,
winged birds like the sand at the seas.
[28]He made them fall inside his camp,
round his great dwelling.
[29]They ate, and they were very full;
he would bring them their longing.
[30]They hadn't turned aside from their longing,
their food was still in their mouth,
[31]When God's anger rose against them,
and he killed some of their beefiest,
put down Yisra'el's youth.

Psalm 78.32–55 Responsiveness is short-lived, but so is wrath

[32]For all this they did wrong again,
and didn't trust in all his extraordinary deeds.
[33]He made their days end in hollowness,
their years in terror.
[34]If he killed them, they would enquire of him,
turn back and look urgently for God.
[35]They were mindful that God was their crag,
God on High their restorer.
[36]But they deceived him with their mouth,
with their tongue they would lie to him.
[37]Their mind was not set with him;
they didn't stay true to his pact.

[38]But because he was compassionate,
he would expiate waywardness and not devastate.
He repeatedly turned his anger back;
he didn't stir all his wrath.
[39]He was mindful that they were flesh,
a passing wind that doesn't come back.
[40]How much they would defy him in the wilderness,
pain him in the wasteland.
[41]Repeatedly they tested God,
upset Yisra'el's Sacred One.
[42]They weren't mindful of his hand,
the day when he redeemed them from the adversary,
[43]When he put his signs in Misrayim,
his portents in the region of Tso'an.
[44]He turned their great river into blood;
people couldn't drink from their streams.
[45]He would send off a swarm against them and it ate them,
frogs and they devastated them.
[46]He gave their produce to the caterpillar,
their crop to the locust.
[47]He killed their vine with hail,
their wild figs with flood.
[48]He surrendered their animals to hail,
their livestock to lightning flashes.
[49]He would send off among them his angry rage,
outburst, condemnation and pressure,
A delegation of bad envoys,
[50]that would clear a trail for his anger.
He didn't hold back their life from death
but surrendered their existence to epidemic.
[51]He struck down every firstborn in Misrayim,
the first issue of vigour in the tents of Ham.
[52]He got his people on the move like sheep,
drove them like a flock in the wilderness.

[53]He led them in confidence and they were not fearful,
but their enemies – the sea covered them.
[54]He brought them to his sacred territory,
the mountain that his right hand acquired.
[55]He dispossessed nations before them,
allotted them a share as their domain;
he enabled Yisra'el's clans to dwell in their tents.

Psalm 78.56–72 When God woke up

[56]But they tested and defied God On High;
they didn't keep his affirmations.
[57]They turned backwards and broke faith like their ancestors;
they turned like a deceitful bow.
[58]They vexed him with their shrines,
aroused his passion with their images.
[59]God listened and raged,
and quite rejected Yisra'el.
[60]He left the dwelling at Shiloh,
the tent where he had dwelt among humanity.
[61]He gave his vigour to captivity,
his glory to the hand of the adversary.
[62]He surrendered his people to the sword;
he raged at his own domain.
[63]Fire consumed its young men,
and its girls were not lamented.
[64]Its priests fell by the sword;
its widows could not cry.

[65]But my Lord woke up like someone asleep,
like a strong man shouting because of wine.
[66]He beat back his adversaries,
gave them permanent reviling.
[67]He rejected Yoseph's tent,
didn't choose the clan of Ephrayim.
[68]He chose the clan of Yehudah,
Mount Tsiyyon, to which he was loyal.
[69]He built his sanctuary like the heights,
like the earth that he founded permanently.
[70]He chose David as his servant
and took him from the sheep pens.
[71]He brought him from following the ewes
to shepherd Ya'aqob his people,
Yisra'el his domain.
[72]He shepherded them in accordance with the integrity of his mind;
he would lead them by the skilful acts of his fists.

Psalm 79 How long will your passion burn?

A composition. Asaph's.

[1]God, nations came into your domain,
defiled your sacred palace,
made Yerushalaim into ruins.
[2]They gave your servants' corpses
as food to the birds of the heavens,
the flesh of the people committed to you to the creatures of the earth.
[3]They poured out their blood like water
round Yerushalaim with no one to bury them.
[4]We became an object of reviling to our neighbours,
of ridicule and derision to the people round us.
[5]How long, Yahweh – will you be angry permanently,
will your passion burn up like fire?
[6]Pour out your wrath on the nations
which have not acknowledged you,

On the kingdoms
which have not called on your name.
[7]Because they have consumed Ya'aqob,
and desolated his home.
[8]Don't keep in mind the wayward acts of the past for us;
may your compassion meet us quickly,
because we've got very low.
[9]Help us, our God who delivers,
for the sake of the splendour of your name.
Rescue us, make expiation for our wrongdoings,
for the sake of your name.
[10]Why should the nations say,
'Where is their God?'
May redress for your servants' blood that was poured out
be acknowledged among the nations before our eyes.
[11]May the captive's groan come before you;
in accordance with the greatness of your might
preserve the people about to die.
[12]Give back to our neighbours sevenfold, into their heart,
their reviling with which they've reviled you, Lord.
[13]But we are your people,
the flock you shepherd.
We will confess you permanently;
to generation after generation we will recount your praise.

Psalm 80 Bring back! Come back!

The leader's. For Lotuses. An affirmation. Asaph's. A composition.

[1]You who shepherd Yisra'el, give ear,
you who drive Yoseph like a flock.
You who sit above the sphinxes, shine out
[2]before Ephrayim, Binyamin and Menashsheh.
Stir your might,
come as deliverance for us.
[3]God, bring us back,
shine your face so we may find deliverance.

[4]Yahweh, God Armies,
how long have you fumed at your people's plea?
[5]You've fed them weeping as food,
made them drink tears by measure.
[6]You've set us at contention with our neighbours;
our enemies ridicule us at will.

[7]God Armies, bring us back,
shine your face so we may find deliverance.
[8]You moved a vine from Misrayim,
dispossessed nations and planted it.
[9]You cleared a way before it,
it put its roots down and filled the country.
[10]Mountains were covered by its shade,
supernatural cedars by its branches.
[11]It put out its boughs as far as the sea,
its shoots to the river.
[12]Why have you broken open its walls,
so that all the people who pass by the way pluck it?
[13]The boar from the forest tears at it,
the creature of the wild feeds on it.

[14]God Armies, please come back,
look from the heavens and see,
Attend to this vine,
[15]the stock that your right hand planted,
And over the offspring you took firm hold of for yourself.
[16]burned in fire, cut;

at the reprimand from your face they perish.
[17]May your hand be upon the one at your right hand,
upon the man you took firm hold of for yourself.
[18]We will not turn backwards from you;
give us life, and we will call on your name.
[19]Yahweh, God Armies, bring us back,
shine your face so that we may find deliverance.

Psalm 81 Praising and listening

The leader's. On the Gittite. Asaph's.

[1]Resound for God our vigour,
shout for Ya'aqob's God.
[2]Raise the music, strike the tambourine,
the melodious guitar with the mandolin.
[3]Blow the horn at the new month,
at the full moon for our festival day.
[4]Because it's a decree of Yisra'el,
a ruling of Ya'aqob's God,
[5]An affirmation he laid on Yoseph,
when he went out over the country of Misrayim.

I listen to a lip I had not acknowledged:
[6]'I removed his shoulder from the burden;
his fists passed on from the basket.
[7]Under pressure you called and I pulled you out,
I answered you in the secret place of thunder.
I tested you at Argument Water:
[8]"Listen, my people, and I will testify to you;
Yisra'el, if you listen to me . . .
[9]There will not be for you a foreign god,
you will not bow low to an alien god.
[10]I Yahweh am your God,
the one who brought you up from the country of Misrayim;
widen your mouth and I will fill it."
[11]But my people didn't listen to my voice;
Yisra'el was unwilling in relation to me.
[12]So I sent them off in the determination of their mind,
so that they might walk by their own counsels.
[13]If only my people were listening to me,
[if only] Yisra'el would walk about in my ways.
[14]In a little while I would put down their enemies,
turn my hand against their adversaries.'
[15]The people hostile to Yahweh would wither at him,
and their fate would be permanent.
[16]He let them eat of the best of wheat;
'From the crag I filled you with syrup.'

Psalm 82 Challenging the gods and God

A composition. Asaph's.

[1]God is standing in the divine assembly;
among the gods he exercises authority.
[2]How long will you [gods] exercise authority for evil,
show regard to faithless people? *(Rise)*
[3]Exercise authority for the poor and the orphan,
show faithfulness to the humble and the destitute.
[4]Enable the poor and the needy to survive,
rescue them from the hand of the faithless.
[5]They don't acknowledge,
they don't consider.
As they walk about in darkness,
all earth's foundations slip.

[6]I myself said, 'You're gods,
offspring of the One on High, all of you.
[7]Therefore you will die like a human being,
fall like one of the officials.'
[8]Arise, God, exercise authority for the earth,
because you possess all the nations as your domain.

Psalm 83 Don't be calm, God

A song. A composition. Asaph's.

[1]God, don't keep your silence, don't be mute,
don't be calm, God.
[2]Because there – your enemies are in turmoil,
the people who are hostile to you have reared their head.
[3]They formulate shrewd confidences against your people,
they take counsel with one another against the people you cherish.
[4]They've said, 'Come on, let's wipe them out from being a nation,
so that Yisra'el's name will be brought to mind no more.'
[5]Because they've taken counsel together with one mind;
against you they seal a pact –
[6]The tents of Edom and the Yishma'e'lites [Ishmaelites],
Mo'ab and the Hagrites,
[7]Gebal, Ammon and Amaleq,
Peleshet with the inhabitants of Tsor.
[8]Ashshur, too, has joined with them;
they've become a source of strength for Lot's descendants. *(Rise)*

[9]Act towards them like Midyan,
like Sisera, like Yabin, at the Qishon Wadi.
[10]They were destroyed at Dor Spring;
they became manure for the ground.
[11]Treat them – their leaders like Oreb and like Ze'eb,
all their chiefs like Zebah and Tsalmunna,
[12]People who said, 'Let's take possession
of God's pastures for ourselves.'
[13]My God, make them like a whirl,
like stubble before the wind.
[14]Like fire that burns up a forest,
like a flame that sets mountains on fire,
[15]So may you chase them with your hurricane,
terrify them with your tempest.
[16]Fill their faces with slighting,
so that they seek your name, Yahweh.
[17]May they be shamed and terrified permanently,
may they be confounded and may they perish.
[18]May they acknowledge that you, whose name is Yahweh,
you alone are the One on High over all the earth.

Psalm 84 The one day and the thousand days

The leader's. On the Gittite. The Qorahites'. A composition.

[1]How much loved is your fine dwelling,
Yahweh of Armies.
[2]My entire being yearned, yes it failed,
for Yahweh's courtyards,
So that my mind and my body
might resound for the living God.
[3]Yes, a bird – it found a home,
a pigeon a nest for itself,
Where it put its young – your great altar,
Yahweh of Armies, my King and my God.
[4]The blessings of the people who live in your house,
who can still praise you! *(Rise)*

[5]The blessings of the person whose vigour comes through you,
the causeways in their mind!
[6]The people who pass through Balsam Vale
make it a spring.
Yes, the first rain will cover it with blessings;
[7]they will go from rampart to rampart.
The God of gods will appear in Tsiyyon,
[8]Yahweh God Armies.

Listen to my plea, give ear,
God of Ya'aqob. *(Rise)*
[9]See our shield, God,
look to the face of your anointed.
[10]Because a day in your courtyards is better than a thousand,
I would choose being at the threshold of my God's house,
Rather than dwelling in the tents of the faithless person,
[11]because Yahweh God is sun and shield.
Yahweh gives grace and splendour;
he does not withhold good for people who walk with integrity.
[12]Yahweh of Armies,
the blessings of the person who trusts in you!

Psalm 85 Faithfulness and well-being have embraced

The leader's. The Qorahites'. A composition.

[1]Yahweh, you acccepted your country,
you turned back Ya'aqob's fortunes.
[2]You carried your people's waywardness,
you covered all their wrongdoings.
[3]You withdrew all your outburst,
you turned from your angry burning.
[4]Turn us back, God who delivers us,
contravene your vexation with us.
[5]Will you be angry at us permanently,
prolong your anger to generation after generation?
[6]Will you yourself not again bring us to life,
so that your people may rejoice in you?
[7]Yahweh, let us see your commitment,
give us your deliverance.

[8]I will listen to what the God Yahweh will speak,
because he will speak of well-being,
To his people and to those committed to him,
those who do not turn back to dim-wittedness.
[9]Indeed his deliverance is near for people who live in awe of him,
so that his splendour may settle in our country.
[10]Commitment and truthfulness – they've met;
faithfulness and well-being – they've embraced.
[11]Truthfulness – it springs up from the earth;
faithfulness – it has looked down from the heavens.
[12]Yes, Yahweh – he will give good things;
our land – it will give its produce.
[13]Faithfulness – it will walk about before him
as he sets his feet on the way.

Psalm 86 A servant leans on his master

A plea. David's.

[1]Bend your ear, Yahweh, answer,
because I'm humble and needy.
[2]Keep watch over my life, because I'm committed;
deliver your servant – you are my God.
As one who trusts in you, [3]be gracious to me, my Lord,
because to you I call all day.

[4]Make your servant's entire being rejoice,
because to you, my Lord, I lift up my being.
[5]Because you, my Lord, are good and pardoning,
big in commitment to everyone who calls you.
[6]Give ear to my plea, Yahweh,
heed the sound of my prayers for grace.
[7]On the day when I'm under pressure I call you,
because you answer me.
[8]There is no one like you among the gods, my Lord,
and there are no acts like yours.
[9]All the nations that you've made will come
and bow low before you, my Lord.
They will honour your name,
[10]because you're great, one who does extraordinary things.
You are God, you alone;
[11]instruct me in your way, Yahweh.
I will walk about by your truthfulness;
may my mind be one, in awe at your name.
[12]I will confess you, my Lord, my God, with all my mind;
I will honour your name permanently.
[13]Because your commitment is great over me;
you will rescue my life from deepest She'ol.
[14]God, assertive people have arisen against me,
an assembly of terrifying people has sought my life.
Whereas they haven't put you in front of them,
[15]you are my Lord,
The compassionate and gracious God,
long-tempered and big in commitment and truthfulness.
[16]Turn your face to me and be gracious to me,
give your vigour to your servant.
Deliver the son of your handmaid,
[17]show me a sign for good,
So that the people who are hostile to me may see and be shamed,
because you, Yahweh, have helped me and comforted me.

Psalm 87 Glorious things of thee are spoken, Zion

The Qorahites'. A composition. A song.

[1]Founded by him among the sacred mountains,
[2]Yahweh is loyal to Tsiyyon's gates
more than all Ya'aqob's dwellings.
[3]Honourable things are spoken in you,
God's town. *(Rise)*
[4]I will make mention of Rahab and Babel
to the people who acknowledge me.
There are Peleshet, Tsor, with Kush
– each was born there.
[5]To Tsiyyon it will be said,
'Each and every one was born in it.'
He is the one who will establish it, the One on High;
[6]Yahweh will record, in writing down the peoples,
'Each was born there.' *(Rise)*
[7]They sing as they dance,
'All my fountains are in you.'

Psalm 88 A cry from the grave

A song. A composition. The Qorahites'. The leader's. On Pipe. For affliction. An instruction. Heman the Ezrahite's.

[1]Yahweh, my God who delivers,
by day I have cried out, by night in front of you.
[2]May my plea come before you;
bend your ear to my resounding noise.
[3]Because my whole person is full of bad experiences;

my life has arrived at She'ol.
[4]I am thought of with the people who go down into the Cistern,
I've become like a man without strength,
[5]An outcast among the dead, like people run through,
lying in the grave,
Of whom you've been mindful no more,
when they are cut off from your hand.
[6]You've put me in the deepest Cistern,
in dark places, in the depths.
[7]Upon me your wrath has pressed down;
with all your breakers you've humbled me. *(Rise)*
[8]You've taken my acquaintances far from me,
made me a great offence to them.
I'm confined so that I cannot go out,
[9]my eye has become dim through humbling.
I've called you, Yahweh, each day,
I've stretched out my palms to you.
[10]Do you do extraordinary things for the dead,
do ghosts rise to confess you? *(Rise)*
[11]Is your commitment recounted in the grave,
your truthfulness in Abaddon?
[12]Are your extraordinary deeds made known in the darkness,
your faithfulness in the land of forgetting?
[13]But I, Yahweh, I've cried to you for help,
in the morning my plea meets you.
[14]Yahweh, why do you reject me,
hide your face from me?
[15]I'm afflicted, breathing my last since youth;
I've borne your dreads, I despair.
[16]Your acts of rage have passed over me,
your acts of terror have destroyed me.
[17]They are round me like water all day,
they've encircled me altogether.
[18]You've taken friend and neighbour far from me,
my acquaintances – darkness.

Psalm 89.1–18 The stable world

An instruction. Ethan the Ezrahite's.

[1]Of Yahweh's acts of commitment I will sing permanently,
for generation after generation I will cause his truthfulness to be acknowledged with my mouth.
[2]Because I've said, 'Your commitment is built up permanently;
the heavens – you establish your truthfulness in them.'

[3]'I sealed a pact for my chosen,
I swore to David my servant:
[4]"I will establish your offspring permanently,
I will build your throne for generation after generation."'

[5]In the heavens they confess your extraordinary deeds, Yahweh,
yes, your truthfulness in the congregation of the sacred ones.
[6]Because who in the sky can equal Yahweh,
can compare with Yahweh among the divine beings,
[7]The God inspiring great reverence in the council of the sacred ones,
inspiring awe above all those round him?
[8]Yahweh, God of Armies, who is like you,
mighty Yah, with your truthfulness surrounding you?
[9]You rule over the majesty of the sea;
when it lifts its waves, you're the one who can still them.
[10]You're the one who crushed Rahab, like someone run through;
with your vigorous arm you scattered your enemies.
[11]The heavens are yours, yes, the earth is yours,
the world and what fills it: you're the one who founded them.
[12]North and south – you're the one who created them;

Tabor and Hermon – they resound at your name.
[13]To you belongs an arm with strength;
your hand is vigorous, your right hand stands high.
[14]Faithfulness in the exercise of authority is the establishment of your throne;
commitment and truthfulness come to meet your face.
[15]The blessings of the people that acknowledges the shout,
that walks about in the light of your face, Yahweh!
[16]In your name they celebrate all day,
in your faithfulness they stand high.
[17]Because you're their vigorous glory;
through your acceptance our horn stands high.
[18]Because our shield belongs to Yahweh,
our king to Yisra'el's Sacred One.

Psalm 89.19–37 The stable promise

[19]Then you spoke in a vision to the people committed to you:
'I put help on a strong man,
I raised high one chosen from the people.
[20]I found David, my servant,
with my sacred oil I anointed him,
[21]The one with whom my hand will be established;
yes, my arm will enable him to stand firm.
[22]No enemy will extort from him,
or evil person humble him.
[23]I will crush his adversaries before him,
beat down the people hostile to him.
[24]My truthfulness and commitment will be with him,
and in my name his horn will stand high.
[25]I will set his hand on the sea,
his right hand on the great river.
[26]That man will call me, 'You're my father,
my God, the crag that delivers me.'
[27]Yes, I myself will make him my firstborn,
on high in relation to earth's kings.
[28]Permanently will I keep my commitment to him;
my pact will be true for him.
[29]I will set his offspring evermore,
his throne like the days of the heavens.
[30]If his sons abandon my instruction,
don't walk by my rulings,
[31]If they profane my decrees
don't keep my orders,
[32]I will attend to their rebellion with a club,
their waywardness with blows,
[33]But my commitment I will not contravene from him;
I will not be false to my truthfulness.
[34]I will not profane my pact;
what's come out of my lips I will not change.
[35]Once and for all I've sworn by my sacredness:
'If I lie to David . . .'
[36]His offspring will be there permanently,
his throne like the sun in front of me,
[37]Like the moon, which is established permanently,
a witness in the sky that's truthful.' *(Rise)*

Psalm 89.38–51 But is the promise stable?

[38]But you yourself have rejected, spurned,
burst out with your anointed.
[39]You've renounced your servant's pact,
profaned his diadem to the earth.
[40]You've broken through all his walls,
made his fortifications a ruin.

[41]All the people who pass his way have plundered him;
he's become an object of reviling to his neighbours.
[42]You've lifted high his adversaries' right hand,
you've made all his enemies rejoice.
[43]Yes, you've turned back his sword's blade,
not enabled him to rise up in the battle.
[44]You've made his purity cease;
his throne you've hurled to the earth.
[45]You've cut short the days of his youth,
clothed him in shame. *(Rise)*

[46]How long, Yahweh – will you hide permanently,
will your wrath burn up like fire?
[47]Be mindful – I, what a short span,
for what emptiness you created all human beings.
[48]Who is the man who can live on and not see death,
can enable himself to escape from She'ol's hand? *(Rise)*
[49]Where are your former acts of commitment, my Lord,
which you swore to David in your truthfulness?
[50]Be mindful, my Lord, of your servant's reviling,
which I've carried in my heart,
Of all the many peoples
[51]who have reviled,
Of your enemies, Yahweh,
those who have reviled the steps of your anointed.

Psalm 89.52 Amen anyway

[52]Yahweh be blessed permanently.
Amen, amen.

Psalm 90 God's time and our time

A plea. Mosheh's, supernatural man.

[1]Lord, you were an abode for us,
generation after generation.
[2]Before mountains were birthed
and you laboured with the earth and the world,
From age to age,
you were God.
[3]You would turn back mere human beings, right to being crushed;
you said, 'Turn back, people!'
[4]Because a thousand years
in your eyes were like a day,
Yesterday when it passes,
or a watch in the night.
[5]You swept them away in sleep,
though in the morning they would be like grass that grows fresh.
[6]In the morning it can flourish and grow fresh;
by evening it dries up and withers.
[7]Because we are finished through your anger,
through your wrath we have been fearful.
[8]You've set our wayward acts in front of you,
our youthful deeds in the light of your face.
[9]Because all our days have turned their face through your outburst;
we've finished up our years as murmuring.
[10]The days of our years in themselves are 70 years,
or with strength 80 years.
But their drive has been oppression and trouble,
because it's passed by speedily and we've flown away.
[11]Who acknowledges the vigour of your anger,
and your outburst, in accordance with awe for you?
[12]In counting our days, so make us acknowledge it,
in order that we may bring home a smart mind.

[13]Turn back, Yahweh, how long?
– relent about your servants.
[14]Fill us in the morning with your commitment,
and we will resound and rejoice all our days.
[15]Enable us to rejoice in accordance with the days of your humbling us,
the years we've seen bad fortune.
[16]May your deed appear to your servants,
your magnificence for their descendants.
[17]May the Lord's loveliness come about,
our God for us.
Establish the deed of our hands for us;
yes, the deed of our hands – establish it.

Psalm 91 Shadow of the Almighty

[1]As someone who lives in the hiding place of the One on High,
who lodges in the shade of Shadday,
[2]I say of Yahweh, 'My shelter,
my stronghold, my God in whom I trust.'
[3]Because he's the one who will rescue you from the hunter's trap,
from the malicious epidemic.
[4]With his pinion he'll cover you,
and under his wings you'll find shelter;
his truthfulness will be a body-shield, a rampart.
[5]You needn't be afraid of something dreadful by night,
of an arrow that flies by day,
[6]Of an epidemic that walks in the dark,
of a scourge that destroys at noon.
[7]A thousand may fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand
– it will not reach to you.
[8]You'll only look with your eyes
and see a making good to the faithless.
[9]Because you're one who has made Yahweh 'My abode',
the One on High your shelter.
[10]Nothing bad will be given access to you,
no harm will approach your tent.
[11]Because he'll order his envoys to you,
to keep you in all your ways.
[12]They'll carry you on the palms of their hands
so you don't hit your foot on a stone.
[13]You'll tread on cub and viper,
you'll trample on lion and serpent.
[14]'Because he's attracted to me, I shall enable him to survive;
I shall set him on high, because he's acknowledged my name.
[15]He will call me and I'll answer, I'll be with him when he is under pressure,
I'll pull him out and honour him.
[16]I'll fill him with long days,
and show him my deliverance.'

Psalm 92 A psalm used on the sabbath

A composition. A song. For the sabbath day.

[1]It's good to confess Yahweh,
to make music for your name, you who are the One on High,
[2]To tell of your commitment in the morning,
and of your truthfulness at night,
[3]With ten-string and with mandolin,
with recitation, on the guitar.
[4]Because you've made me rejoice, Yahweh, by your act;
at the deeds of your hands I resound.
[5]How great your deeds have been, Yahweh;
your intentions were very deep.
[6]The stupid person – he doesn't acknowledge,

the dimwit – he doesn't understand this:
[7]when the faithless flourish like grass,
and all the people who devise trouble thrive,
It's to be annihilated for all time,
[8]whereas you are up on high permanently, Yahweh.
[9]Because there – your enemies, Yahweh,
because there – your enemies perish;
all the people who devise trouble scatter.
[10]But you've raised up my horn like an oryx,
my exhaustion with refreshing oil.
[11]My eye has looked at the people who're watching for me;
the people who rise against me, dealing badly
– my ears can hear them.
[12]The faithful person is like a date palm that flourishes,
like a Lebanese cedar that grows great,
[13]Planted in Yahweh's house,
which flourish in our God's courtyards.
[14]They still fruit in old age,
they become verdant and fresh,
[15]Telling that Yahweh is upright,
my crag in whom there is no evil.

Psalm 93 Is the earth vulnerable?

[1]Yahweh began to reign,
he put on majesty;
Yahweh put on, belted on vigour.
Yes, the world is established, it doesn't slip;
[2]your throne is established since long ago,
you are from of old.
[3]Rivers lifted up, Yahweh,
rivers lifted up their voice,
rivers lift up their crushing.
[4]Above the voices of many water,
august, the sea's breakers,
Yahweh was august on high.
[5]Your affirmations have been very truthful,
your sacredness has adorned your house,
Yahweh, for long days.

Psalm 94 The God of redress

[1]God of total redress, Yahweh,
God of total redress, shine out.
[2]Rise up as the one who exercises authority over the earth,
give back their dealing to the majestic people.
[3]How long will the faithless, Yahweh,
how long will the faithless exult,
[4]Will they pour out, speak assertively,
will all the people who devise trouble hold forth?
[5]They crush your people, Yahweh,
they humble your domain.
[6]They kill the widow and alien,
they murder the orphan.
[7]And they say, 'Yah does not see,
Ya'aqob's God does not consider it.'

[8]Consider, you stupid among the people,
you dimwits, when will you show some insight?
[9]The one who plants the ear – he listens, doesn't he;
the one who shapes the eye – he looks, doesn't he.
[10]The one who disciplines nations – he reproves, doesn't he,
the one who teaches humanity about knowledge.
[11]Yahweh knows about humanity's intentions,
that they are hollow.

[12]The blessings of the man whom you discipline, Yah,
and teach from your instruction,
[13]To give him calm from bad times,
until a pit is dug for the faithless person!
[14]Because Yahweh does not leave his people,
does not abandon his domain.
[15]Because authority will come right back to faithfulness,
and all those who are upright in mind will follow it.

[16]Who rises up for me with the people dealing badly,
who takes a stand for me with the people devising trouble?
[17]Were Yahweh not a help for me,
soon I myself would have dwelt in silence.
[18]If I said, 'My foot is slipping',
your commitment, Yahweh, sustains me.
[19]When anxieties multiply inside me,
your comforts give me pleasure.
[20]Can a malicious throne ally with you,
someone who shapes oppression by means of a decree?
[21]They gang up against the life of the faithful person,
they condemn to death the person who's free of guilt.
[22]But Yahweh has been a turret for me,
my God a crag that's a shelter.
[23]He has turned back their troublemaking on them,
he will put an end to them through their bad ways;
Yahweh our God will put an end to them.

Psalm 95 Will you just shut up and listen?

[1]Come, let's resound for Yahweh,
let's shout for our crag who delivers us.
[2]Let's draw near to his face with confession;
we'll shout for him with melodies.
[3]Because Yahweh is the great God,
the great king over all gods,
[4]The one in whose hand are the far reaches of the earth,
and to whom the mountain peaks belong,
[5]The one to whom the sea belongs (he made it)
and the dry land (his hands shaped it).

[6]Come, let's bow low, let's bend down,
let's bow the knee before Yahweh our maker.
[7]Because he's our God
and we're the people he pastures,
the sheep in his hand.

Today, if you listen to his voice,
[8]don't toughen your mind as you did at Meribah ['Argument'],
As on the day at Massah ['Testing'] in the wilderness,
[9]when your ancestors tested me.
They tried me, though they'd seen my action;
[10]for 40 years I loathed the generation.
I said, 'They're a people who go astray in mind,
and they – they have not acknowledged my ways,
[11]Of whom I swore in my anger,
"If they come to my place to settle down . . ."'

Psalm 96 Yes, Yahweh has begun to reign

[1]Sing for Yahweh a new song,
sing for Yahweh all the earth!
[2]Sing for Yahweh, bless his name,
announce the news day after day of his deliverance!
[3]Recount his splendour among the nations,
his extraordinary deeds among all the peoples!

[4]Because Yahweh is great and much to be praised;
he's to be held in awe above all gods.
[5]Because all the nations' gods are non-entities,
whereas Yahweh made the heavens.
[6]Grandeur and magnificence are before him,
vigour and glory in his sanctuary.

[7]Bestow on Yahweh, you kin-groups of the peoples,
bestow on Yahweh splendour and vigour.
[8]Bestow on Yahweh the splendour due to his name,
carry an offering and come into his courtyards.
[9]Bow low to Yahweh in his sacred splendour;
tremble before him, all the earth.
[10]Say among the nations, 'Yahweh has begun to reign!'
– yes, the world will stand firm, it will not slip.
He will give judgement for the peoples with uprightness;
[11]the heavens may rejoice and the earth celebrate.
The sea and what fills it may thunder,
[12]the field and all that is in it exult.
Then all the trees in the forest may resound
[13]before Yahweh, because he is coming.
Because he is coming to exercise authority over the earth;
he will exercise authority over the world with faithfulness,
over the peoples with truthfulness.

Psalm 97 The real King of kings

[1]Yahweh has begun to reign, earth should celebrate,
many foreign shores should rejoice!
[2]Cloud and darkness are round him,
faithfulness in exercising authority is the establishment of his throne.
[3]Fire goes before him
and has set on fire his adversaries all round.
[4]His lightning flashes have lit up the world;
the earth has seen and convulsed.
[5]Mountains like wax have melted before Yahweh,
before the Lord of all the earth.
[6]The heavens have told of his faithfulness,
and all the peoples will see his splendour.
[7]They will be shamed, all those who serve an image,
those who take pride in non-entities;
all the gods have bowed low to him.

[8]Tsiyyon has listened and rejoiced,
the daughter-towns of Yehudah have celebrated,
on account of your authoritative rulings, Yahweh.
[9]Because you, Yahweh, are the One on High over all the earth,
you have ascended very high over all the gods.
[10]You who are loyal to Yahweh, be hostile to what is bad;
he keeps watch on the lives of people committed to him,
he rescues them from the hand of the faithless.
[11]Light has been sown for the faithful person,
rejoicing for those who are upright in mind.
[12]Rejoice in Yahweh, you faithful,
confess the commemoration of his sacredness!

Psalm 98 Revealed to the eyes of the nations

A composition.

[1]Sing for Yahweh a new song,
because he has performed extraordinary deeds!
His right hand has wrought deliverance for him,
yes, his sacred arm.
[2]Yahweh has caused his deliverance to be acknowledged;
to the eyes of the nations he has revealed his faithfulness.

[3]He has been mindful of his commitment and his truthfulness
to the household of Yisra'el.
All the ends of the earth have seen
the deliverance of our God.

[4]Shout for Yahweh, all the earth,
break out and resound and make music!
[5]Make music for Yahweh with the guitar,
with the guitar and the sound of music!
[6]With trumpets and the sound of the horn,
shout before the King, Yahweh!
[7]The sea and what fills it should thunder,
the world and the people who live in it.
[8]Rivers should clap the palms of their hands,
mountains should resound together,
[9]Before Yahweh, because he has come
to exercise authority over the earth.
He exercises authority over the world with faithfulness,
over the peoples with uprightness.

Psalm 99 The one who carries things

[1]Yahweh has begun to reign – peoples should tremble;
the one who sits above the sphinxes – the earth should shake.
[2]In Tsiyyon Yahweh is great,
and he is on high over all the peoples.
[3]They should confess your name, great and awe-inspiring
– he is sacred.

[4]With the vigour of a king, loyal to the exercise of authority,
you are the one who established uprightness.
Authority and faithfulness in Ya'aqob:
you are the one who implemented them.
[5]Lift Yahweh our God high
and bow low to his footstool
– he's sacred.

[6]Mosheh, and Aharon among his priests,
and Shemu'el [Samuel] among the people who call his name,
They were people calling to Yahweh, and he himself would answer them,
[7]in the pillar of cloud he would speak to them.
They kept his affirmations, the decree he gave them;
[8]Yahweh our God, you answered them.
You became a God who carried things for them,
but one who exacted redress for their actions.
[9]Lift Yahweh our God high and bow low to his sacred mountain
– because Yahweh our God is sacred.

Psalm 100 Shout for Yahweh, all the earth

A composition. For the thank-offering.

[1]Shout for Yahweh, all the earth,
[2]serve Yahweh with rejoicing,
come before him with resounding.
[3]Acknowledge that Yahweh is God,
he is the one who made us and we are his,
his people and the sheep he pastures.
[4]Come into his gateways with confession,
his courtyards with praise,
confess him, bless his name.
[5]Because Yahweh is good,
his commitment is permanent,
his truthfulness to generation after generation.

Psalm 101 The leadership challenge

David's. A composition.

[1]I will sing of commitment and the exercise of authority,
for you Yahweh I will make music.
[2]I will show insight in the way that has integrity;
when will you come to me?
I will go about with integrity in my mind
within my household.
[3]I will not set in front of my eyes anything of Beliyya'al;
I'm hostile to the action of deviant people
– it will not stick to me.
[4]A crooked mind will depart from me;
I will not acknowledge bad ways.
[5]The person who speaks against his neighbour in secret
– I will put an end to him.
The person lofty in his own eyes and wide of mind
– I will not tolerate him.
[6]My eyes will be on the person who is trustworthy in the country,
to live with me.
The person who walks on the way of integrity
– he will minister to me.
[7]The person who practises deceit
will not live within my household.
The person who speaks lies
will not be established in front of my eyes.
[8]Each morning I will put an end to all the people who are faithless in the country,
so as to cut off from Yahweh's town all who devise trouble.

Psalm 102.1–11 My heart's withered

A plea. For a humble person when he is faint and pours out his talk before Yahweh.

[1]Yahweh, listen to my plea;
may my cry for help come to you.
[2]Don't hide your face from me
on a day when there is pressure for me.
Bend your ear to me;
on the day when I call, be quick, answer me.
[3]Because my days are finished in smoke,
my bones have burned as in a fireplace.
[4]My heart's been stricken like grass and it's withered,
because I've put out of mind eating my food.
[5]Because of the sound of my groaning,
my bone sticks to my flesh.
[6]I've come to resemble a tawny owl of the wilderness,
I've become like a screech owl of the ruins.
[7]I've been awake and I've become like a bird,
alone on a roof.
[8]All day my enemies have reviled me;
people whom I call crazy have sworn oaths by me.
[9]Because I've eaten ashes like bread
and mixed my drink with tears,
[10]In the face of your condemnation and your fury,
because you picked me up and threw me out.
[11]My days are like an extended shadow,
and I – I wither like grass.

Psalm 102.12–28 I have hope for Tsiyyon, but is there hope for me?

[12]But you, Yahweh – you will sit permanently,
your commemoration will continue for generation after generation.
[13]You – you will arise, you will have compassion on Tsiyyon,
because it's time to be gracious to it, because the set time has come.
[14]Because your servants have accepted its stones,
and been gracious to its earth.
[15]Nations will live in awe of Yahweh's name,

all earth's kings of your splendour.
[16]Because Yahweh has built up Tsiyyon,
has appeared in his splendour.
[17]He has turned his face to the plea of the naked person
and not despised their plea.
[18]May this be written down for the next generation,
so that a people to be created may praise Yah,
[19]because he has looked down from his sacred height,
from the heavens Yahweh has looked at the earth,
[20]To listen to the prisoner's cry,
to release people doomed to death,
[21]For the recounting of Yahweh's name in Tsiyyon,
his praise in Yerushalaim,
[22]When peoples collect together,
yes, kingdoms, to serve Yahweh.

[23]He has humbled my energy on my way,
he has cut my days.
[24]I will say, 'My God, don't take me up
in the middle of my days.
Your years continue generation after generation;
[25]before, you founded the earth,
and the heavens are the making of your hands.
[26]Whereas they may perish,
you will stand.
All of them could wear out like a coat;
like clothing you could pass them on.
They would pass on, [27]but you are the one,
and your years will not come to an end.
[28]May your servants' children dwell,
and their offspring endure, before you.'

Psalm 103 He has distanced our rebellions from us

David's.

[1]Bless Yahweh, my entire being;
all my being, [bless] his sacred name.
[2]Bless Yahweh, my entire being;
don't put out of mind all his dealings.
[3]He's the one who pardons all your waywardness,
who heals all your illnesses,
[4]Who restores your life from the Pit,
who garlands you with commitment and compassion,
[5]Who fills you in your finery with goodness,
so that your youth renews like an eagle.
[6]Yahweh performs faithful deeds,
acts of authority for all the oppressed.
[7]He would make his ways known to Mosheh,
his deeds to the Yisra'elites.
[8]Yahweh is compassionate and gracious,
long-tempered and big in commitment.
[9]He doesn't argue permanently,
he doesn't hold on to it for a long time.
[10]He hasn't acted towards us in accordance with our wrongdoings;
he hasn't dealt to us in accordance with our wayward acts.
[11]Because in accordance with the loftiness of the heavens over the earth,
his commitment has been strong over people who hold him in awe.
[12]In accordance with the distance of east from west,
he has distanced our rebellions from us.
[13]In accordance with a father's compassion for his children,
Yahweh has had compassion for people who hold him in awe.
[14]Because he himself knows our frame;
he is mindful that we are earth.
[15]A mere human being: his days are like grass;

like a flower in the fields – that's how he blooms.
[16]When the wind passes by it, it is no more;
its place doesn't recognize it any more.
[17]But Yahweh's commitment lasts from age to age
for people who hold him in awe, and his faithfulness to their grandchildren,
[18]For people who keep his pact
and are mindful of the things he has determined, so that they perform them.
[19]Yahweh established his throne in the heavens;
his reign rules over everything.
[20]Bless Yahweh, his envoys, energetic strong men performing his word,
listening to the sound of his word.
[21]Bless Yahweh, all his armies,
his ministers doing what is acceptable to him.
[22]Bless Yahweh, all his works,
in all the places where he rules.
Bless Yahweh, my entire being.

Psalm 104.1–23 Provision for human beings and donkeys

[1]Bless Yahweh, my entire being!
– Yahweh my God, you became very great.
You put on grandeur and magnificence,
[2]wrapping on light like a coat,
Stretching the heavens like a tent,
[3]one fixing his lofts in the water,
One making clouds his transport,
one going about on the wings of the wind,
[4]Making his envoys of winds,
his ministers of flaming fire.
[5]He founded the earth on its establishments,
so that it would never slip, ever.
[6]You covered it with the deep like a garment,
so that the water would stand above the mountains.
[7]At your reprimand they would flee;
at the sound of your thunder they would make haste.
[8]They would go up mountains, they would go down valleys,
to the place that you founded for them.
[9]You set a boundary they were not to pass;
they would not again cover the earth.

[10]You're the one who sends out springs in wadis,
so that they go about between the mountains.
[11]They water every animal of the field;
donkeys break their thirst.
[12]By them the birds of the heavens dwell;
from among the branches they give voice.
[13]You're one who waters mountains from his lofts
– from the fruit of your deeds the earth has its fill.
[14]You are one who grows grass for the cattle,
and plants for the service of human beings,
To make bread go out from the earth,
[15]and wine that rejoices a person's heart,
To make the face shine with oil,
and bread that sustains a person's heart.
[16]Yahweh's trees get their fill,
the cedars of Lebanon that he planted,
[17]Where birds nest,
the stork – the junipers are its home.
[18]The lofty mountains belong to the ibex,
the cliffs are a shelter for the rock badgers.
[19]He made the moon for set times;
the sun knows its setting.
[20]You bring darkness so that it becomes night:
in it every creature of the forest moves about.
[21]The lions roar for prey,

yes, in seeking their food from God.
[22]When the sun rises, they gather,
and crouch in their abodes.
[23]Human beings go out to their work,
and to their service until evening.

Psalm 104.24–35 Withdrawing breath, giving breath

[24]How the things you made multiplied, Yahweh;
you made them all with smartness;
the earth is full of your possessions;
[25]That's the sea, great,
and wide in reach.
There are moving things without number,
living things small and great.
[26]There ships go about,
Livyatan that you shaped to have fun in it.
[27]All of them look to you,
to give their food at its time.
[28]You give them, they gather;
you open your hand, they have their fill of good things.
[29]You hide your face, they're fearful;
you gather up their breath, they breathe their last,
and go back to their earth.
[30]You send out your breath, they are created,
and you renew the face of the ground.

[31]May Yahweh's splendour be permanent;
may Yahweh rejoice in his deeds,
[32]The one who looks on the earth and it trembles;
he touches the mountains and they smoke.
[33]I will sing for Yahweh while I live,
I will make music for my God while I'm still here.
[34]May my talk be pleasant to him;
I myself will rejoice in Yahweh.
[35]May wrongdoers come to an end from the earth;
faithless people – may there be none of them any more.
Bless Yahweh, my entire being;
praise Yah.

Psalm 105.1–22 Tell your story

[1]Confess Yahweh, call in his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples.
[2]Sing for him, make music for him,
talk about all his extraordinary deeds.
[3]Take pride in his sacred name;
the heart of all who seek Yahweh should rejoice.
[4]Enquire of Yahweh and his vigour;
seek his face continually.
[5]Be mindful of his extraordinary deeds, those which he has done,
his portents and the rulings of his mouth,
[6]You offspring of Abraham his servant,
descendants of Ya'aqob, his chosen ones.

[7]He is Yahweh our God;
his rulings are in all the earth.
[8]He has been mindful permanently of his pact,
the word he ordered to a thousand generations,
[9]That which he sealed to Abraham,
and swore to Yitshaq [Isaac].
[10]He established it as a decree to Ya'aqob,
to Yisra'el as a lasting pact,
[11]saying, 'I will give the country of Kena'an [Canaan] to you,
as a share, your domain.'

[12]When they were few in number,
little and resident aliens in it,
[13]And they went about from nation to nation,
from one kingdom to another people,
[14]He did not allow anyone to oppress them,
but reproved kings on account of them:
[15]‘Don’t touch my anointed ones,
don’t do wrong to my prophets.’

[16]He called for hunger on the country;
every staff of bread he broke.
[17]He sent before them an individual
who was sold as a servant, Yoseph.
[18]They subjected his foot to the fetter;
iron came on to his person.
[19]Until the time his word came about,
Yahweh’s saying refined him.
[20]A king sent and freed him,
a ruler of peoples, and released him.
[21]He made him lord of his household,
ruler over all his possessions,
[22]To constrain his officials according to his will,
and to make his elders smart.

Psalm 105.23–45 In order that they might keep his decrees

[23]Yisra’el came to Misrayim;
Ya’aqob resided in the country of Ham.
[24]He made his people very fruitful,
made them more numerous than their adversaries.
[25]He turned their mind against his people,
to scheme against his servants.
[26]He sent Mosheh his servant,
Aharon whom he had chosen.
[27]They placed among them words about his signs,
his portents in the country of Ham.
[28]He sent darkness, and it became dark;
they did not defy his word.
[29]He turned their water into blood,
and put their fish to death.
[30]Their country teemed with frogs,
in their kings’ rooms.
[31]He spoke, and a swarm came,
mosquitoes in all their territory.
[32]He made their rain hail,
flaming fire in their country.
[33]He struck down their vine and their fig tree,
broke down the trees in their territory.
[34]He spoke, and the locust came,
the grasshopper without number.
[35]It ate all the vegetation in their country,
ate the fruit of their land.
[36]He struck down every firstborn in their country,
the first of all their vigour.

[37]He got them out, with silver and gold;
none among their clans collapsed.
[38]Misrayim rejoiced when they got out,
because dread of them had fallen on them.
[39]He spread a cloud for covering,
and a fire to light the night.
[40]They asked and he brought quail,
and he would fill them with bread from the heavens.
[41]He opened a crag and water flowed,
went in dry places as a river.

[42]Because he was mindful of his sacred word
with Abraham his servant,
[43]He got his people out with joy,
his chosen ones with resounding.
[44]He gave them the nations' countries,
and they took possession of the labour of the peoples,
[45]In order that they might keep his decrees
and observe his instructions.
Praise Yah!

Psalm 106.1–22 He gave them what they asked

[1]Praise Yah!
Confess Yahweh, because he is good,
because his commitment is permanent.
[2]Who can utter Yahweh's mighty acts,
get people to listen to all his praises?
[3]The blessings of people who keep watch over the exercise of authority,
of the person who does what is faithful at all times!
[4]Be mindful of me, Yahweh, when you act with acceptance towards your people,
attend to me when you deliver them,
[5]So that I may see the good things that come to your chosen,
rejoice in the rejoicing of your nation,
take pride with your domain.

[6]We've done wrong with our ancestors,
we've been wayward, we've been faithless.
[7]Our ancestors in Misrayim did not have insight into your extraordinary deeds,
they were not mindful of the magnitude of your acts of commitment.
[8]But he delivered them for the sake of his name,
so that his might would be acknowledged.
[9]He reprimanded the Reed Sea and it dried up,
and he enabled them to go through the deeps like a wilderness.
[10]He delivered them from the hand of the one who was hostile to them,
restored them from the hand of the enemy.
[11]Water covered their adversaries;
not one of them was left.
[12]They trusted in his words,
and sang his praise.
[13]They quickly put his deeds out of mind;
they did not wait for his counsel.
[14]They felt a deep longing in the wilderness,
they tested God in the wasteland.
[15]He gave them what they asked,
but sent a wasting in their entire being.
[16]They were jealous of Mosheh in the camp,
of Aharon, Yahweh's sacred one.
[17]The earth opened and swallowed Datan,
closed over Abiram's assembly.
[18]Fire burned up among their assembly,
a flame that set on fire the faithless.
[19]They made a bullock at Horeb,
bowed low to an image.
[20]They exchanged their splendour
for the representation of an ox eating grass.
[21]They put out of mind their deliverer,
the one who had done great things in Misrayim,
[22]extraordinary deeds in the country of Ham,
awe-inspiring deeds at the Reed Sea.

Psalm 106.23–47 Deliver us in the same way!

[23]He said he would annihilate them,
except that Mosheh, his chosen,
Stood in the breach before him,

to turn back his wrath from devastating.
[24]They rejected the beautiful country,
and didn't trust in his word.
[25]They muttered in their tents,
and didn't listen to Yahweh's voice.
[26]So he raised his hand [to swear] to them,
that he would make them fall in the wilderness,
[27]Make their offspring fall among the nations,
and scatter them among the countries.
[28]They joined the Master-of-Pe'or,
and ate sacrifices offered for the dead.
[29]They provoked by their deeds,
and an epidemic broke out among them.
[30]But Pinhas stood and intervened,
and the epidemic held back.
[31]It was thought of for him as a faithful deed,
generation after generation permanently.
[32]They angered at Meribah Water;
it was bad for Mosheh because of them.
[33]Because they rebelled against his spirit,
he was rash with his tongue.

[34]They didn't devastate the peoples,
as Yahweh had said to them.
[35]They mixed with the nations,
and learned what they did.
[36]They served their images;
they became a snare for them.
[37]They sacrificed their sons
and their daughters to demons.
[38]They shed the blood of someone free of guilt,
the blood of their sons and their daughters,
Whom they sacrificed to the images of Kena'an,
so that the land became ungodly through the bloodshed.
[39]They became defiled through their deeds;
they whored in their actions.
[40]Yahweh's anger burned against his people,
he loathed his domain.
[41]He gave them into the hand of the nations;
people hostile to them ruled over them.
[42]Their enemies afflicted them,
and they bowed down under their hand.
[43]Many times he would rescue them,
but those people – they were rebellious in their counsel.
They sank low because of their waywardness,
[44]and he saw the pressure that came to them.
When he heard their resounding shout,
[45]he was mindful of his pact to them.
He relented in accordance with the magnitude of his acts of commitment,
[46]and made them objects of compassion
before all their captors.

[47]Deliver us, Yahweh our God,
collect us from the nations,
To confess your sacred name,
to glory in your praise.

Psalm 106.48 Another amen

Yahweh, the God of Yisra'el, be blessed,
from age to lasting age!
All the people is to say,
'Amen'; praise Yah!

Psalm 107.1–22 Let the redeemed of the Lord say so

[1]Confess Yahweh, because he is good,
because his commitment is permanent.
[2]The people restored by Yahweh are to say it,
those whom he restored from the hand of the adversary,
[3]And collected from the countries,
from the north and from the west.

[4]They wandered in the wilderness, in the wasteland;
they didn't find the way to a settled town.
[5]Hungry, thirsty too,
their entire being within them fainted.
[6]But they cried out to Yahweh in the pressure that came to them,
and he rescued them from their straits.
[7]He directed them by a straight way,
so as to go to a settled town.
[8]They are to confess to Yahweh his commitment,
his extraordinary deeds for human beings,
[9]Because he has sated the person who is scurrying about,
and filled the hungry person with good things.

[10]People living in darkness and deathly gloom,
prisoners of humbling and iron,
[11]Because they had defied the things God said,
despised the counsel of the One on High:
[12]He humbled their heart with oppression;
they collapsed without a helper.
[13]But they cried out to Yahweh in the pressure that came to them,
and he delivered them from their straits.
[14]He got them out of darkness and deathly gloom,
and would break their bonds.
[15]They are to confess to Yahweh his commitment,
his extraordinary deeds for human beings.
[16]Because he has broken up copper doors,
shattered iron bars.

[17]Dense people, because of their rebellious way,
and through their acts of waywardness, experienced humbling.
[18]Their appetite loathed all food;
they reached death's gateways.
[19]But they cried out to Yahweh in the pressure that came to them,
and he delivered them from their straits.
[20]He sent his word and healed them;
he released them from their deep pit.
[21]They are to confess to Yahweh his commitment,
his extraordinary deeds for human beings.
[22]They are to offer thanksgiving sacrifices,
and tell of his deeds with resounding noise.

Psalm 107.23–43 Consider Yahweh's acts of commitment

[23]People who go down to the sea in ships,
doing work in extensive waters,
[24]These people – they saw Yahweh's deeds,
and his extraordinary deeds in the deep.
[25]He spoke and set a hurricane in place,
and it lifted its waves.
[26]They went up to the heavens, they went down to the depths;
their entire being melted away in their trouble.
[27]They reeled and staggered like a drunk,
and all their smartness swallowed itself up.
[28]But they cried out to Yahweh in the pressure that came to them,
and he delivered them from their straits.
[29]He turned the hurricane into stillness;
their waves went quiet.
[30]They rejoiced when they became silent,

and he led them to the haven they wanted.
[31]They are to confess to Yahweh his commitment,
his extraordinary deeds for human beings.
[32]They are to exalt him in the congregation of the people,
and praise him in the session of the elders.

[33]He turns rivers into wilderness,
water outlets into thirsty land,
[34]Fruitful land into salt marsh,
because of the bad ways of the people who live in it.
[35]He turns wilderness into a pool of water,
dry land into water outlets.
[36]He has let hungry people live there;
they have established a settled town.
[37]They've sown fields and planted vineyards,
and they have produced fruit, a yield.
[38]He's blessed them and they've increased greatly,
and he doesn't let their cattle decrease.
[39]But they have decreased and become low
through oppression, bad fortune and sadness.
[40]He pours contempt on leaders,
and makes them wander in a waste where there is no way.
[41]But he sets the needy person on high out of humbling,
and makes their kin-groups like a flock.

[42]The upright will see and rejoice;
all evil has stopped its mouth.
[43]Who is the smart person who will keep watch on these things?
– they will consider Yahweh's acts of commitment.

Psalm 108 Urging God to act in the light of his promises

A song. A composition. David's.

[1]My mind is established, God,
I will sing and make music, yes, my entire being.
[2]Wake up, mandolin and guitar;
I will wake the dawn.
[3]I will confess you among the peoples, Yahweh,
I will make music for you among the nations.
[4]Because your commitment is great, over the heavens,
your truthfulness up to the skies.
[5]Be high over the heavens, God,
over all the earth your splendour.
[6]In order that the people you love may be pulled out,
deliver me by your right hand and answer me.

[7]God had spoken by his sacredness:
'I will exult as I allocate Shekem
and measure out Sukkot Vale.
[8]Gil'ad will be mine,
Menashsheh will be mine.
Ephrayim will be a stronghold for my head,
Yehudah my sceptre.
[9]Mo'ab will be my washbasin,
over Edom I will throw my boot,
over Peleshet I will shout out.
[10]Who will conduct me to the fortified town,
who would lead me to Edom?

[11]You've rejected us, haven't you, God;
you don't go out with our armies, God.
[12]Grant us help against the adversary,
given that human deliverance is empty.
[13]Through God we will act with forcefulness;
he is the one who will trample on our adversaries.

Psalm 109.1–19 How to deal with being swindled

The leader's. David's. A composition.

[1]God, my praise, don't be silent,
[2]because it's a faithless mouth,
And a deceitful mouth, that people have opened against me;
they have spoken with me by means of a lying tongue.
[3]With hostile words they've surrounded me,
and battled against me for nothing.
[4]In return for my friendliness they accuse me;
so I [am making] a plea.
[5]They've brought on me bad in return for good,

hostility in return for my friendliness.

[6]‘Appoint a faithless person over him,
an accuser who will stand at his right hand.
[7]When he enters into judgement, may he come out as faithless;
may his plea lead to condemnation.
[8]May his days be few;
may another person take his appointment.
[9]May his children become orphans,
his wife a widow.
[10]May his children wander about,
ask and enquire from their ruins.
[11]May the creditor strike at all that he has,
may strangers plunder his earnings.
[12]May he have no one showing commitment,
may there be no one being gracious to his orphans.
[13]May his succession be for cutting off,
in the next generation may their name be blotted out.
[14]May the waywardness of his ancestors stay in mind for Yahweh,
may his mother’s wrongdoings not be blotted out.
[15]May they be in front of Yahweh continually;
may he cut off their commemoration from the earth.
[16]Because of the fact that he was not mindful
to keep commitment,
But pursued the person who was humble and needy,
and the one crushed in spirit, to put him to death.
[17]He liked slighting, and it came about for him;
he didn’t want blessing, and it was far from him.
[18]He put on slighting like a coat,
it came into his insides like water,
into his bones like oil.
[19]May it be for him like clothing in which he covers himself,
and as a belt that he wraps round continually.’

Psalm 109.20–31 Wages for accusers

[20]May this be the wages of my accusers
from Yahweh,
the people who speak what is bad against me.
[21]So you, Yahweh, Lord,
deal with me for the sake of your name;
because your commitment is good, rescue me.
[22]Because I am humble and needy,
and my heart is run through within me.
[23]Like a shadow as it lengthens, I am gone;
I am shaken off like a locust.
[24]My knees have collapsed from hunger;
my body has wasted, away from fatness.
[25]I – I have become an object of reviling to them;
when they see me, they shake their head.
[26]Help me, Yahweh my God,
deliver me in accordance with your commitment,
[27]So that people may acknowledge that this is your hand,
that you, Yahweh, you have done it.
[28]Those people may slight me, but you – may you bless;
they will have arisen and been disgraced, but your servant will rejoice.
[29]May my accusers put on shame,
may they wrap round their disgrace like a coat.

[30]I will confess Yahweh greatly with my mouth,
in the middle of many people I will praise him,
[31]Because he stands at the right hand of the needy person,
to deliver him from the people who exercise authority over him.

Psalm 110 Enemies become footstool

David's. A psalm.

[1]Yahweh's proclamation to my lord:
'Sit at my right
until I make your enemies your footstool.'
[2]Yahweh will send your vigorous sceptre out from Tsiyyon;
hold sway among your enemies.
[3]Your people are willing offerings
on the day you deploy your forces.
In sacred magnificence from the womb of dawn
the dew of your youths is yours.
[4]Yahweh has sworn,
and will not relent:
'You are a priest permanently
after the manner of Melkitsedeq.'
[5]The Lord is at your right;
he has hit kings on the day of his anger.
[6]He judges among the nations, filling them with bodies;
he has hit heads over the earth, far and wide.
[7]From the wadi by the way he drinks;
therefore he can raise his head.

Psalm 111 The lasting pact

[1]Praise Yah!
I will confess Yahweh with my whole mind
in the council of the upright, the assembly.
[2]Yahweh's doings are great,
enquired about for all their delights.
[3]His action is grandeur and magnificence,
his faithfulness stands permanently.
[4]He achieved commemoration for his extraordinary deeds;
Yahweh is gracious and compassionate.
[5]He has given meat to people who live in awe of him;
he is mindful of his pact permanently.
[6]He told his people of the energy of his doings
in giving them the domain of the nations.
[7]The doings of his hands are true and authoritative;
all the things he has determined are truthful,
[8]Established lastingly and permanently,
done in truth and uprightness.
[9]He sent redemption to his people,
he ordered his pact permanently.
His name is sacred and to be held in awe;
[10]awe for Yahweh is the essence of smartness.
Good insight belongs to all who do them;
his praise stands permanently.

Psalm 112 Blessed so as to bless

[1]Praise Yah!
The blessings of the person who lives in awe of Yahweh,
who delights much in his orders!
[2]His offspring will become a strong man in the country;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.
[3]Riches and wealth are in his house,
and his faithfulness stands permanently.
[4]He rises in the darkness as light for the upright,
gracious, compassionate and faithful.
[5]Good is the person who is gracious and lends,
as he fulfils his words with the [proper] exercise of authority.
[6]Because he will not slip, ever;
the faithful person will become an object of commemoration permanently.
[7]He is not afraid of bad news;
his mind is established, reliant on Yahweh.

[8]His mind is held firm so that he is not afraid,
until he looks on his adversaries.
[9]He spreads abroad as he gives to the needy;
his faithfulness stands permanently.
His horn will stand high in splendour;
[10]the faithless person will see and be vexed.
He will grind his teeth and waste away;
the longing of faithless people will perish.

Psalm 113 The one who gets down low to look

[1]Praise Yah!
Praise, Yahweh's servants,
praise Yahweh's name!
[2]May Yahweh's name be blessed,
now and permanently!
[3]From the rising of the sun to its setting,
Yahweh's name be praised!
[4]Yahweh is on high over all nations,
his splendour is over the heavens!
[5]Who is like Yahweh our God,
the one who goes on high to sit,
[6]Who gets down low to look,
in the heavens and the earth,
[7]Who lifts up the poor person from the earth,
raises the needy person from the rubbish heap,
[8]To enable them to sit with leaders,
with the leaders of the people,
[9]Who enables the childless woman to sit in the household,
the mother of children, rejoicing?
Praise Yah!

Psalm 114 The sacred place

[1]When Yisra'el got out from Misrayim,
Ya'aqob's household from a jabbering people,
[2]Yehudah became its sacred place,
Yisra'el its realm.
[3]When the sea saw, it fled;
the Yarden – it was turning back.
[4]The mountains – they jumped like rams,
the hills like the children of the flock.
[5]What was it with you, sea, that you were fleeing,
Yarden, that you were turning back,
[6]Mountains that you were jumping like rams,
hills like the children of the flock?
[7]Tremble, before the Lord, earth,
before Ya'aqob's God,
[8]Who turned the crag into a pool of water,
basalt into a spring of water.

Psalm 115 The gods with bodies that don't work

[1]Not to us, Yahweh,
not to us,
But to your name give splendour,
for your commitment, for your truthfulness.
[2]Why should the nations say,
'Where is their God, please?'
[3]Whereas our God is in the heavens;
everything that he wants he has done.
[4]Their images are silver and gold,
the making of human hands.
[5]They have a mouth but they don't speak,
they have eyes but they don't see,

[6]They have ears but they don't hear,
they have a nose but they don't smell,
[7]Their hands but they don't feel, their feet but they don't walk about;
they don't murmur with their throat.
[8]Their makers become like them,
everyone who relies on them.

[9]Yisra'el, rely on Yahweh!
– he is their help and their shield.
[10]Household of Aharon, rely on Yahweh!
– he is their help and their shield.
[11]People who live in awe of Yahweh, rely on Yahweh!
– he is their help and their shield.
[12]In that Yahweh has been mindful of us, he will bless us;
he will bless Yisra'el's household,
he will bless Aharon's household.
[13]He will bless the people who live in awe of Yahweh,
the small along with the great.
[14]May Yahweh add to you,
to you and to your children.
[15]May you be blessed by Yahweh,
maker of heavens and earth.
[16]The heavens are heavens belonging to Yahweh,
but the earth he gave to human beings.
[17]Whereas the dead do not praise Yah,
nor any who go down to silence,
[18]We – we will bless Yah,
now and permanently.
Praise Yah!

Psalm 116 I will make good my pledges

[1]I am loyal, because Yahweh listens
to my voice, my prayers for grace.
[2]Because he has bent his ear to me,
and through my days I will call.

[3]Death's ropes encompassed me,
She'ol's restraints found me.
When I find pressure and sadness,
[4]I call out in Yahweh's name:
'Oh now, Yahweh,
save my life!'
[5]Yahweh is gracious and faithful;
our God is compassionate.
[6]Yahweh keeps watch over simple people;
I sank low, and he delivered me.
[7]Turn back, my entire being, to your rest,
because Yahweh – he has dealt to you.
[8]Because you pulled out my life from death,
my eye from tears, my foot from being pushed down,
[9]I can walk about before Yahweh
in the land of the living.

[10]I trust, because I could say,
'I – I have become very low.'
[11]I – I said in my haste,
'Every human being lies.'
[12]What shall I give back to Yahweh,
for all his dealings with me?
[13]I will lift the deliverance cup,
and call out in Yahweh's name.
[14]I will make good my pledges to Yahweh,
right in front of all his people, please.
[15]Valuable in Yahweh's eyes

is the death of people who are committed to him.
[16]Oh, Yahweh,
because I am your servant,
I am your servant, the son of your handmaid;
you loosed my bonds.
[17]I will make a thanksgiving sacrifice to you,
I will call in Yahweh's name.
[18]I will make good my pledges to Yahweh,
right in front of all his people, please,
[19]in the courtyards of Yahweh's house,
in the middle of Yerushalaim.
Praise Yah!

Psalm 117 A lot in a few words

[1]Praise Yahweh, all you nations,
extol him all you peoples.
[2]Because his commitment to us has been strong;
Yahweh's truthfulness is permanent.
Praise Yah.

Psalm 118 This is the day that the Lord has made

[1]Confess Yahweh, because he is good,
because his commitment is permanent.
[2]Yisra'el is please to say,
'His commitment is permanent.'
[3]Aharon's household is please to say,
'His commitment is permanent.'
[4]The people who live in awe of Yahweh are please to say,
'His commitment is permanent.'

[5]Out of constraint I called Yah;
Yah answered me with roominess.
[6]Because Yahweh is mine, I will not be afraid;
what can a human being do to me?
[7]Yahweh is mine as my helper,
and I shall look on the people who are hostile to me.
[8]It's better to take shelter with Yahweh
than to rely on human beings.
[9]It's better to take shelter with Yahweh
than to rely on leaders.
[10]All nations surrounded me;
in Yahweh's name I can indeed wither them.
[11]They surrounded me, yes, surrounded me;
in Yahweh's name I can indeed wither them.
[12]They surrounded me like bees;
they've been extinguished like a fire of thorns
– in Yahweh's name I can indeed wither them.
[13]You pushed me hard, so as to fall,
but Yahweh – he helped me.
[14]Yah was my vigour and protection,
and he became my deliverance.
[15]The noise of resounding and deliverance
was in the tents of the faithful.
Yahweh's right hand acts with forcefulness,
[16]Yahweh's right hand lifts up high,
Yahweh's right hand acts with forcefulness.
[17]I shall not die, but live,
and recount Yah's deeds.
[18]Yahweh severely disciplined me,
but didn't give me over to death.

[19]Open the faithful gateways to me;
when I come through them, I shall confess Yahweh.

[20]This is Yahweh's gateway;
faithful people come through it.
[21]I will confess you, because you answered me
and became deliverance for me.
[22]'The stone that the builders spurned
became the head cornerstone.'
[23]This came about from Yahweh;
it's been extraordinary in our eyes.
[24]This was the day that Yahweh made;
so that we would celebrate and rejoice in it.

[25]Oh, Yahweh, will you deliver us, please?
– oh, Yahweh, enable us to succeed, please.
[26]Blessed be the one who comes in Yahweh's name;
we are blessing you from Yahweh's house.
[27]Yahweh is God; he has shone light to us
– tie the festal offering with cords to the horns of the altar.
[28]You are my God and I will confess you;
my God, I will exalt you.
[29]Confess Yahweh, because he is good,
because his commitment is permanent.

Psalm 119.1–24 God's laws as the way to blessing

[1]The blessings of people who have integrity in their way,
who walk by Yahweh's instruction!
[2]The blessings of people who observe his affirmations,
who enquire of him with their entire mind!
[3]Indeed, they have not done evil;
they have walked in his ways.
[4]You yourself have given the order that the things you have determined
are to be well kept.
[5]Oh that my ways may be firm
in keeping your decrees!
[6]Then I shall not be shamed
when I look to all your orders.
[7]I will confess you with uprightness of mind
as I learn of your faithful rulings.
[8]I will keep your decrees;
don't totally abandon me.

[9]How can a youth keep his path clean?
– by keeping watch in accordance with your word.
[10]I've enquired of you with my whole mind;
don't let me stray from your orders.
[11]I've treasured your words in my mind
in order that I may not do wrong in relation to you.
[12]Blessed are you, Yahweh;
teach me your decrees.
[13]With my lips I've recounted
all the rulings of your mouth.
[14]In the way of your affirmations
I've rejoiced as over all riches.
[15]I shall talk about the things you have determined
and look to your paths.
[16]In your decrees I will take pleasure;
I will not put out of mind your words.

[17]Deal to your servant
so that I may live, and keep your word.
[18]Open my eyes so that I may look
to extraordinary things from your instruction.
[19]I'm a sojourner on the earth;
don't hide your orders from me.
[20]My entire being has failed with longing

for your rulings all the time.
[21]You've reprimanded the assertive;
cursed are the people who stray from your orders.
[22]Roll away from me reviling and shame,
because I've observed your affirmations.
[23]Although officials have sat, have spoken against me,
your servant talks about your decrees.
[24]Yes, your affirmations are my pleasure,
my counsellors.

Psalm 119.25–48 Standing on the promises

[25]My entire being is stuck in the earth:
bring me to life in accordance with your word.
[26]I recounted my ways and you answered me;
teach me your decrees.
[27]Help me understand the way of the things you have determined,
so that I may talk about your extraordinary deeds.
[28]My entire being has wept itself away through sorrow;
set me up in accordance with your word.
[29]Remove the way of falsehood from me;
grace me with your instruction.
[30]I've chosen the way of truthfulness;
I've set out your rulings.
[31]I've stuck to your affirmations;
Yahweh, don't shame me.
[32]I run the way of your orders,
because you widen my mind.

[33]Teach me the way of your decrees, Yahweh,
so that I may preserve it to the utmost.
[34]Help me understand, so that I may observe your instruction,
and keep it with all my mind.
[35]Direct me on the trail of your orders,
because I delight in it.
[36]Bend my mind to your affirmations
and not to profit.
[37]Help my eyes pass from seeing emptiness;
bring me to life by your way.
[38]Implement for your servant what you've said,
that which was for people who live in awe of you.
[39]Make my reviling, which I dread, pass,
because your rulings are good.
[40]There, I long for the things you've determined;
in your faithfulness bring me to life.

[41]So may your commitment come to me, Yahweh,
your deliverance in accordance with what you've said.
[42]And I shall answer the person who reviles me with a word,
because I've relied on your word.
[43]So don't snatch right away from my mouth your truthful word,
because I've waited for your rulings.
[44]And I will keep your instruction continually,
lastingly and permanently.
[45]So I will walk about in wideness,
because I've enquired of the things you've determined.
[46]And I will speak of your affirmations in front of kings,
and not be shamed.
[47]So I will take pleasure in your orders,
to which I am loyal.
[48]And I will lift the palms of my hands to your orders, to which I am loyal,
and I will talk about your decrees.

Psalm 119.49–72 Teach me

[49]Be mindful of your word to your servant,
upon which you've caused me to wait.
[50]This is my comfort in my humbling,
that what you've said has brought me to life.
[51]Though the assertive have mocked me greatly,
I haven't turned away from your instruction.
[52]I've been mindful of your rulings from of old,
Yahweh, and found comfort.
[53]Rage has grasped me because of the faithless people,
who abandon your instruction.
[54]Your decrees have been my protection
in the house where I reside.
[55]I've been mindful by night of your name, Yahweh,
and I've kept your instruction.
[56]This is how it's been for me,
because I've observed the things you've determined.
[57]Yahweh being my share,
I've said I would keep your words.
[58]I've sought your goodwill with all my heart;
be gracious to me in accordance with what you've said.
[59]I've thought about my ways
and turned back my feet to your affirmations.
[60]I've hurried and not delayed
to keep your orders.
[61]Though the ropes of the faithless were round me,
I haven't put out of mind your instruction.
[62]In the middle of the night I get up
to confess you for your faithful rulings.
[63]I'm a friend to all who live in awe of you
and to the people who keep the things you've determined.
[64]The earth is full of your commitment, Yahweh;
teach me your decrees.

[65]You've done good things with your servant,
Yahweh, in accordance with your word.
[66]Teach me goodness of discretion and acknowledgement,
because I've trusted in your orders.
[67]Before I became low I was going astray,
but now I've kept what you said.
[68]You're good and you do good;
teach me your decrees.
[69]The assertive have smeared falsehood over me,
whereas I observe the things you've determined with my whole mind.
[70]Their mind is thick like fat,
whereas I've taken pleasure in your instruction.
[71]It was good for me that I was humbled,
in order that I might learn your decrees.
[72]The instruction that comes from your mouth is better for me
than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

Psalm 119.73–96 Waiting

[73]Given that your hands made me, established me,
help me understand so that I may learn your orders.
[74]People who live in awe of you will see and rejoice,
because I've waited for your word.
[75]I've acknowledged, Yahweh, that your rulings are faithful,
and in truthfulness you've humbled me.
[76]May your commitment become my comfort, please,
in accordance with what you've said to your servant.
[77]May your compassion come to me so that I may live,
because your instruction is my pleasure.
[78]May the assertive be shamed, because they have put me in the wrong by means of falsehood,
whereas I talk about the things you've determined.

[79]May the people who live in awe of you turn back to me,
the people who acknowledge your affirmations.
[80]May my mind be of integrity in your decrees
in order that I may not be shamed.

[81]My entire being fails [in looking] for your deliverance;
for your word I've waited.
[82]My eyes fail regarding what you've said,
in saying 'When will you comfort me?'
[83]When I've become like a water-skin in smoke,
I haven't put out of mind your decrees.
[84]How many are your servant's days:
when will you act with authority against my pursuers?
[85]The assertive have dug pits for me,
which is not in accordance with your instruction.
[86]All your orders are truthful;
when people pursue me with falsehood, help me.
[87]They've almost finished me off in the country,
but I haven't abandoned the things you've determined.
[88]In accordance with your commitment bring me to life,
so that I may keep the affirmations of your mouth.

[89]Your word is permanent, Yahweh,
standing in the heavens.
[90]Your truthfulness lasts generation after generation;
you established the earth and it has stood firm.
[91]As for your rulings, they've stood firm today,
because all are your servants.
[92]Were not your instruction my pleasure,
I would then have perished through my humbling.
[93]Never will I put out of mind the things you've determined,
because by means of them you've brought me to life.
[94]I am yours, deliver me,
because I've enquired of the things you've determined.
[95]Whereas faithless people have hoped to make me perish,
I show understanding of your affirmations.
[96]As for every finish, I've seen an end,
but your order is very wide.

Psalm 119.97–120 I can be smarter than my professor

[97]How loyal I am to your instruction!
– all day it is my talk.
[98]Your orders make me smarter than my enemies,
because they are mine permanently.
[99]I've gained more insight than all my teachers,
because your affirmations are my talk.
[100]I show more understanding than the elders,
because I've observed the things you've determined.
[101]I've kept back my foot from every bad path,
in order that I might keep your word.
[102]I haven't departed from your rulings,
because you've instructed me.
[103]How smooth the things you say have been to my palate,
more than syrup to my mouth.
[104]Through the things you've determined I show understanding;
therefore I oppose every false path.

[105]Your word is a lamp to my foot,
a light to my trail.
[106]I swore and set it up,
that I would keep your faithful rulings.
[107]I am low, very low, Yahweh;
bring me to life in accordance with your word.
[108]Please accept the free offerings of my mouth, Yahweh,

and teach me your rulings.
[109]My life is in the palm of my hand continually,
but I haven't put out of mind your instruction.
[110]Faithless people have placed a trap for me,
but I haven't strayed from the things you've determined.
[111]I've made your affirmations my own permanently,
because they are the joy of my heart.
[112]I've bent my mind to act on your decrees,
permanently, to the utmost.

[113]I'm hostile to divided people,
and I'm loyal to your instruction.
[114]Since you've been my shelter and shield,
I've waited for your word.
[115]Depart from me, you who deal badly,
so that I may observe my God's orders.
[116]Hold me up in accordance with what you said, so that I may live;
don't let me be ashamed of my expectation.
[117]Sustain me so that I may find deliverance,
and have regard to your decrees continually.
[118]You've thrown out everyone who wanders from your decrees,
because their deceptiveness is false.
[119]As dross, you've made all the faithless people in the country cease;
therefore I'm loyal to your affirmations.
[120]My flesh shivers in reverence for you;
I live in awe of your rulings.

Psalm 119.121–44 The opening up of your words gives light

[121]I've made faithful rulings;
don't leave me to oppressors.
[122]Make a pledge to your servant for good things;
the assertive must not oppress me.
[123]My eyes fail [in looking] for your deliverance,
for what you said about your faithfulness.
[124]Act with your servant in accordance with your commitment,
and teach me your decrees.
[125]As I am your servant, help me understand,
so that I may acknowledge your affirmations.
[126]It's a time for Yahweh to act;
people have violated your instruction.
[127]Therefore I'm loyal to your orders,
more than to gold and silver.
[128]Therefore I've treated as upright everything that you've determined about everything;
I've been hostile to every false path.

[129]Your affirmations are extraordinary things;
therefore my entire being has observed them.
[130]The opening up of your words gives light,
helping the simple to understand.
[131]I opened wide my mouth and panted,
because I longed for your orders.
[132]Turn your face to me and be gracious to me,
in accordance with your ruling for people who are loyal to your name.
[133]Establish my feet by what you say,
so that no evil may have power over me.
[134]Redeem me from human oppression,
so that I may keep the things you've determined.
[135]Shine your face on your servant,
and teach me your decrees.
[136]My eyes have run down streams of water,
because people have not kept your instruction.

[137]You're faithful, Yahweh,
and upright in your rulings.

[138]You've ordered the faithfulness of your affirmations,
and the truthfulness, exceedingly.
[139]My passion has devoured me,
because my adversaries have put your words out of mind.
[140]What you say has been much proven,
and your servant is loyal to it.
[141]Although I am small and despised,
I haven't put out of mind the things you've determined.
[142]Your faithfulness is a faithfulness that is permanent,
and your instruction is truth.
[143]Although pressure and straits have found me,
your orders are my pleasure.
[144]The faithfulness of your affirmations is permanent;
help me understand so that I may live.

Psalm 119.145–160 My eyes have anticipated the watches

[145]I've called with all my heart; answer me, Yahweh,
so that I may observe your decrees.
[146]I've called you – deliver me,
so that I may keep your affirmations.
[147]I've anticipated the twilight and cried for help,
as I waited for your word.
[148]My eyes have anticipated the watches,
to talk about what you've said.
[149]Listen to my voice in accordance with your commitment;
Yahweh, bring me to life in accordance with your ruling.
[150]People who pursue deliberate wickedness are near;
they are far from your instruction.
[151]You are near, Yahweh,
and all your orders are true.
[152]Of old I've acknowledged from your affirmations
that you founded them permanently.

[153]See my humbling, pull me out,
because I haven't put out of mind your instruction.
[154]Argue my cause and restore me;
in the light of what you've said, bring me to life.
[155]Deliverance is far from the faithless,
because they haven't enquired of your decrees.
[156]Your compassion is great, Yahweh;
bring me to life in accordance with your rulings.
[157]Although my pursuers and adversaries are many,
I haven't turned away from your affirmations.
[158]I've seen people who break faith and loathed them,
people who didn't keep what you said.
[159]See that I've been loyal to the things you've determined;
Yahweh, bring me to life in accordance with your commitment.
[160]Truthfulness is the first principle of your word,
and every faithful ruling of yours is permanent.

Psalm 119.161–176 The appeal of the lost sheep

[161]Officials have pursued me for nothing,
but my heart has revered your word.
[162]I rejoice over what you've said,
like someone who finds much plunder.
[163]Whereas I'm hostile to and take offence at falsehood,
I'm loyal to your instruction.
[164]I've praised you seven times a day
for your faithful rulings.
[165]There is much well-being for people who are loyal to your instruction,
and there isn't anything that can make them collapse.
[166]I've looked for your deliverance, Yahweh,
and acted on your orders.

[167]I've kept your affirmations with my entire being;
I am totally loyal to them.
[168]I've kept the things you've determined and your affirmations,
because all my ways are in front of you.

[169]May my resounding come near your presence, Yahweh;
in accordance with your word, help me understand.
[170]May my prayer for grace come before you;
in accordance with what you've said, rescue me.
[171]May my lips pour forth praise,
because you teach me your decrees.
[172]May my tongue chant of what you've said,
because all your orders are faithful.
[173]May your hand come to my help,
because I've chosen the things you've determined.
[174]I've longed for your deliverance, Yahweh,
and your instruction is my pleasure.
[175]May my entire being live and praise you,
and may your rulings help me.
[176]I've wandered like a lost sheep:
look for your servant,
because I haven't put your orders out of mind.

Psalm 120 Peaceableness

A song of the ascents.

[1]To Yahweh, when I was under pressure,
I called and he answered me.
[2]Yahweh, rescue my life from false lips,
from a deceitful tongue.
[3]What will it give you, what will it add to you,
deceitful tongue?
[4]The arrows of a strong man, sharpened,
with coals of broom shrubs.
[5]Oh for me, that I've resided with Meshek,
dwelt with Qedar's tents.
[6]A long time I've been dwelling
with someone hostile to peace.
[7]I am for peace, but when I speak,
they are for battle.

Psalm 121 Peacefulness

A song for the ascents.

[1]I raise my eyes to the mountains:
from where does my help come?
[2]My help comes from Yahweh,
maker of heavens and earth.
[3]He doesn't give your foot to slipping;
your keeper doesn't doze.
[4]There, he doesn't doze and he doesn't sleep,
Yisra'el's keeper.
[5]Yahweh is your keeper, Yahweh is your shade,
at your right hand.
[6]By day the sun will not strike you down,
or the moon by night.
[7]Yahweh will keep you from everything bad;
he will keep your life.
[8]Yahweh will keep your going out and your coming in,
from now and permanently.

Psalm 122 Praying for Yerushalaim

A song of the ascents. David's.

[1]I rejoiced when people said to me,
'We'll go to Yahweh's house.'
[2]Our feet have been standing
in your gates, Yerushalaim,
[3]Yerushalaim, which is built
as a town that is joined together to itself,
[4]Where the clans went up, Yah's clans,
(an affirmation for Yisra'el),
to confess Yahweh's name.
[5]Because thrones for exercising authority sat there,
thrones for David's household.
[6]Ask for the well-being of Yerushalaim;
may people who are loyal to it be secure.
[7]May there be well-being in your rampart,
ease in your citadels.
[8]For the sake of my brothers and my friends
I shall please speak of well-being for you.
[9]For the sake of the house of Yahweh our God
I will seek good things for you.

Psalm 123 Praying for grace

A song of the ascents.

[1]To you I raise my eyes,
you who sit in the heavens.
[2]There, like the eyes of servants
towards the hand of their masters,
Like the eyes of a maidservant
towards the hand of her mistress,
So are our eyes towards Yahweh our God,
until he is gracious to us.
[3]Be gracious to us, Yahweh, be gracious,
because we've become very full of contempt.
[4]Our entire being has become very full for itself
of the ridicule of complacent people,
of the contempt of majestic people.

Psalm 124 Our help is the name of the Lord

A song of the ascents. David's.

[1]Were it not Yahweh who was ours,
Yisra'el is please to say,
[2]Were it not Yahweh who was ours
when people arose against us,
[3]Then they would have swallowed us alive
in their angry burning against us.
[4]Then the water – it would have carried us off;
the torrent – it would have passed right over us.
[5]Then it would have passed right over us,
the seething water.
[6]Yahweh be blessed,
who did not give us as prey to their teeth.
[7]Our life is like a bird
that has escaped from the hunters' trap.
The trap – it broke;
and we – we escaped.
[8]Our help is the very name of Yahweh,
maker of heavens and earth.

Psalm 125 Mountains round Yerushalaim, Yahweh round his people

A song of the ascents.

[1]The people who rely on Yahweh are like Mount Tsiyyon,
which will not slip – it will sit permanently.
[2]Yerushalaim – mountains are round it;
Yahweh – he is round his people,
now and permanently.
[3]Because the faithless club will not rest
over the allocation of the faithful,
In order that the faithful do not put
their hands to evil.

[4]Do good, Yahweh, to the people who are good,
yes, to the people who are upright in their mind.
[5]But the people who bend their crooked ways,
may Yahweh make them go, the people who devise trouble;
well-being [be] on Yisra'el!

Psalm 126 Dreaming, crying, resounding

A song of the ascents.

[1]When Yahweh turned back Tsiyyon's fortunes,
we became like people dreaming.
[2]Then our mouth would fill with laughter,
our tongue with resounding.
Then they would say among the nations,
'Yahweh has shown greatness in acting with them.'
[3]Yahweh has shown greatness in acting with us;
we became people celebrating.

[4]Turn back our fortunes, Yahweh,
like canyons in the Negev.
[5]May people who sow with crying
reap with resounding.
[6]The person who goes, but goes crying,
carrying the seed bag –
As he comes, may he come with resounding,
carrying his sheaves.

Psalm 127 Insomnia

A song of the ascents. Shelomoh's.

[1]If Yahweh doesn't build a house,
in vain the builders have laboured on it.
If Yahweh doesn't keep a town,
in vain the one who keeps watch has been wakeful.
[2]It is in vain for you, being people early to get up,
people late to sit down,
People who eat bread of toil
– yes, he gives sleep to his beloved.

[3]There, sons are your domain from Yahweh;
the fruit of the womb is a reward.
[4]Like arrows in a strong man's hand
– so are the sons of youth.
[5]The blessings of the man
who has filled his quiver!
Of them he will not be shamed
when they speak with enemies in the gateway.

Psalm 128 Blessings and good things

A song of the ascents.

[1]The blessings of anyone who lives in awe of Yahweh,
who walks in his ways!
[2]Because you will eat the fruit of the palms of your hands,

your blessings and good things of yours.
[3]Your wife like a fruitful vine
in the inner rooms of your house,
Your children like the slips of olive trees
round your table.
[4]There, surely thus will he be blessed,
a man who lives in awe of Yahweh.
[5]May Yahweh bless you from Tsiyyon;
you can look at the good things of Yerushalaim,
All the days of your life,
[6]and look at your grandchildren;
well-being [be] on Yisra'el!

Psalm 129 Atrocities

A song of the ascents.

[1]People have attacked me much since my youth,
Yisra'el is please to say,
[2]People have attacked me much,
though not prevailed over me.
[3]Over my back ploughmen have ploughed;
they made long furrows.
[4]Yahweh is faithful;
he cut through the ropes of the faithless people.
[5]May they be shamed and may they turn backwards,
all the people who are hostile to Tsiyyon.
[6]May they become like the grass on roofs
that withers before someone has plucked it,
[7]With which a reaper has not filled his fist,
or a gatherer his arm,
[8]And passers-by have not said,
'Yahweh's blessing on you;
we bless you in Yahweh's name.'

Psalm 130 From the depths

A song of the ascents.

[1]From the depths I have called you, Yahweh:
[2]Lord, listen to my voice.
May your ears become attentive
to the sound of my prayers for grace.
[3]If you keep watch on wayward acts, Yah:
Lord, who can stand?
[4]Because with you there is pardon,
in order that you may be held in awe.
[5]I have hoped for Yahweh,
my entire being has hoped.
For his word I have waited,
[6]my entire being for the Lord,
More than people keeping watch for the morning,
people keeping watch for the morning.
[7]Yisra'el, wait for Yahweh,
because with Yahweh there is commitment.
With him the redemption will be great,
[8]when he himself redeems Yisra'el from all its wayward acts.

Psalm 131 No big ideas

A song of the ascents. David's.

[1]Yahweh, my mind has not been lofty,
my eyes have not looked high.
I haven't gone about with big ideas
or extraordinary deeds beyond me.

[2]If I haven't conformed
and quietened my entire being . . .
Like someone nursed with its mother,
so my entire being is nursed with me.
[3]Yisra'el, wait for Yahweh,
now and for evermore.

Psalm 132 If you build it, he will come

A song of the ascents.

[1]Yahweh, be mindful for David
of all his being humbled,
[2]In that he swore to Yahweh,
pledged to Ya'aqob's Champion,
[3]'If I come into my tent, my house,
if I climb into my bed, my couch,
[4]If I give sleep to my eyes,
slumber to my eyelids,
[5]Until I find the place belonging to Yahweh,
the dwelling belonging to Ya'aqob's Champion . . .'

[6]There, we heard of it at Ephrata,
we found it in the Ya'ar fields.
[7]Let's come to his dwelling,
let's bow low to his footstool.
[8]Rise, Yahweh, to your place, to settle down,
you and your powerful chest.
[9]Your priests put on faithfulness,
the people who are committed to you resound.
[10]For the sake of David your servant,
don't turn back the face of your anointed one.

[11]Yahweh swore to David in truthfulness;
he will not turn back from it:
'One from the fruit of your body
I will put on your throne.
[12]If your sons keep my pact,
my affirmations that I will teach them,
For all time their sons
also will sit on your throne.
[13]Because Yahweh chose Tsiyyon,
which he wanted as a seat for himself.
[14]For all time this is my place to settle down,
where I will sit, because I wanted it.
[15]Its supplies I will greatly bless;
its needy people I will fill with bread.
[16]Its priests I will clothe with deliverance,
its committed people will resound loudly.
[17]There I will make David's horn flourish;
I am setting up a lamp for my anointed one.
[18]Its enemies I will clothe in shame,
but on him his crown will sparkle.'

Psalm 133 Brothers living as one

A song of the ascents. David's.

[1]There, how good and how lovely
is brothers living as one,
[2]Like good oil on the head,
going down on to the beard,
Aharon's beard,
which goes down on the collar of his clothes,
[3]Like the dew of Hermon,
which goes down on the mountains of Tsiyyon.

Because there Yahweh ordered blessing,
life for evermore.

Psalm 134 How to end the day

A song of the ascents.

[1]There, bless Yahweh, all you servants of Yahweh,
you who stand in Yahweh's house at night.
[2]Raise your hands to the sacred place
and bless Yahweh.
[3]May Yahweh bless you from Tsiyyon
– the one who is maker of heavens and earth.

Psalm 135 Anything that Yahweh has wished, he has done

[1]Praise Yah!
Praise Yahweh's name;
praise, servants of Yahweh,
[2]You who stand in Yahweh's house,
in the courtyards of the house of our God.
[3]Praise Yah, because Yahweh is good;
make music for his name, because it's lovely.
[4]Because Yah chose Ya'aqob for himself,
Yisra'el as his personal treasure.

[5]Because I myself acknowledge that Yahweh is great;
our Lord above all gods.
[6]Anything that Yahweh has wished,
he has done in the heavens and on the earth,
In the seas and all the depths,
[7]making clouds rise from the end of the earth.
He has made flashes of lightning for the rain,
getting wind out from his storehouses,
[8]The one who struck down the firstborn of Misrayim,
both human beings and cattle.
[9]He sent signs and portents
in the middle of Misrayim
against Par'oh [Pharaoh] and against all his servants,
[10]The one who struck down many nations
and killed numerous kings,
[11]Sihon king of the Amorites,
Og king of Bashan,
And all the kingdoms of Kena'an,
[12]and gave their country as a domain,
a domain for Yisra'el his people.

[13]Yahweh, your name is permanent;
Yahweh, your commemoration is through generation after generation.
[14]Because Yahweh acts in judgement for his people
and gets relief in connection with his servants.

[15]The nations' images are silver and gold,
the making of human hands.
[16]They have a mouth but they don't speak,
they have eyes but they don't see.
[17]They have ears but they don't hear;
no, there's no breath in their mouths.
[18]Their makers will become like them,
anyone who relies on them.

[19]Household of Yisra'el, bless Yahweh;
household of Aharon, bless Yahweh.
[20]Household of Levi, bless Yahweh;
you who live in awe of Yahweh, bless Yahweh.
[21]Yahweh be blessed from Tsiyyon,

the one who dwells in Yerushalaim.
Praise Yah!

Psalm 136 His commitment is permanent

[1]Confess Yahweh, because he is good
(because his commitment is permanent).
[2]Confess the God of gods
(because his commitment is permanent).
[3]Confess the Lord of lords
(because his commitment is permanent).
[4]The one who did big, extraordinary things alone
(because his commitment is permanent),
[5]Who made the heavens with understanding
(because his commitment is permanent),
[6]Who spread the earth over the water
(because his commitment is permanent),
[7]Who made the big lights
(because his commitment is permanent),
[8]The sun to rule the day
(because his commitment is permanent),
[9]The moon and the stars to rule the night
(because his commitment is permanent),
[10]Who struck down Misrayim through their firstborn
(because his commitment is permanent),
[11]And got Yisra'el out from the middle of them
(because his commitment is permanent),
[12]With a strong hand and an extended arm
(because his commitment is permanent),
[13]The divider of the Reed Sea into two divisions
(because his commitment is permanent),
[14]Who let Yisra'el pass through the middle of it
(because his commitment is permanent),
[15]But shook Par'oh and his force into the Reed Sea
(because his commitment is permanent),
[16]The one who enabled his people to go through the wilderness
(because his commitment is permanent),
[17]The one who struck down great kings
(because his commitment is permanent),
[18]Who killed august kings
(because his commitment is permanent),
[19]Sihon king of the Amorites
(because his commitment is permanent),
[20]Og king of Bashan
(because his commitment is permanent),
[21]And gave their country as a domain
(because his commitment is permanent),
[22]A domain for Yisra'el his servant
(because his commitment is permanent),
[23]Who was mindful of us in our lowliness
(because his commitment is permanent),
[24]And tore us away from our adversaries
(because his commitment is permanent),
[25]Giver of food to all flesh
(because his commitment is permanent).
[26]Confess the God of the heavens
(because his commitment is permanent).

Psalm 137 Mindfulness, God's and ours

[1]By the rivers of Babel,
there we sat, yes, we cried
as we were mindful of Tsiyyon.
[2]On the poplars in the middle of it
we hung our guitars.

[3]Because there they asked,
our captors, for the words of a song,
The people who play about with us, for rejoicing:
'Sing us one of the Tsiyyon songs!'
[4]How can we sing Yahweh's song
on foreign soil?
[5]If I put you out of mind, Yerushalaim,
may my right hand put out of mind.
[6]May my tongue stick to my palate
if I am not mindful of you,
If I do not exalt Yerushalaim
above the pinnacle of my rejoicing.

[7]Yahweh, be mindful for the Edomites
of Yerushalaim's day,
The people who were saying, 'Strip it,
strip it, to its foundation.'
[8]Ms Babel, you who are to be destroyed:
the blessings of the person who makes good to you
for the thing that you dealt to us.
[9]The blessings of the person who grasps your babies
and dashes them on the cliff.

Psalm 138 How to be defiant in spirit

David's.

[1]I will confess you with all my heart,
in front of the gods I will make music for you.
[2]I will bow low to your sacred palace,
and confess your name for your commitment and for your truthfulness,
Because you have made great above everything
your name, your word.
[3]On the day I called, you answered me;
you make me defiant in my being, with vigour.
[4]All earth's kings will confess you, Yahweh,
because they will have heard the sayings of your mouth.
[5]They will sing of Yahweh's ways,
because Yahweh's splendour will be great.
[6]Because Yahweh is on high, but he sees the lowly;
lofty, he acknowledges from afar.
[7]If I walk in the middle of pressure you will give me life;
on account of my enemies' anger you will put out your hand.
Your right hand will deliver me;
[8]Yahweh will bring it to an end for me.
Yahweh, your commitment is permanent;
don't slacken your hold of the things your hands made.

Psalm 139 Openness

The leader's. David's. A composition.

[1]Yahweh, you've searched me out and got to know me:
[2]you yourself have got to know my sitting and my rising,
you've understood my intention, from far away.
[3]My walking and my reclining you've measured;
with all my ways you've become familiar.
[4]Because there's not an utterance on my tongue
– there, Yahweh, you've got to know it all.
[5]Behind and in front you've bound me,
and put the palm of your hand on me.
[6]Your knowledge is too extraordinary for me;
it's towered high, I can't prevail over it.

[7]Where could I go from your spirit,
where could I take flight from your face?

[8]If I were to go up to the heavens, you would be there;
if I were to make She'ol my bed – there you would be.
[9]Were I to take dawn's wings,
dwell on the far side of the sea,
[10]There, too, your hand could lead me away,
your right hand could grasp me.
[11]Were I to say, 'The darkness can certainly seize me,
light can be night round me',
[12]Darkness, too, would not be too dark for you,
and night would be light like day;
darkness and light are the same.

[13]Because you are the one who created my inner being,
when you wove me in my mother's womb.
[14]I will confess you, on account of the fact that I was set distinguished in an awe-inspiring way;
the things you made were extraordinary.
I myself acknowledge you fully;
[15]my frame was not concealed from you,
When I was made in secret,
when I was embroidered in earth's depths.
[16]Your eyes saw me as an embryo,
and on your document were written, all of them,
The days that were shaped,
when there was not one of them.
[17]So for me, how valuable were your intentions, God,
how numerous was the sum of them!
[18]If I could count them, they would be more than the sand;
when I've come to an end, I will still be with you.

[19]If you would only slay the faithless person, God,
and people of bloodshed would depart from me,
[20]People who speak of you in connection with a strategy,
your adversaries who have lifted you up for emptiness.
[21]I'm hostile to people who are hostile to you, Yahweh, am I not,
and I loathe people who rise up against you.
[22]With complete hostility I'm hostile to them;
they've become enemies for me.

[23]Search me out, God, and acknowledge my mind;
test me and acknowledge my concerns.
[24]See if there is an idolatrous way in me
and lead me in the ancient way.

Psalm 140 The shield

The leader's. A composition. David's.

[1]Pull me out, Yahweh, from the bad person,
preserve me from the individual of great violence,
[2]People who've thought up bad things in their mind,
who stir up battles every day.
[3]They've sharpened their tongue like a snake;
a spider's poison is under their lips. *(Rise)*
[4]Keep me from the hand of the faithless person, Yahweh,
preserve me from the individual of great violence,
People who've thought up how to trip my steps;
[5]majestic people have hidden a trap for me, and ropes.
They've spread a net by the side of the track,
they've set snares for me. *(Rise)*

[6]I've said to Yahweh, 'You are my God';
give ear, Yahweh, to the sound of my prayer for grace.
[7]Yahweh, my Lord, the [one with the] vigour that delivers me,
you've shielded my head on the day of weaponry.
[8]Yahweh, don't grant the wishes of the faithless person;
don't let his plan succeed so that they are exalted. *(Rise)*

[9]The head of the people who surround me
– may the oppression caused by their lips cover them.
[10]May burning coals tumble on them with fire;
may it make them fall into pits so that they don't get up.
[11]May the person with a [violent] tongue not be established in the country;
the violent person – may bad fortune hunt him into pens.
[12]I've come to acknowledge that Yahweh makes a judgement for the humble,
a ruling for the needy.
[13]Yes, the faithful will confess your name;
the upright will live in your presence.

Psalm 141 On keeping one's mouth shut

A composition. David's.

[1]Yahweh, when I call you, hurry to me,
give ear to my voice when I call to you.
[2]May my plea be established as incense before you,
the lifting of the palms of my hands as the evening offering.
[3]Set a watch at my mouth, Yahweh,
keep guard at the door of my lips.
[4]Don't let my mind turn away to something bad,
to have dealings in faithlessness
with people who devise trouble.
So I shall not feed on their delights;
[5]the faithful person may hit me with commitment and reprove me.
May choice oil not adorn my head,
because my plea is still against their bad ways.
[6]When their authorities have fallen at the sides of the cliff,
they will listen to the things I say, because they are lovely.

[7]Like someone cleaving and splitting the earth,
our bones have been scattered at the mouth of She'ol.
[8]Because my eyes are towards you, Yahweh my Lord,
with you I have taken shelter, don't expose my life.
[9]Keep me from the sides of the trap that they have laid for me,
and from the snares of people who devise trouble.
[10]May the faithless fall into their own nets all at once,
while I myself pass through.

Psalm 142 A prisoner's plea

An instruction. David's. When he was in the cave. A plea.

[1]With my voice I will cry out to Yahweh,
with my voice I will pray for grace to Yahweh.
[2]I will pour out my talk before him;
the pressure on me I will declare before him.
[3]When my spirit faints away within me,
you're the one who knows my trail.
On the way that I walk about,
they've hidden a trap for me.
[4]Look at my right hand and see
– there's no one who recognizes me.
Retreat has failed for me;
there's no one who enquires about my life.
[5]I've cried out to you, Yahweh;
I've said, 'You're my shelter,
my share in the land of the living.'
[6]Heed my resounding shout,
because I've been brought very low.
Rescue me from my pursuers,
because they stand too firm for me.
[7]Get me out of my prison,
to confess your name.
Round me faithful people will gather,

because you've dealt to me.

Psalm 143 God's faithfulness, not mine

A composition. David's.

[1]Yahweh, listen to my plea,
give ear to my prayer for grace, in your truthfulness,
answer me in your faithfulness.
[2]Don't come into the exercise of authority with your servant,
because no living person counts as faithful before you.
[3]Because my enemy has pursued my life,
crushed my existence to the earth,
Made me live in darkness,
like people long dead.
[4]My spirit has fainted away within me;
my mind is desolate inside me.
[5]I have been mindful of the days of old,
I've murmured about all you had done,
I would talk about the action of your hands.
[6]I've spread out my hands to you,
my entire being has been like dry earth in relation to you. *(Rise)*

[7]Be quick, answer me, Yahweh;
my spirit is finished.
Don't hide your face from me,
so that I shall be like the people who go down into the Cistern.
[8]Let me hear of your commitment in the morning,
because it's on you that I've relied.
Let me know the way that I should walk,
because it is to you that I've lifted up my soul.
[9]Rescue me from my enemies, Yahweh;
with you I've found cover.
[10]Teach me to do what's acceptable to you,
because you are my God.
May your good spirit lead me
on level ground.
[11]For the sake of your name, Yahweh, give me life;
in your faithfulness will you get me out of the pressure on me.
[12]In your commitment will you put an end to my enemies,
obliterate all the people who are attacking me,
because I'm your servant.

Psalm 144 The God who snatches away

David's.

[1]Yahweh, my crag, be blessed,
the one who trains my hands for encounter,
my fingers for battle,
[2]The one committed to me, my fastness,
my turret, the one who enables me to survive,
My shield, the one with whom I take shelter,
who subdues my people under me.

[3]Yahweh, what is a human person that you should acknowledge him,
a mere human being that you should think about him?
[4]A human person is like a breath,
his days like a passing shadow.
[5]Yahweh, spread your heavens and come down,
touch the mountains so that they smoke.
[6]Make lightning flash and scatter them,
send your arrows and rout them.
[7]Send your hands from on high,
snatch me away, rescue me,
From the great water,

from the hand of foreigners,
[8]Whose mouth has spoken emptiness,
and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood.

[9]God, I will sing
a new song for you,
on a ten-stringed mandolin I will make music for you.
[10]As the one who gives deliverance to kings,
who snatches away David his servant,
From the deadly sword [11]snatch me away,
rescue me from the hand of foreigners,
Whose mouth has spoken emptiness,
and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood.

[12]In that our sons are like saplings,
nourished in their youth,
Our daughters are like a corner pillar,
carved in the pattern of a palace,
[13]Our storehouses are full
of provisions of this kind and that kind,
Our flocks number thousands, myriads in our fields,
[14]our cattle are laden,
There is no breach and no going out
and no cry in our squares:
[15]The blessings of the people that has it like this,
the blessings of the people whose God is Yahweh!

Psalm 145 Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory

An act of praise. David's.

[1]I will exalt you, my God, King;
I will bless your name lastingly and permanently.
[2]Every day I will bless you;
I will praise your name lastingly and permanently.
[3]Yahweh is great and much to be praised;
of his greatness there is no searching out.
[4]One generation will extol your works to another generation,
and tell of your mighty acts.
[5]Of the glorious magnificence of your grandeur,
and your extraordinary deeds, I will talk.
[6]People will speak of the might of your awe-inspiring acts;
your greatness – I will recount it.
[7]They will pour forth commemoration of your great goodness,
and resound at your faithfulness.
[8]Yahweh is gracious and compassionate,
long-tempered and big in commitment.
[9]Yahweh is good to all;
his compassion is over all the things he made.
[10]All the things you made will confess you, Yahweh;
the people committed to you will bless you.
[11]They will talk of the splendour of your reign,
they will speak of your might,
[12]To get his mighty acts acknowledged by human beings,
the splendour and magnificence of his reign.
[13]Your reign is a reign over all ages,
your rule over generation after generation.

[14]Yahweh supports all who are falling,
and lifts upright all who are bent down.
[15]The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food at its time.
[16]You open your hand,
and fill every living thing with your acceptance.
[17]Yahweh is faithful in all his ways,
committed in all his actions.

[18]Yahweh is near to all who call him,
to all who call him in truth.
[19]He acts with acceptance to the people who live in awe of him;
he listens to their cry for help and delivers them.
[20]Yahweh keeps watch over all who are loyal to him,
but he devastates all the faithless.
[21]My mouth will speak Yahweh's praise;
all flesh will bless his sacred name,
lastingly and permanently.

Psalm 146 Don't rely on leaders

[1]Praise Yah! –
praise Yahweh, my entire being.
[2]I will praise Yahweh through my life,
I will make music for my God while I exist.
[3]Don't rely on leaders,
on a human being with whom there is no deliverance.
[4]His breath leaves, he goes back to his ground;
on that day, his deliberations have perished.
[5]The blessings of the one who has Ya'aqob's God as his help,
whose expectation is of Yahweh his God,
[6]Maker of heavens and earth,
the sea and all that is in them!
The one who keeps faith permanently,
[7]exercising authority for the oppressed,
Giving food to the hungry
– Yahweh frees captives.
[8]Yahweh opens the blind;
Yahweh lifts upright the people who are bent down.
Yahweh is loyal to the faithful;
[9]Yahweh keeps watch over the resident aliens.
He relieves orphan and widow,
but subverts the way of the faithless.
[10]Yahweh will reign permanently
– your God, Tsiyyon, for generation after generation;
praise Yah!

Psalm 147 Reasons for hope

[1]Praise Yah! –
because making music for our God is good,
because glorifying the one who is our praise is beautiful.
[2]Yahweh is the builder of Yerushalaim,
he gathers those of Yisra'el who were driven out.
[3]He's the one who heals the broken in heart,
and bandages their wounds.
[4]He calculates the number of the stars
and pronounces the names of them all.
[5]Our Lord is great and mighty in energy;
of his understanding there is no reckoning.
[6]Yahweh restores the humble,
brings down the faithless to the earth.

[7]Chant for Yahweh with confession,
make music for our God with the guitar.
[8]He's the one who covers the heavens with clouds,
provides rain for the earth,
makes the mountains grow grass.
[9]He gives their food to cattle,
to the offspring of the raven when they call.
[10]He doesn't delight in the strength of a horse;
he doesn't value the thighs of a person.
[11]Yahweh values people who live in awe of him,
people who put their expectation in his commitment.

[12]Yerushalaim, extol Yahweh,
praise your God, Tsiyyon,
[13]because he's made strong the bars of your gateways,
blessed your children within you.
[14]He gives your territory well-being,
fills you with the finest of wheat.
[15]He sends his utterance to the earth;
his word runs quickly.
[16]He gives snow like wool;
he scatters frost like ash.
[17]He throws his hail like bits of bread;
who can stand before his ice?
[18]He sends his word and melts them;
when he blows his breath, water flows.
[19]He tells his words to Ya'aqob,
his decrees and his rulings to Yisra'el.
[20]He has not done so for any nation;
his rulings – they don't know them;
praise Yah!

Psalm 148 Reasons for praise

[1]Praise Yah! –
praise Yahweh from the heavens,
praise him in the heights.
[2]Praise him, all his envoys,
praise him all his armies.
[3]Praise him, sun and moon,
praise him, all bright stars.
[4]Praise him, highest heavens,
and you water that is above the heavens.
[5]They should praise Yahweh's name,
because it was he who gave the order so they were created.
[6]He set them in place lastingly and permanently,
he gave a decree and it will not pass.

[7]Praise Yahweh from the earth,
sea monsters and all depths,
[8]Fire and hail, snow and fog,
hurricane doing his word,
[9]Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars,
[10]Creatures and all cattle,
things that move and winged birds,
[11]Kings of the earth and all peoples,
officials and all authorities in the earth,
[12]Young men and young women too,
old and young too.
[13]They should praise Yahweh's name,
because his name alone is on high.
His grandeur is over the earth and the heavens,
[14]but he has lifted up a horn for his people,
A reason for praise for all who are committed to him,
for the Yisra'elites, the people who come near him:
praise Yah!

Psalm 149 Dance and slaughter

[1]Praise Yah! –
sing for Yahweh a new song,
his praise in the congregation of the committed people.
[2]Yisra'el is to rejoice in its maker,
the children of Tsiyyon are to celebrate their King.
[3]They are to praise his name in dancing;
tambourine and guitar are to make music for him.

[4]Because Yahweh accepts his people;
he adorns the humble with deliverance.
[5]The committed people are to exult in their splendour,
they are to resound on their beds,
[6]Acclamations of God in their throat
and a two-edged sword in their hand,
[7]To execute redress on the nations,
reproofs on the peoples,
[8]To bind their kings with shackles,
their nobles with iron chains,
[9]To execute on them the ruling that is written
– it will be magnificence for all the people committed to him;
praise Yah!

Psalm 150 The praise of God, the eternal Creator, is finished and completed

[1]Praise Yah! –
praise God in his sacred place,
praise him in his strong firmament.
[2]Praise him in his acts of strength,
praise him in accordance with his immense greatness.
[3]Praise him with the blast of the horn,
praise him with mandolin and guitar.
[4]Praise him with tambourine and dancing;
praise him with strings and pipe.
[5]Praise him with cymbals that can be heard,
praise him with noisy cymbals.
[6]Every breath should praise Yah:
praise Yah!

Proverbs

The book called 'Proverbs' is indeed dominated by one-liners that express a truth, often vividly and concretely, but it is the middle third of the book (chapters 10—22) that is most characterized by these sayings. The first third (chapters 1—9) is a collection of something more like sermonettes that may occupy half a chapter. The last third is a mixture of the two.

They all have in common that they are teaching about life that bases itself on how life itself works out in practice – or at least on how it's supposed to work out. Proverbs doesn't appeal to the exodus or the covenant and it doesn't refer to the Torah or to the Prophets. It does presuppose that the God of Israel is the real God (it uses the name Yahweh) and it presupposes that life must always be lived within the framework of faithfulness and uprightness. But while it takes that framework for granted, it then works empirically. It fits with this feature of Proverbs that it is a part of the Old Testament that has close parallels with works we know from other Middle Eastern cultures (the 'Thirty Sayings' in chapters 22—24 parallel an Egyptian set of Thirty Sayings). Proverbs thus recognizes that God has not left the world as a whole without any awareness of his ways, of right and wrong, and of how life works. Such awarenesses are hardwired into humanity.

The proverbs are 'Solomon's', though the implication is not that he wrote them. Indeed, you could almost say that nobody 'writes' proverbs – at least the one-liners. They just happen. Solomon is the patron of the worldly wisdom that appears in Proverbs (and in Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs) as David is the patron of psalmody. If we wonder about the background of the material in Proverbs, then three contexts are worth bearing in mind.

First, much of the material presents itself as the teaching that parents offer their children. While this image may have become a figure of speech, the family is indeed the natural first context in which people are encouraged to grow up from naïvety to smartness. Such teaching in Proverbs would ultimately go back to way before Solomon's day. One can imagine its teaching in the context of the life of the clan in Genesis. And the story of Joseph illustrates a number of the themes of Proverbs.

Second, scattered through the book are a number of observations about kings and how to relate to them, and that material suggests another context in which the material could naturally be used: the training of young men and women for the administration. Beyond the explicit references to the king there are many other references to wise speech, the dynamics of decision-making, and self-control that would be important for people involved in the administration.

Third, the opening part of the book also includes some reflection on the nature of creation, of God's involvement in creation and of the way creation reflects something of God. That reflection makes one think in terms of the syllabus for theological education in Israel. By New Testament times the 'scribes' were certainly people who had been involved in theological education. We don't know how it developed in Israel, but it wouldn't be surprising if Proverbs was a set text in theological schools when they came into being.

The opening chapters speak of Smartness as a woman who is its embodiment, and the last verses of the book comprise a description of the resourceful woman. It occupies 22 lines, one line for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet, so that it describes the resourceful woman from A to Z. The poem shows how extensive were the opportunities for a woman in Israel – in this case, a woman who is the mistress of a household, but she is active outside the house and not just inside. Alongside the metaphor of Ms Smartness and the picture of the resourceful woman is the metaphor of Ms Stupidity and the picture of the woman who can lead a man astray. In the Torah, the point would be that sexual dallying and adultery are wrong. In Proverbs, the point is that they are also really stupid.

Knowledge, ethics and spirituality

1 Aphorisms of Shelomoh [Solomon] ben David king of Yisra'el:

[2]So as to know smartness and discipline,
to understand words that express understanding,
[3]To get discipline so as to act with insight,
faithfulness, the exercise of authority, and uprightness,
[4]To give shrewdness to the naïve,
knowledge and strategy to the youth,
[5]So that the smart person may listen and increase in his grasp,
the understanding may acquire skill,
[6]So as to understand an aphorism and a parable,
the words of the smart and their conundrums:
[7]The first principle of knowledge is awe for Yahweh;
dense people despise smartness and discipline.

[8]Listen to your father's discipline, son,
don't leave your mother's instruction,
[9]Because they're a graceful garland for your head,
a chain for your neck.
[10]Son, if wrongdoers entice you, don't be willing,
[11]if they say 'Go with us.
Let's lie in wait for blood,
let's ambush someone free of guilt, for nothing.
[12]Let's swallow them alive, like She'ol –

whole, like people going down to the Cistern.
[13]We'll find every sort of valuable riches,
we'll fill our houses with spoil.
[14]Let your lot fall among us;
there'll be one purse for us all.'
[15]Son, don't go on the way with them;
keep your foot from their trail.
[16]Because their feet run to bad dealing,
they hurry to shed blood.
[17]Because it's for nothing that a net is spread
before the eyes of any owner of wings.
[18]But those people lie in wait for their own blood,
they ambush their own lives.
[19]Such are the paths of everyone who gets wrongful gain;
it takes the life of its owners.

The naïve, the arrogant, the dimwit

[20]Smartness resounds in the open streets,
in the squares she gives her voice.
[21]At the head of the noisy places,
at the entrances of the gateways,
in the town she says her words.

[22]'How long will you naïve people be loyal to naïvety?
– arrogant people desire arrogance for themselves.
Dimwits are hostile to knowledge;
[23]do turn back at my rebuke.
Here, I will pour out my spirit to you,
I will let you know my words.
[24]Since I called but you refused me,
I stretched out my hand but there was no one heeding,
[25]You've spurned all my counsel,
and you weren't willing for my rebuke,
[26]I myself too will make fun of your disaster;
I shall ridicule when what you dread comes,
[27]When what you dread comes like devastation,
and your calamity arrives like a tempest,
when trouble and disaster come upon you.
[28]Then they'll call me but I won't answer,
they'll look urgently for me but they won't find me,
[29]Because of the fact that they were hostile to acknowledgement,
didn't choose awe for Yahweh.
[30]They weren't willing for my counsel,
they spurned every rebuke of mine.
[31]They'll eat the fruit of their way,
they'll have their fill of their own counsels.
[32]Because the turning back of the naïve will kill them,
and the ease of dimwits will obliterate them.
[33]But the person who listens to me will dwell in confidence,
safe from the dread of bad fortune.'

The household that goes down to death

2 Son, if you take the things I say,
hide up my orders with you,
[2]Getting your ear to heed smartness,
inclining your mind to understanding,
[3]If you indeed call to understanding,
give your voice to understanding,
[4]If you seek it like silver,
search for it like treasure,
[5]Then you'll understand awe for Yahweh,
you'll find acknowledgement of God.
[6]Because Yahweh gives smartness;

from his mouth come acknowledgement and understanding.
[7]He hides up adeptness for the upright,
being a shield for people who walk with integrity,
[8]Preserving the paths of authority,
he keeps watch on the way of people committed to him.
[9]Then you'll understand faithfulness and authority,
and uprightness, every good track.
[10]Because smartness will come into your mind,
acknowledgement be lovely to your entire being.
[11]Strategy will keep watch over you,
understanding will preserve you,
[12]Rescuing you from the way of the bad person,
from the one speaking things that are crooked,
[13]People who abandon upright paths,
going in the ways of darkness,
[14]Who rejoice to deal badly,
celebrate the crooked actions of the bad person,
[15]People whose paths are crooked,
who are deviant in their tracks;
[16]Rescuing you from the other woman,
from the alien woman who is slippery in the things she says,
[17]Who abandons the partner of her youth,
puts out of mind her pact with God.
[18]Because her household goes down to death,
her tracks to the ghosts.
[19]Anyone who comes to her doesn't come back;
he doesn't reach the paths of life;
[20]In order that you may walk in the way of good people,
keep the paths of the faithful.
[21]Because the upright will dwell in the country,
the people of integrity will be left in it.
[22]But the faithless will be cut off from the country,
the people who break faith will be ripped up from it.

Commitment, truthfulness, trust

3 Son, don't put my instruction out of mind;
your mind is to observe my orders,
[2]Because length of days and years of life
and well-being is what they will add to you.
[3]Commitment and truthfulness must not abandon you;
bind them on your neck, write them on the tablet of your mind.
[4]Thus find grace and good insight,
in the eyes of God and of human beings.
[5]Rely on Yahweh with all your mind,
don't lean on your own understanding.
[6]In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he himself will keep your paths straight.
[7]Don't become smart in your own eyes;
live in awe of Yahweh and depart from what's bad.
[8]It will be health for your body,
a tonic for your bones.
[9]Honour Yahweh with your riches,
with the first of all your yield.
[10]Your barns will fill with plenty,
your vats will overflow with new wine.
[11]Don't reject Yahweh's discipline, son,
don't be dismayed at his reproof.
[12]Because the one Yahweh is loyal to, he reproves,
just like a father the son he accepts.

The tree of life

[13]The blessings of the person who finds smartness,
the person who obtains understanding!

[14]Because her profit is better than the profit of silver,
her yield than pale gold.
[15]She's more valuable than rubies;
nothing you delight in equals her.
[16]Length of days is in her right hand;
in her left hand wealth and splendour.
[17]Her ways are lovely ones;
all her trails are well-being.
[18]She's a tree of life to people who take strong hold of her;
one who gets hold of her is blessed.
[19]It was by smartness that Yahweh founded the earth;
he established the heavens by understanding.
[20]By his knowledge the deeps split,
and the skies would drop dew.

[21]Son, they must not deviate from your eyes;
preserve adeptness and strategy.
[22]They will be life for your whole person,
and grace for your neck.
[23]Then you'll go your way with confidence,
and you won't hit your foot.
[24]If you lie down, you won't be fearful;
you'll lie down and your sleep will be pleasant.
[25]You won't be afraid of a sudden terror
or of the devastation of the faithless when it comes,
[26]Because Yahweh will be your assurance,
and will keep your foot from being caught.

[27]Don't withhold good from the one to whom it's due
when it's in your hand to act.
[28]Don't say to your neighbour, 'Go, and come back,
I'll give it tomorrow', when it's with you.
[29]Don't devise something bad against your neighbour,
when he's living with a feeling of security with you.
[30]Don't argue with someone for nothing,
if he hasn't dealt something bad you.
[31]Don't be jealous of a violent individual,
and don't choose any of his ways.
[32]Because a deviant person is offensive to Yahweh;
his confidences are with upright people.
[33]Yahweh's curse is on the household of the faithless person,
but he blesses the home of faithful people.
[34]If he himself behaves arrogantly to the arrogant,
to the humble he gives grace.
[35]Smart people will have splendour as their domain,
but dimwits take up slighting.

On discipline

4 Listen to a father's discipline, sons, heed, so as to acknowledge understanding.
[2]Because I give you a good grasp;
don't abandon my instruction.
[3]Because I was a son to my father,
tender and the only one before my mother.
[4]He instructed me and said to me,
'Your mind is to take hold of my words;
keep my orders and you'll live.'

[5]Acquire smartness, acquire understanding;
don't put it out of mind and don't turn away from the sayings of my mouth.
[6]Don't abandon her and she'll keep you;
be loyal to her and she'll protect you.
[7]The first principle of smartness is, acquire smartness,
and among all the things you acquire, acquire understanding.

[8]Exalt her and she'll elevate you;
she'll honour you when you embrace her.
[9]She'll give your head a graceful garland,
she'll present you with a glorious diadem.
[10]Listen, son, and take my sayings,
and the years of your life will be many.
[11]I instruct you in the way of smartness,
I direct you in upright tracks.
[12]As you go, your step will not be in straits;
if you run, you won't collapse.
[13]Take a strong hold of discipline, don't slacken hold,
preserve it, because it's your life.
[14]Don't come on to the path of faithless people,
don't walk in the way of people who deal badly.
[15]Avoid it, don't pass through it;
turn from it and pass by.
[16]Because they won't sleep if they don't act badly;
they're robbed of their sleep if they don't make someone collapse.
[17]Because they eat bread that comes from faithlessness
and drink wine that comes from violent acts.
[18]But the path of the faithful is like dawn light,
getting more light until the establishing of the day.
[19]The way of faithless people is very darkness;
they don't acknowledge how they will collapse.

On resisting temptation

[20]Son, heed my words,
bend your ear to the things I say.
[21]They must not deviate from your eyes;
keep them within your mind.
[22]Because they are life to the people who find them,
health for one's whole body.
[23]Above everything that you keep watch over, preserve your mind,
because from it things go out into life.
[24]Keep away from you crookedness of mouth;
put deviousness of lips far away.
[25]Your eyes must turn forward,
your eyelids be straight ahead of you.
[26]Weigh the track for your foot;
all your ways must be firm.
[27]Don't turn right or left;
keep your foot away from evil.

5 Heed my smartness, son,
bend your ear to my understanding,
[2]So as to keep strategy,
and so that your lips may protect knowledge.
[3]Because the lips of an alien woman drip honey,
her mouth is smoother than oil.
[4]But her end is as bitter as gall,
sharp as a two-edged sword.
[5]Her feet go down to death,
her steps take hold of She'ol.
[6]So that she doesn't weigh the path to life,
her tracks wander, though she doesn't acknowledge it.
[7]So now, sons, listen to me,
and don't depart from the sayings of my mouth.
[8]Keep your way far from her,
don't go near the entrance to her house,
[9]So that you don't give your wealth to other people,
your years to someone cruel,
[10]So that strangers don't eat their fill of your energy,
and [the fruit of] your pains are in the house of a foreigner.

[11]You'll groan at your end,
when your flesh and body are finished.
[12]You'll say, 'How I was hostile to discipline,
and my mind spurned rebuke.
[13]I didn't listen to my instructors' voice,
I did not bend my ear to my teachers.
[14]I was soon in every kind of bad situation
in the middle of the assembled congregation.'

Crazy for love

[15]Drink water from your cistern,
running water from within your well.
[16]Should your fountains gush outside,
your streams of water in the squares?
[17]They should be for you alone,
so that there's none for strangers with you.
[18]May your spring be blessed,
may you rejoice in the wife of your youth,
[19]She's a doe to love,
a graceful deer.
Her breasts should drench you all the time;
be crazy on her love continually.
[20]Why be crazy on a stranger, son,
and embrace the arms of a foreigner?
[21]Because an individual's ways are in front of Yahweh's eyes;
he weighs all his tracks.
[22]His wayward acts capture the faithless person;
he gets taken hold of by the ropes of his wrongdoing.
[23]That person dies for lack of discipline;
he's crazy on the abundance of his denseness.

6 Son, if you've given a guarantee for your neighbour,
clapped the palms of your hands for a stranger,
[2]Trapped yourself by the sayings of your mouth,
caught yourself by the sayings of your mouth:
[3]Do this then,
son, and rescue yourself.
When you've come into the palm of your neighbour's hand,
go, lower yourself, press your neighbour.
[4]Don't give sleep to your eyes
or slumber to your eyelids.
[5]Rescue yourself like a gazelle from the hand,
like a bird from the hand, of a hunter.

[6]Go to the ant, you sloth,
look at its ways and get smart.
[7]One that has no commander,
overseer, or ruler,
[8]Prepares its bread in summer,
gathers its food at harvest.
[9]How long will you lie down, you sloth,
when will you get up from your sleep?
[10]A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to lie down,
[11]And your destitution will come like someone walking about,
your want like someone with a shield.

[12]Someone who is a scoundrel, an evil individual,
going with a crooked mouth,
[13]Winking his eyes, speaking with his feet,
pointing with his fingers,
[14]Crooked actions in his mind, devising something bad;
all the time he lets loose disputes.
[15]Therefore suddenly his disaster will come on him,

in an instant he'll break, with no healing.

Jealousy and wrath

[16]These are six things Yahweh is hostile to,
seven offensive to his entire being:
[17]Haughty eyes, a false tongue,
and hands shedding the blood of someone free of guilt,
[18]A mind devising troublesome intentions,
feet hurrying to run to something bad,
[19]Someone who breathes out lies as a false witness,
and someone who lets loose disputes between brothers.

[20]Son, observe your father's order,
don't leave your mother's instruction.
[21]Fasten them into your mind continually,
bind them on to your neck.
[22]When you're going about, it will lead you,
when you lie down it will keep watch over you,
when you wake up, it will talk to you.
[23]Because an order is a lamp and instruction is a light,
and the rebuke that disciplines is a way to life,
[24]To keep you from the woman who is bad,
from the smoothness of the tongue of an alien woman.
[25]Don't desire her beauty in your heart;
she must not take you with her eyelids.
[26]Because for a woman who's a whore,
[the cost is] as much as a loaf of bread.
But a man's wife,
she'll capture your dear life.
[27]Can someone scoop up fire into the fold of his coat,
and his clothes will not burn?
[28]If someone walks about on coals,
will his feet not burn?
[29]So it is with one who has sex with his neighbour's wife;
no one who touches her will go free.
[30]People don't despise a thief when he steals
to fill his appetite, when he's hungry.
[31]But if he's found out, he'll make good sevenfold;
he'll give all the riches of his household.
[32]One who commits adultery with a woman is lacking in sense;
one who does it is devastating himself.
[33]He'll find injury and slighting;
his reviling will not wipe away.
[34]Because jealousy means a man's wrath;
he won't spare on the day of redress.
[35]He won't show regard for any compensation;
he won't agree, even when you offer a big bribe.

Let me tell you a story

7 Son, keep my words,
store up my orders with you.
[2]Keep my orders and live,
and my instruction as the apple of your eye.
[3]Fasten them on your fingers,
write them on the tablet of your mind.
[4]Say to smartness, 'You're my sister',
and call understanding 'Friend',
[5]To keep you from the alien woman,
the foreign woman who is smooth in the things she says.

[6]Because through the window of my house,
by way of my lattice, I looked out,
[7]And I saw among the naïve, I considered among the young men,

a youth lacking in sense.
[8]He was passing along the street by her corner,
he was walking the way to her house,
[9]At dusk, in the evening of the day,
at the approach of night and darkness.
[10]There, a woman to meet him,
dressed as a whore, restrained in heart.
[11]She's noisy and defiant;
her feet don't stay in her house.
[12]Now in the street, now in the squares,
and by every corner, she lies in wait.
[13]She takes strong hold of him and kisses him,
makes her face forceful and says to him,
[14]'Though well-being sacrifices were incumbent on me,
today I've made good my pledges.
[15]Therefore I've come out to meet you,
to look urgently for your face, and I've found you.
[16]I've spread my couch with coverlets,
coloured Egyptian linens.
[17]I've perfumed my bed,
with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon.
[18]Come on, let's drench ourselves in love until morning,
let's exult in lovemaking.
[19]Because the man isn't here in his house,
he's gone on a journey a long way.
[20]He's taken a bag of silver in his hand;
he'll come home at the middle of the month.'

The story has a solemn end

[21]She's turned him away with the abundance of her grasp of things,
with the smoothness of her lips she drives him.
[22]All at once he's going after her,
like an ox that comes to the slaughter,
Like a dense person bounding into constraint,
[23]until an arrow pierces his liver,
Like a bird rushing into a trap,
when it doesn't know it will be at the cost of its life.

[24]So now listen to me, sons,
heed the sayings of my mouth.
[25]Your mind isn't to turn into her ways;
don't wander into her trails.
[26]Because she's made many fall, run through;
numerous are all the ones killed by her.
[27]Her house is a major road to She'ol,
going down to death's rooms.

8 Smartness calls, doesn't she; understanding gives her voice.
[2]At the highest point along the trail,
at the crossroads, she takes her stand.
[3]At the side of the gateways at the township entrance,
at the way in to the entrances, she resounds.
[4]'People, I call to you,
my voice is to humankind.
[5]Understand shrewdness, you naïve;
understand sense, you dimwits.
[6]Listen, because I speak honourable things;
the opening of my lips, upright things.
[7]Because my palate murmurs truth;
faithlessness is offensive to my lips.
[8]All the sayings of my mouth are characterized by faithfulness;
there's nothing crooked or twisted in them.
[9]All of them are straight to someone of understanding,

upright to people who have found knowledge.
[10]Take my discipline and not silver,
knowledge more than choice pale gold.
[11]Because smartness is better than rubies,
and no delights can compare with her.

Let me tell you my story

[12]I, smartness, dwell with shrewdness;
I find knowledge of strategies.
[13]Awe for God
is hostility to what is bad.
Majesty and majesticness and the bad way,
and a crooked mouth, I am hostile to.
[14]Mine are counsel and adeptness;
I am understanding, I have strength.
[15]By me kings reign
and rulers decree what is faithful;
[16]By me officials govern,
leaders, all who exercise authority faithfully.
[17]I am loyal to people who are loyal to me;
people who look urgently for me find me.
[18]Wealth and splendour are with me,
enduring riches and faithfulness.
[19]My fruit is better than pale gold, even than fine gold,
my yield than choice silver.
[20]I walk about in the way of faithfulness,
among the trails of authority,
[21]Giving a domain to people who are loyal with substance,
and I fill their treasuries.

[22]Yahweh acquired me at the beginning of his way,
before his actions of old.
[23]Long ago I was formed,
at the beginning, at earth's origins.
[24]When there were no deeps I was birthed,
when there were no springs heavy with water.
[25]Before the mountains were settled,
before the hills I was birthed,
[26]While he had not yet made the earth and fields,
and the first of the world's lumps of earth.
[27]When he established the heavens, I was there,
when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep,
[28]When he made the skies above firm,
when the deep's fountains were vigorous,
[29]When he set its limit for the sea,
so that its water might not transgress his bidding.
When he marked out earth's foundations,
[30]I was a child by his side.
I was full of pleasure day by day,
having fun before him all the time,
[31]Having fun in his world, in his earth,
and full of pleasure in humanity.

[32]So now, sons, listen to me:
the blessings of people who keep my ways!
[33]Listen to discipline and become smart, don't put it out of mind;
[34]the blessings of the person who listens to me,
Seeking my gateways keenly day by day,
keeping watch at the posts of my entrances!
[35]Because one who finds me finds life,
and obtains acceptance from Yahweh.
[36]But one who wrongs me does violence to his life;
all who are hostile to me are loyal to death.'

The two voices

9 Smartness has built her house; she's hewn her seven pillars.
[2]She's slaughtered her animals, mixed her wine,
indeed set her table.
[3]She's sent her girls so she can call,
on the township's high elevations,
[4]'Whoever is naïve should turn aside here';
one who is lacking in sense, she says to him,
[5]'Come, eat my bread,
drink of the wine I've mixed.
[6]Abandon naïvety and live,
walk in the way of understanding.'

[7]One who disciplines an arrogant person gets slighting for himself;
one who reproves someone faithless, a hurt for himself.
[8]Don't reprove an arrogant person or he'll be hostile to you;
reprove someone smart and he'll be loyal to you.
[9]Give something to someone smart and he'll get yet smarter;
make something known to a faithful person and he'll increase in his grasp.
[10]Awe for Yahweh is the beginning of smartness;
understanding lies in acknowledgement of the Sacred One.
[11]Because through me your days will be many
and the years of your life will increase.
[12]If you're smart, you're smart for your benefit;
if you're arrogant, you'll carry it alone.

[13]The Dimwit Woman is noisy;
naïvety, and she doesn't acknowledge anything.
[14]She sits at the entrance of her house,
on a seat at the township's heights,
[15]Calling to passers-by, people making their paths straight:
[16]'Whoever is naïve should turn aside here.'
The person who is lacking in sense, she says to him,
[17]'Stolen water is sweet, a secret meal is lovely.'
[18]He doesn't acknowledge that the ghosts are there;
the people she calls are in the depths of She'ol.

The mouth of the faithful is fruitful

10 Shelomoh's aphorisms.
A smart son rejoices a father,
but a dimwit son is a mother's sorrow.
[2]Treasures that come from faithlessness don't profit,
but faithfulness rescues from death.
[3]Yahweh doesn't let the faithful person go hungry,
but he thwarts the malice of faithless people.
[4]A lazy fist makes destitute,
but the hand of determined people makes wealthy.
[5]One who gathers in summer is an insightful son;
one who sleeps in harvest is a disgraceful son.
[6]There are blessings on the head of the faithful person,
but the mouth of faithless people conceals violence.
[7]The commemoration of the faithful person becomes a blessing,
but the name of faithless people rots.
[8]One who is smart of mind accepts orders,
but one dense of lips comes to ruin.
[9]One who walks in integrity walks in confidence,
but one who makes his ways crooked gets known.
[10]One who winks an eye gives hurt,
and one dense of lips comes to ruin.
[11]The mouth of a faithful person is a fountain of life,
but the mouth of faithless people conceals violence.

[12]Hostility stirs up disputes,
but loyalty covers over all acts of rebellion.
[13]Smartness is found on the lips of the person of understanding,
but there's a club on the back of one who is lacking in sense.
[14]Smart people store up knowledge,
but the mouth of a dense person is ruin drawing near.
[15]The riches of the wealthy person are his strong township;
their destitution is the ruin of the poor.
[16]The earnings of the faithful person make for life;
the yield of the faithless person makes for wrongdoing.

The dimwit's real fun

[17]One who keeps correction is on the path to life,
one who abandons reproof goes astray.
[18]Someone who conceals hostility with false lips,
and the one who issues charges, he's a dimwit.
[19]Where there's an abundance of words, rebellion doesn't leave off,
but one who holds back his lips is insightful.
[20]The tongue of a faithful person is choice silver;
the mind of faithless people is worth little.
[21]The lips of a faithful person pasture many,
but dense people die for lack of sense.
[22]Yahweh's blessing – it makes wealthy,
and painful toil doesn't add to it.
[23]Real fun for a dimwit is implementing a deliberate wickedness,
but for someone of understanding, it's smartness.
[24]The dread of a faithless person – it comes to him,
but the longing of faithful people is granted.
[25]When a tempest passes, the faithless person isn't there,
but the faithful person is a lasting foundation.
[26]Like vinegar to the teeth, like smoke to the eyes,
so is the lazy person to the people who sent him.
[27]Awe for Yahweh prolongs days,
but the years of the faithless shorten.
[28]The waiting of faithful people will be rejoicing,
but the hope of faithless people will perish.
[29]Yahweh is a stronghold for someone of integrity in his way,
but the ruin of people who devise trouble.
[30]The faithful person will never slip,
but the faithless will not dwell in the country.
[31]The mouth of the faithful person is fruitful with smartness,
but the crooked tongue will be cut off.
[32]The lips of the faithful person know what finds acceptance,
but the mouth of the faithless, things that are crooked.

On lying scales

11 Lying scales are an offence to Yahweh, and a perfect weight is what he accepts.

[2]Assertiveness comes, and slighting comes,
but with modest people there is smartness.
[3]The integrity of the upright guides them,
but the deviousness of people who break faith destroys them.
[4]Riches don't avail on the day of an outburst [of wrath],
but faithfulness rescues from death.
[5]The faithfulness of a man of integrity makes his way straight,
but the faithless person falls by his faithlessness.
[6]The faithfulness of the upright rescues them,
but people who break faith are captured through malice.
[7]At the death of a faithless person hope perishes,
and waiting for riches perishes.
[8]The faithful person pulls out from pressure,
and the faithless person comes in in place of him.
[9]With the mouth the impious person devastates his neighbour,

but through the knowledge of the faithful, people pull out [from trouble].
[10]When things are good for the faithful, the township exults;
when the faithless perish, there is resounding.
[11]By the blessing of the upright a township rises up,
but by the mouth of the faithless it's torn down.
[12]One who despises his neighbour lacks sense,
and a person of understanding keeps quiet.
[13]Someone who goes about as a slanderer reveals a confidence,
but someone trustworthy of spirit conceals a thing.
[14]When there's no steering, a people falls,
but deliverance comes with an abundance of counsellors.
[15]A bad person will do badly when he stands surety for a stranger,
but someone hostile to people clapping hands will be secure.

The gold ring in a pig's nose

[16]A woman of grace takes hold of splendour,
and violent men take hold of wealth.
[17]A person of commitment deals to himself;
someone cruel troubles his own self.
[18]One who is faithless makes a false profit,
but someone who sows faithfulness, a trustworthy wage.
[19]One established in faithfulness goes to life,
but one who pursues what is bad, to his death.
[20]The crooked in mind are an offence to Yahweh,
but people of integrity in their way are the ones he accepts.
[21]Hand to hand, the bad person will not go free of guilt,
but the offspring of the faithful will escape.
[22]A gold ring in a pig's nose
is a beautiful woman turning aside from discretion.
[23]The longing of the faithful is only good;
the hope of the faithless is for an outburst [of wrath].
[24]There is one who scatters and gets still more,
and one who holds back beyond what is upright, only to be in want.
[25]A person of blessing will be enriched,
and someone who drenches – he'll also be drenched.
[26]One who withholds grain – the people will curse him,
but blessing will be on the head of one who sells.
[27]Someone who urgently looks for what is good seeks acceptance,
but the one who looks for what is bad, it comes on him.
[28]One who relies on his wealth – he falls,
but the faithful flourish like foliage.
[29]Someone who troubles his household gets wind as his domain,
and someone dense is a servant to one who is smart of mind.
[30]The fruit of a faithful person is a tree of life,
but a smart person takes lives.
[31]If someone who is faithful on earth is made good,
how much more the faithless person and the wrongdoer.

The one who knows his animal's appetite

12 One who befriends correction befriends knowledge,
but one who is hostile to reproof is stupid.
[2]One who is good obtains acceptance from Yahweh,
but he regards a man of strategies as faithless.
[3]A person cannot be established through faithlessness,
but the root of the faithful will not slip.
[4]A resourceful woman is her husband's crown,
but a shameful one is like decay in his bones.
[5]The intentions of the faithful are the [proper] exercise of authority;
the steering of the faithless is deceit.
[6]The words of the faithless are a deadly ambush,
but the mouth of the upright rescues them.
[7]Overturn the faithless and they're not there,
but the household of the faithful stands.

[8]On the basis of his insight an individual is praised,
but one who's crooked in mind comes to contempt.
[9]Better one who is slighted but is his own servant
than one who looks honourable but lacks bread.
[10]A faithful person knows his animal's appetite,
but the compassion of the faithless is cruel.
[11]One who serves his land will have his fill of bread,
but one who pursues empty things lacks sense.
[12]The faithless person desires what is a trap for bad people,
but the root of the faithful gives.
[13]In the rebellion of lips is a snare for a bad person,
but a faithful person gets out of pressure.
[14]From the fruit of an individual's mouth he has his fill of good things,
and the dealing of someone's hands comes back to him.

Silence, words and smartness

[15]The way of a dense person is upright in his eyes,
but the smart person listens to counsel.
[16]A dense person – his vexation makes itself known at the time,
but a shrewd person conceals a slighting.
[17]Someone who testifies truthfully tells things with faithfulness,
but a false witness with deceit.
[18]There is one who rants like sword-thrusts,
but the tongue of smart people is a healing.
[19]A truthful lip is established permanently,
but a false tongue lasts for the blink of an eye.
[20]Deceit is in the mind of people who devise something bad,
but for people who counsel well-being, there is rejoicing.
[21]No trouble befalls the faithful person,
but the faithless are full of bad fortune.
[22]False lips are an offence to Yahweh;
people who act truthfully are the ones he accepts.
[23]A shrewd person conceals knowledge,
but the mind of dimwits calls out denseness.
[24]The hand of determined people rules,
but [someone characterized by] laziness will belong to a workforce.
[25]Anxiety in someone's mind weighs it down,
but a good word makes it rejoice.
[26]A faithful person shows his neighbour the path,
but the way of the faithless leads them astray.
[27]Laziness will not roast game,
but the riches of a person are valuable – determined.
[28]On the path of faithfulness there is life,
and on the way of its trail, no death.

Hope deferred sickens the heart

13 A smart son [listens] to a father's discipline,
but someone arrogant doesn't listen to a reprimand.
[2]From the fruit of his mouth a person eats what is good,
but the appetite of the people who break faith is for violence.
[3]One who preserves his mouth preserves his life,
but one who opens his lips wide – ruin is his.
[4]The lazy person – his appetite desires, but there is nothing;
the appetite of the determined is enriched.
[5]A faithful person is hostile to a lying word,
but a faithless person stinks and comes to confounding.
[6]Faithfulness preserves [the person of] integrity in the way,
but faithlessness overturns a wrong[doer].
[7]There is one who acts wealthy but there's nothing,
one who acts destitute but there's much riches.
[8]The ransom for someone's life is his wealth,
but one who is destitute doesn't listen to a reprimand.

[9]The light of the faithful rejoices,
but the lamp of the faithless goes out.
[10]Only by means of assertiveness does someone produce strife;
smartness is with people who take counsel.
[11]Riches gained from emptiness diminish,
but someone who gathers by hand makes it grow.
[12]Hope deferred sickens the heart,
but longing that comes about is a tree of life.

The company you keep

[13]One who despises a word, it will be ruinous for him,
but one who lives in awe of an order, he'll be made good.
[14]The instruction of a smart person is a fountain of life,
for departing from deadly snares.
[15]Good insight gives grace,
but the way of people who break faith is strong.
[16]Every shrewd person acts with knowledge,
but a dimwit spreads denseness.
[17]A faithless envoy falls into bad fortune,
but a trustworthy emissary – healing.
[18]Destitution and slighting – one who rejects discipline,
but one who keeps watch on correction is honoured.
[19]Longing that comes about is pleasant to the appetite,
but departing from bad ways is an offence to the dimwit.
[20]One who walks with smart people gets smart,
but the friend of dimwits does badly.
[21]Bad fortune pursues wrongdoers,
but good fortune makes good to the faithful.
[22]A good man gives a domain to grandchildren,
but the resources of the wrongdoer are stored up for the faithful person.
[23]The fallow ground of the destitute – abundance of food,
but it's swept away for want of the exercise of authority.
[24]Someone who holds back his club is hostile to his son,
but one who loves him gets him up early with discipline.
[25]The faithful person eats to fill his appetite,
but the stomach of the faithless lacks.

Even in laughter a heart may hurt

14 The smartest of women builds her house,
but denseness tears it down with her own hands.
[2]One who lives in awe of Yahweh walks in uprightness,
but one who despises him is deviant in his ways.
[3]In the mouth of the dense person there is a shoot of majesty,
but the lips of smart people keep watch over them.
[4]When there are no oxen the stall is clean,
but there's abundance of yield through the energy of a bull.
[5]A trustworthy witness doesn't lie,
but a false witness testifies lies.
[6]Someone arrogant seeks smartness and there is none,
but knowledge is easy for the person of understanding.
[7]Go at a distance from the dimwit;
you won't have known knowledgeable lips.
[8]The smartness of someone shrewd means understanding his way,
but the denseness of dimwits is deception.
[9]Dense people are arrogant about reparation,
but between upright people there is acceptance.
[10]The heart knows its own bitterness,
and in its rejoicing a stranger doesn't share.
[11]The house of the faithless will be devastated,
but the tent of the upright will flourish.
[12]There is a way that is upright before someone,
but its end is the ways of death.

[13]Even in laughter a heart may hurt,
and rejoicing – its end may be grief.
[14]Someone who turns backwards in heart will be full from his ways,
and a good person from his deeds.
[15]A naïve person trusts in anything,
but someone shrewd understands his step.
[16]A smart person is afraid and turns aside from what is bad,
but a dimwit rages and is confident.

Oppressing the poor reviles their maker

[17]One who is short-tempered will do dense things,
and a person of strategies will meet with hostility.
[18]The naïve get denseness as their domain,
but the shrewd wear a crown of knowledge.
[19]Bad people bow down before good people,
and the faithless at the gateways of someone faithful.
[20]Even with his neighbour someone destitute meets with hostility,
but the friends of a wealthy person are many.
[21]One who despises his neighbour is a wrongdoer,
but one who is gracious to the humble: his blessings!
[22]People who devise bad things go astray, don't they,
but people who devise good things: commitment and truthfulness.
[23]In all painful toil there will be profit,
but the word of lips: only being in want.
[24]Their wealth is the crown of the smart,
but the denseness of dimwits is denseness.
[25]A truthful witness saves lives,
but one who testifies lies, deceit.
[26]In awe for Yahweh, vigorous security,
and for one's children it will be a shelter.
[27]Awe for Yahweh is a fountain of life,
to depart from deadly snares.
[28]The glory of a king lies in the abundance of a people,
and in the absence of a nation lies the ruin of a ruler.
[29]Long-temperedness is abundant in understanding,
but shortness of spirit exalts denseness.
[30]A healthy mind is life for the flesh,
but passion is rot for the bones.
[31]One who oppresses a poor person reviles his maker,
but one who is gracious to a needy person honours him.
[32]In his bad fortune a faithless person is thrown down,
but a faithful person finds shelter when he's dying.
[33]In the mind of a person of understanding smartness settles,
and in the middle of dimwits it makes itself known.
[34]Faithfulness exalts a nation,
but wrongdoing is a reproach to peoples.
[35]The acceptance of a king [will be] towards an insightful servant,
but his outburst will be [towards] a shameful one.

A gentle response turns back wrath

15 A gentle answer turns back wrath,
but a painful word arouses anger.
[2]The tongue of the smart makes knowledge good,
but the mouth of dimwits pours out denseness.
[3]Yahweh's eyes are in every place,
observing the bad and the good people.
[4]A healing tongue is a tree of life,
but deviation in it is brokenness in spirit.
[5]A dense person spurns his father's discipline,
but one who keeps watch on reproof shows shrewdness.
[6]The house of the faithful person: much riches,
but in the yield of the faithless, trouble.

[7]The lips of the smart spread knowledge,
but the mind of dimwits – not so.
[8]The sacrifice of the faithless is an offence to Yahweh,
but the plea of the upright is acceptable to him.
[9]The way of the faithless person is an offence to Yahweh,
but he is loyal to one who pursues faithfulness.
[10]Discipline is bad to one who abandons the path,
but one who is hostile to reproof dies.
[11]She'ol and Abaddon are in front of Yahweh;
how much more the minds of human beings.
[12]Someone arrogant doesn't befriend one who reproves him;
he doesn't go to the smart.
[13]A rejoicing heart makes the face good,
but by hurt in the heart the spirit is crushed.
[14]The mind of a person of understanding seeks knowledge,
but the mouth of dimwits feeds on denseness.
[15]All the days of a humble person are bad,
but a good heart is a continual feast.
[16]Better a little with awe for Yahweh,
than much treasure and turmoil with it.

Better a helping of greens when love is there

[17]Better a helping of greens when love is there,
than a fattened bull when hostility is with it.
[18]A wrathful man stirs up a dispute,
but one who is long-tempered calms an argument.
[19]The way of a lazy person is like a hedge of thorn,
but the path of the upright is cleared.
[20]A smart son rejoices his father,
but a dim-witted man despises his mother.
[21]Denseness is a joy to one who lacks sense,
but a person of understanding makes his going upright.
[22]Intentions get contravened when there is no counsel,
but with an abundance of counsellors they get implemented.
[23]In the answer of his mouth there is rejoicing for a person,
and a word at its time – how good!
[24]The path of life is upwards for someone insightful,
in order to depart from She'ol below.
[25]Yahweh tears down the house of the majestic,
but establishes the boundary of the widow.
[26]Bad intentions are an offence to Yahweh,
but lovely sayings are pure.
[27]One who gets dishonest gain troubles his household,
but one who is hostile to a gift will live.
[28]The mind of a faithful person murmurs so as to answer,
but the mouth of faithless people pours out bad things.
[29]Yahweh is far away from the faithless,
but listens to the plea of the faithful.
[30]The lamp of the eyes rejoices the heart;
good news enriches the bones.
[31]The ear that listens to life-giving reproof
lodges among the smart.
[32]One who leaves go of discipline despises himself,
but one who listens to reproof acquires sense.
[33]Awe for Yahweh is smartness's discipline;
lowliness is before splendour.

Yahweh weighs spirits

16 The ordering of the mind belongs to a human being,
but the answer of the tongue comes from Yahweh.
[2]All an individual's ways are clean in his eyes,
but Yahweh weighs spirits.

[3]Roll your actions on to Yahweh,
and your intentions will be established.
[4]Every deed of Yahweh is for what it answers,
even the faithless person for a bad day.
[5]Anyone lofty of mind is an offence to Yahweh;
hand to hand he won't go free of guilt.
[6]By commitment and truthfulness waywardness is expiated,
and with awe for Yahweh there's a departing from anything bad.
[7]When Yahweh accepts an individual's ways,
he causes even his enemies to be at peace with him.
[8]Better is a little with faithfulness
than abundance of yield without judgement.
[9]The mind of a person thinks out his course,
but Yahweh establishes his step.
[10]There is divination on a king's lips;
in giving judgement, one doesn't trespass against his bidding.
[11]Balance and scales for judgement belong to Yahweh;
all the stones in the bag are his making.
[12]Acting with faithlessness is an offence to kings,
because the throne stands on faithfulness.
[13]Faithful lips are what kings accept;
he's loyal to one who speaks upright things.
[14]The king's wrath is death's envoy,
but someone smart will expiate it.
[15]There is life in the light of the king's face,
and his acceptance is like a cloud with spring rain.
[16]Acquiring smartness – how much better than pale gold,
and acquiring understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.

Majesty, loftiness; brokenness, collapsing

[17]The causeway of the upright: departing from anything bad;
one who preserves his way keeps his life.
[18]Majesty goes before brokenness,
loftiness of spirit before collapsing.
[19]Lowliness of spirit with the humble
is better than sharing plunder with the majestic.
[20]One who is insightful about a thing will find good fortune,
and one who relies on Yahweh, his blessings.
[21]One who is smart of mind is called understanding,
and sweetness of lips increases people's grasp.
[22]The insight of people who possess it is a fountain of life,
but denseness is the discipline of dense people.
[23]The mind of someone smart makes his speech insightful,
and on his lips it increases people's grasp.
[24]Lovely sayings are a honeycomb,
sweet to the entire being and healing for the body.
[25]There is a road that is right before someone,
but its end is roads that lead to death.
[26]The appetite of a labourer labours for him,
because his mouth is pressing on him.
[27]A scoundrel digs for bad things,
and on his lip is a veritable scorching fire.
[28]A crooked person lets loose a dispute,
and a gossip separates a friend.
[29]A violent person misleads his neighbour,
and makes him go in a way that isn't good.
[30]A person winks his eyes in thinking up crooked things;
he purses his lips when he's finished something bad.
[31]Grey hair is a glorious crown;
it's found by way of faithfulness.
[32]Better to be long-tempered than a strong man,
and one ruling over his spirit than one taking a town.
[33]The lot is cast in the fold of the coat,

but every ruling it makes is from Yahweh.

Yahweh tests minds

17 Better a dry bit of bread and ease with it,
than a house full of sacrifices with arguments.
2 An insightful servant will rule over a disgraceful son,
and share in the domain among the brothers.
3 The crucible for silver, the furnace for gold,
and Yahweh tests minds.
4 Someone who deals badly heeds a lip that brings trouble;
falsehood gives ear to a malicious tongue.
5 One who ridicules a destitute person reviles his maker;
one who rejoices at disaster will not go free of guilt.
6 Grandchildren are the crown of elders,
and their parents are the glory of children.
7 A plentiful tongue isn't fitting for a villain,
much less a false tongue for a leader.
8 A bribe is a gracious stone in its owner's eyes;
wherever he turns his face, he'll thrive.
9 One who seeks loyalty covers over rebellion,
but one who repeats a thing separates a friend.
10 A reprimand gets down into a person of understanding,
more than lashes into a dimwit – a hundred.
11 A bad person seeks only rebellion,
but a cruel envoy will be sent off against him.
12 Let a bereaved bear meet with someone,
but not a dimwit in his denseness.
13 Someone who gives back something bad for something good –
bad fortune will not move away from his household.
14 The beginning of a dispute releases water,
so before contention breaks out, abandon it.

A rejoicing heart enhances healing

15 One who declares a faithless person faithful or declares a faithful person faithless,
both of them are an offence to Yahweh.
16 Why is the price in a dimwit's hand
for acquiring smartness, when he has no sense?
17 A neighbour is a friend at any time;
a brother is born for pressure.
18 Someone lacking in sense claps the palm of his hand,
standing surety before his neighbour.
19 One who likes rebellion likes strife;
one who makes his entrance lofty seeks breaking down.
20 Someone crooked of mind doesn't find good fortune,
and someone who twists with his tongue falls into bad fortune.
21 One begets a dimwit to one's grief,
and the father of a villain doesn't rejoice.
22 A rejoicing heart enhances healing,
but a crushed spirit dries up bones.
23 A faithless person takes a bribe from the fold of his coat,
to bend the paths of the exercise of authority.
24 Smartness is before someone of understanding,
but the eyes of the dimwit are at the end of the earth.
25 A dimwit son is a vexation to his father,
and bitterness to the one who gave birth to him.
26 Surely penalizing a faithful person is not good –
striking down leaders for uprightness.
27 One who has knowledge holds back his words;
a person of understanding is cool of spirit.
28 Even a dense person, keeping silence, is thought smart;
one who keeps his lips closed, understanding.

Yahweh's name is a refuge

18 One who isolates himself seeks what he longs for;
he breaks out against all adeptness.
2 The dimwit doesn't delight in understanding,
but rather in disclosing his thinking.
3 When a faithless person comes, contempt also comes,
and with slighting comes reviling.
4 The words from someone's mouth are deep water;
a fountain of smartness is a flowing wadi.
5 Showing regard to the faithless person is not good,
by turning away the faithful person when exercising authority.
6 The lips of a dimwit come into an argument,
and his mouth calls to blows.
7 The mouth of a dimwit is his ruin,
and his lips are a snare for his life.
8 The words of a gossip are like bites of food,
and they go down into the inner rooms of the stomach.
9 Really, one who slackens in his work –
he is brother to a master of devastation.
10 Yahweh's name is a strong tower,
into which the faithful person runs and is high up.
11 A wealthy person's riches are his strong township,
and like a high wall, in his thinking.
12 Before being broken, someone's mind is lofty,
but before splendour comes lowliness.

A crushed spirit – who can bear it?

13 One who gives word back before he listens –
it's his denseness and shame.
14 A person's spirit sustains his illness,
but a crushed spirit – who can bear it?
15 An understanding mind acquires knowledge,
and the ear of smart people seeks knowledge.
16 A person's gift widens the way for him,
and conducts him before big people.
17 The first person in a dispute seems in the right,
then his neighbour comes and examines him.
18 The lot stops disputes,
and separates numerous people.
19 A brother acting rebelliously is stronger than a strong township,
and disputes are like the barrier of a citadel.
20 From the fruit of someone's mouth his stomach gets full;
from the yield of his lips he gets full.
21 Death and life are in the hand of the tongue;
those who love it eat its fruit.
22 When someone finds a wife, he finds something good,
and obtains acceptance from Yahweh.
23 The destitute person speaks prayers for grace,
but the wealthy person answers fierce things.
24 There are neighbours to act like neighbours,
and there's one who's loyal, sticking firmer than a brother.

Riches make many friends

19 Better one who's destitute who walks with integrity
than one who's crooked with his lips and he's a dimwit.
2 Surely without knowledge appetite isn't good,
and one who's hasty on his feet goes wrong.
3 A person's denseness overturns his way,
but his mind rages against Yahweh.
4 Riches make many friends,
and a poor person becomes separate from his friend.
5 A false witness will not go free of guilt,

one who testifies lies will not escape.
[6]Many seek the goodwill of a leader,
and everyone befriends the person with a gift.
[7]All the brothers of a destitute person are hostile to him –
how much more do his neighbours keep their distance from him;
someone who pursues things to say – he doesn't have them.
[8]One who acquires sense befriends himself;
one who keeps understanding finds good fortune.
[9]A false witness will not go free of guilt,
and one who testifies lies will perish.
[10]Luxury isn't fitting for a dimwit,
certainly not for a servant to rule over officials.
[11]A person's insight lengthens his anger,
and his glory is to pass over an act of rebellion.
[12]The king's rage is a growl like a lion's,
and his acceptance is like dew on grass.
[13]A dimwit son is malicious to his father,
but a woman's disputes are a continuing drip.
[14]House and riches are a domain from parents,
but a woman of insight comes from Yahweh.

The peril of laziness

[15]Laziness make deep sleep fall,
and a slack person gets hungry.
[16]One who keeps an order keeps his life;
one who despises his ways will die.
[17]One who's gracious to a poor person lends to Yahweh,
and he'll make good to him for his dealing.
[18]Discipline your son when there's hope,
and don't apply yourself to putting him to death.
[19]One who's big in wrath carries a penalty;
if you rescue him, you'll do it again.
[20]Listen to counsel and accept discipline,
in order that you may be smart when you come to the end.
[21]Many intentions may be in a person's mind,
but Yahweh's counsel is the one that gets implemented.
[22]A person's longing is his reproach,
but a destitute person is better than a liar.
[23]Awe for Yahweh leads to life;
one eats one's fill, spends the night, doesn't fear bad fortune.
[24]The lazy person buries his hand in the bowl;
he can't even bring it back to his mouth.
[25]Strike down someone arrogant and the naïve person will become shrewd;
reprove someone of understanding – he'll understand knowledge.
[26]One who destroys a father, puts a mother to flight,
is a son who brings shame and confounding.
[27]Son, leave off listening to discipline,
and you'll stray from words of knowledge.
[28]A witness who's a scoundrel is arrogant towards the exercise of authority,
and the mouth of faithless people swallows trouble.
[29]Acts of authority are prepared for the arrogant,
and blows for the back of dimwits.

Drink is noisy

20 Wine is arrogant, drink is noisy,
and anyone who goes astray through them isn't smart.
[2]The king's dreadfulness is a growl like a lion's;
one who infuriates him wrongs himself.
[3]Ceasing from an argument is splendour for a person,
but every dense person breaks out.
[4]After autumn the lazy person doesn't plough,
and he asks at harvest, and there's nothing.
[5]The counsel in someone's mind is deep water,

but someone understanding can draw it up.
[6]An abundance of people may call out, ‘a person of commitment’,
but a person of truthfulness who can find?
[7]A faithful person walks about with integrity –
the blessings of his children after him!
[8]A king sitting on a throne of judgement
winnows all that’s bad with his eyes.
[9]Who can say, ‘I’ve kept my mind clean,
I’m pure from my offence’?
[10]Different stones, different measures,
both of them are an offence to Yahweh.
[11]It is indeed by his deeds that a youth lets himself be recognized,
whether his action is clean and whether it’s upright.
[12]The ear listens, the eye sees;
Yahweh made both of them.
[13]Don’t love sleep, so that you don’t become poor;
open your eyes, be full of bread.
[14]‘Bad, bad’, says the buyer,
and goes off, then takes pride.
[15]There is gold and abundance of jewels,
but lips with knowledge are a valuable object.

Don’t say, ‘I’ll recompense a bad deed’

[16]Take his garment, because he made a pledge to a stranger;
bind him, on account of a foreign woman.
[17]Dishonest bread is pleasant to someone,
but afterwards his mouth will fill with gravel.
[18]Intentions are established through counsel;
do battle with steering.
[19]One who reveals a confidence goes about as a slanderer;
don’t share with someone who has his lips open.
[20]One who slights his father and his mother,
his lamp will go out at the approach of darkness.
[21]A domain hastened at the beginning,
at the end of it will not be blessed.
[22]Don’t say, ‘I’ll make good for a bad deed’;
hope in Yahweh and he’ll deliver you.
[23]Different stones are an offence to Yahweh;
deceptive scales are not good.
[24]A man’s steps come from Yahweh;
how can someone understand his way?
[25]It’s a snare when someone is wild regarding making something sacred,
and consults after vows.
[26]A smart king winnows faithless people,
and turns back the wheel over them.
[27]The breath of a person is Yahweh’s lamp,
revealing all the rooms in your insides.
[28]Commitment and truthfulness protect a king;
he maintains his throne by commitment.
[29]The glory of youths is their energy;
the magnificence of elders is their grey hair.
[30]Blows that wound scour things that are bad,
and beatings, the rooms of one’s insides.

The way of a man can be strange

21 The king’s mind is a water channel in Yahweh’s hand,
which he bends wherever he wants.
[2]Someone’s entire way is upright in his own eyes,
but Yahweh weighs minds.
[3]Exercising authority in a faithful way
is to be chosen for Yahweh over a sacrifice.
[4]Exaltedness of eyes and wideness of mind:
the fallow ground of the faithless is wrongdoing.

[5]The intentions of the determined person do end up in gain,
but anyone who's hasty does end up in want.
[6]Working for treasures by means of a false tongue
is a breath driven away, people seeking death.
[7]The destructiveness of the faithless sweeps them off,
because they refuse to exercise [proper] authority.
[8]The way of a man: twisting, and strange,
but his action: clean and upright.
[9]Living on a corner of the roof is better
than a disputatious woman and a shared house.
[10]The appetite of the faithless person desires what is bad;
his neighbour isn't graced in his eyes.
[11]Through the punishing of someone arrogant a naïve person gets smart,
and through gaining insight into someone smart he gets knowledge.
[12]One who is faithful gains insight into the household of the faithless person,
turning over the faithless to their bad fortune.
[13]One who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor person –
he too will call and not be answered.
[14]A gift in secret calms anger,
a bribe in the fold of the coat, vigorous wrath.
[15]Exercising authority means rejoicing for the faithful
but ruin to one who brings trouble.
[16]Someone who wanders from the way of insight
will settle down in the congregation of ghosts.

The sacrifice of the faithless is an offence

[17]One who loves rejoicing: a person in want;
one who loves wine and oil will not get wealthy.
[18]The faithless person is a ransom for someone faithful,
and one who breaks faith, in place of upright people.
[19]Living in a wilderness region is better
than a disputatious and vexatious woman.
[20]Desirable treasure and oil are in the home of someone smart,
but a dimwit of a person will swallow them up.
[21]One who pursues faithfulness and commitment
finds life, faithfulness and splendour.
[22]Someone smart went up to a town of strong men
and brought down the stronghold in which it was confident.
[23]One who keeps his mouth and his tongue
keeps his life from pressures.
[24]The assertive, presumptuous person – arrogant his name –
acts in an outburst of assertiveness.
[25]The longing of the lazy person puts him to death,
because his hands have refused to act.
[26]All day someone may feel longing,
but the faithful gives and doesn't hold back.
[27]The sacrifice of the faithless is an offence,
yes, because he brings it with a deliberate wickedness.
[28]A lying witness will perish,
but someone who listens to the end will speak.
[29]A faithless person looks forceful in his face,
but one who is upright – he understands his way.
[30]There's no smartness, there's no understanding,
there's no counsel in front of Yahweh.
[31]The horse is prepared for the day of battle
but the deliverance belongs to Yahweh.

Rich and poor meet

22 A name is to be chosen rather than much wealth;
grace is better than silver and than gold.
[2]Wealthy and destitute meet;
Yahweh makes all of them.

[3]Someone shrewd sees something bad and hides;
naïve people pass on and pay the penalty.
[4]The effect of lowliness is awe for Yahweh,
wealth, splendour and life.
[5]Thorns (traps) are in the way of the crook;
one who keeps watch on his life stays far from them.
[6]Initiate a youth with regard to his way;
even when he gets old, he won't depart from it.
[7]The wealthy person rules over the destitute,
and the borrower is a servant to the one who lends.
[8]One who sows evil will reap trouble;
the club with which he expresses his outburst will be finished off.
[9]One who is good of eye will be blessed,
because he gives of his bread to the poor person.
[10]Drive out the arrogant person and dispute will depart;
judgement and slighting will cease.
[11]One who is loyal to being pure in mind,
grace on his lips, the king is his friend.
[12]Yahweh's eyes preserve knowledge,
but he overturns the words of one who breaks faith.
[13]Someone lazy says, 'A lion in the street,
in the middle of the square I shall be murdered!'
[14]The mouth of alien women is a deep pit;
one condemned by Yahweh falls there.
[15]Denseness is bound up in a youth's mind;
the club of discipline will take it far away from him.
[16]One who oppresses the poor person: it's to make much for himself;
one who gives to the wealthy person: it's only to come to want.

Thirty sayings: from one to five

[17]Bend your ear, listen to smart people's words,
and apply your mind to my knowledge.
[18]Because it will be lovely when you keep them inside you;
they will be prepared all at once on your lips.
[19]So that your reliance may be on Yahweh,
I enable you to know them today – yes, you.
[20]I've written for you 30, haven't I,
with counsels and knowledge,
[21]To enable you to know the truest of truthful sayings,
so as to take back sayings in truthfulness to the people who send you.

[22][1] Don't rob the poor person because he's poor,
and don't crush the humble person at the gateway.
[23]Because Yahweh will argue their cause,
and despoil the people who despoil them of life.

[24][2] Don't befriend someone characterized by anger,
and you will not come with someone of frequent wrath,
[25]So that you don't learn his paths,
and get a snare for your life.

[26][3] Don't be among the people who clap the palm of the hand,
among the people who stand surety for debts.
[27]If you have nothing to make good with,
why should someone take your bed from under you?

[28][4] Don't remove an age-old boundary mark,
one that your ancestors made.

[29][5] You've beheld someone quick at his work?
– he'll stand before kings,
he won't stand before people who are in the dark.

Thirty sayings: from 6 to 14

23 [6] When you sit to dine with a ruler, understand well who is before you.

[2]Put a knife to your throat
if you're someone with an appetite.
[3]Don't long for his titbits,
given that it's a lying meal.

[4][7] Don't get weary in order to become wealthy;
out of your understanding, leave off.
[5]Should your eyes flit upon it, it's gone,
because it definitely makes itself wings;
like an eagle, it flies to the heavens.

[6][8] Don't eat the meal of someone who is bad of eye,
and don't be desirous of his titbits.
[7]Because like a hair in the throat, so is he;
he says to you, 'Eat and drink',
but his heart isn't with you.
[8]The bit you've eaten you'll throw up,
and ruin your lovely words.

[9][9] In the ears of a dimwit don't speak,
because he'll despise the insight of your utterances.

[10][10] Don't remove an age-old boundary mark,
and don't come into the fields of orphans.
[11]Because their restorer is strong;
he'll argue their cause with you.

[12][11] Bring your mind to discipline,
and your ear to knowledgeable sayings.

[13][12] Don't withhold discipline from a youth;
if you strike him down with a club, he won't die.
[14]You may strike him down with a club,
and rescue his life from She'ol.

[15][13] Son, if your mind is smart,
my mind will rejoice, mine too.
[16]My inner being will exult,
when your lips speak with uprightness.

[17][14] Your mind must not be jealous of wrongdoers,
but rather of [people who live in] awe for Yahweh all day.
[18]Rather there will be a future,
and your hope will not cut off.

Thirty sayings: from 15 to 18

[19][15] You, my son, listen, and be smart,
and direct your mind on the way.
[20]Don't become among the people who toss down wine,
among those who gorge themselves on meat.
[21]Because one who tosses down and gorges will lose his possession,
and slumbering will clothe him in rags.

[22][16] Listen to your father who begot you,
and don't despise your mother when she's old.
[23]Acquire truth, don't sell it –
smartness, discipline and understanding.
[24]The father of someone faithful will truly celebrate,
the one who begets someone smart will rejoice in him.
[25]May your father and your mother rejoice,
the one who gave birth to you celebrate.

[26][17] Give your mind to me, son,
may your eyes preserve my ways.

[27]Because a whore is a deep pit,
a foreign woman is a narrow well.
[28]Indeed, she lies in wait as if for prey,
and multiplies the people who break faith among humanity.

[29][18] Who has ‘Oh’, who has ‘Aagh’,
who has disputes, who has talk,
Who has wounds for nothing,
who has bleary eyes?
[30]People who linger over wine,
who come to investigate mixed wine.
[31]Don’t look at wine because it’s red,
because it gives its eye in the chalice,
goes about smoothly.
[32]At its finish it bites like a snake,
poisons like a viper.
[33]Your eyes will see strange things,
your mind will speak twisted things.
[34]You’ll become like someone lying down in the middle of the sea,
like someone lying down on the top of the rigging.
[35]‘Though they struck me down, I didn’t hurt,
though they beat me, I didn’t know.
When will I wake up? –
I’ll seek it once again!’

Thirty sayings: from 19 to 30

24 [19] Don’t be jealous of bad people, don’t desire to be with them.

[2]Because their mind mutters destruction,
and their lips speak of oppression.

[3][20] By smartness a house gets built,
and by understanding it gets established.
[4]By knowledge its rooms get filled
with all valuable and lovely riches.

[5][21] A smart man is vigour itself,
someone knowledgeable firms his energy.
[6]Because by steering you do battle to your advantage,
and deliverance comes through an abundance of counsellors.

[7][22] Smartness is too high for a dense person;
at the gateway he doesn’t open his mouth.

[8][23] While they may call one who intends to deal badly
‘a master of strategies’,
[9]Dense deliberate wickedness, an expression of denseness, is wrongdoing,
and an arrogant person is an offence to people.

[10][24] Should you slacken on a day of constraint,
your energy will be constrained.

[11][25] Rescue people who are being taken off to death,
who are slipping towards slaughter; if you hold back . . .
[12]When you say, ‘There, we didn’t know this’,
the one who weighs minds will discern, won’t he.
The one who preserves your life, he will know,
and will give back to a person in accordance with his deed.

[13][26] Eat syrup, son, because it’s good,
liquid honey, sweet to your palate.
[14]In this way acknowledge smartness for your appetite;
if you find it, there’s a future,
and your hope will not cut off.

[15][27] Don’t lie in wait, faithless one, at the home of a faithful person,

don't destroy his dwelling.
[16]Because seven times a faithful person may fall, and rise,
but the faithless will collapse through one bad fortune.

[17][28] When your enemy falls, don't rejoice,
and when he collapses, your heart should not celebrate,
[18]So that Yahweh doesn't see and it's bad in his eyes,
and he turns back his anger from him.

[19][29] Don't get heated at people who do bad things,
don't get jealous of the faithless,
[20]Because there's no future for the bad person;
the lamp of the faithless goes out.

[21][30] Live in awe of Yahweh, son, and of the king,
and don't share with people who are changing,
[22]Because suddenly disaster may arise for them,
and ruin from both of them: who can know?

Another set of sayings

[23]These also belong to the sages.

Recognizing the person in making exercising authority isn't good:
[24]someone saying to the faithless person 'You're in the right.'
Peoples curse him,
nations condemn him.
[25]But for people who issue reproof, things will be lovely,
and upon them will come the blessing of good things.
[26]He kisses with the lips,
the one who speaks back with straight words.

[27]Prepare your work outside,
get it ready in the fields for yourself;
afterwards build your house.
[28]Don't become a witness against your neighbour for nothing;
will you mislead with your lips?
[29]Don't say, 'As he did to me,
so I'll do him,
I'll give back to the man in accordance with his deed.'

[30]I passed by the field of someone lazy,
and by the vineyard of one lacking sense.
[31]There, it had all come up in weeds,
chickpeas covered its surface,
its stone wall was torn down.
[32]When I myself beheld, I applied my mind;
when I saw, I grasped some discipline.
[33]A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to lie down,
[34]And your destitution comes walking about,
your want like someone with a shield.

Golden apricots in silver settings

25 These, too, are aphorisms of Shelomoh, which the men of Hizqiyyahu [Hezekiah] king of Yehudah compiled.

[2]It's God's splendour to conceal a thing,
but kings' splendour to explore a thing.
[3]The heavens regarding height, the earth regarding depth,
and the mind of kings – there's no exploring.
[4]Remove dross from silver,
and an article comes out for the smith;
[5]Remove the faithless person before a king,
and his throne is established in faithfulness.
[6]Don't magnify yourself before a king,

and don't stand in the place of big people,
[7]Because it's better for someone to say to you 'Go up there',
than move you down before a leader.
What your eyes have seen
[8]should not go out into an argument quickly,
In case – what will you do at the end of it,
when your neighbour puts you to shame?
[9]Argue for your cause with your neighbour,
but don't reveal someone else's confidence,
[10]In case someone who hears it reproaches you
and the charge against you doesn't turn back.
[11]Golden apricots in silver settings
is a word appropriately spoken.
[12]A gold earring or an ornament of fine gold
is someone smart reproving into a listening ear.
[13]Like the cold of snow at harvest time
is a trustworthy envoy to the people who sent him;
he brings back his lord's soul.
[14]Clouds and wind but no rain
is someone who takes pride in a false gift.

A gentle tongue can break a bone

[15]Through being long-tempered a commander can be enticed;
a gentle tongue can break a bone.
[16]When you find syrup, eat enough for yourself,
so that you don't get your fill of it and throw up.
[17]Make your foot rare at your neighbour's house,
so that he doesn't get his fill of you and become hostile to you.
[18]A hammer, a sword, a sharpened arrow,
is someone who testifies against his neighbour as a false witness.
[19]A bad tooth and a wobbly foot,
is confidence in someone who breaks faith on a day of pressure.
[20]One who takes off a coat on a cold day,
vinegar on a wound,
and a singer of songs to a bad heart.
[21]If someone hostile to you is hungry, give him bread to eat;
if he's thirsty, give him water to drink,
[22]Because you're heaping coals on his head,
and Yahweh will make good to you.
[23]A north wind may give birth to rain,
and a secretive tongue a condemning face.
[24]Living on a corner of the roof is better
than a disputatious woman and a shared house.
[25]Cold water to a dry throat
is good news from a far-off land.
[26]A muddied spring, a ruined fountain,
is a faithful person slipping before a faithless person.
[27]Eating much syrup isn't good,
nor is it splendid to investigate people's splendour.
[28]A town that's been opened up, where there's no wall,
is someone for whose spirit there's no restraint.

The dimwit

26 Like snow during summer and like rain during harvest,
so splendour is not fitting for a dimwit.
[2]Like a sparrow flitting and like a swallow flying,
so being slighted for nothing will not come about.
[3]A whip for a horse, a bridle for a donkey,
and a club for the back of dimwits.
[4]Don't answer a dimwit in accordance to his denseness,
so that you don't become like him, you too.
[5]Answer a dimwit in accordance with his denseness,
so he doesn't become smart in his own eyes.

[6]Someone cutting off his feet, drinking violence,
sending words by means of a dimwit.
[7]Legs hang down from someone disabled,
and an aphorism in the mouth of dimwits.
[8]Like binding a stone in a sling,
so is one who gives splendour to a dimwit.
[9]A thorn grows up into the hand of a drunk
and an aphorism in the mouth of dimwits.
[10]An archer running through everyone
and one who hires a dimwit or hires people passing through.
[11]As a dog goes back to its vomit,
a dimwit repeats his denseness.
[12]I've seen someone smart in his own eyes;
there's hope for a dimwit more than for him.
[13]A lazy person says, 'There's a lion cub on the road,
a lion among the squares.'
[14]The door turns on its hinge,
the lazy person on his bed.
[15]The lazy person buries his hand in the bowl;
he's too weary to bring it back to his mouth.
[16]The lazy person is smarter in his own eyes
than seven people speaking back with discretion.

When there's no gossip, disputes go quiet

[17]One who takes strong hold of the ears of a passing dog
is one who bursts out in an argument that isn't his.
[18]Like a madman who is shooting
fiery arrows of death,
[19]So is someone who beguiles his neighbour
and says, 'I was having fun, wasn't I.'
[20]In the absence of wood a fire goes out,
and when there's no gossip, disputes go quiet.
[21]Charcoal for embers and wood for a fire,
and a disputatious person for heating up an argument.
[22]The words of a gossip are like bites of food,
and they go down into the rooms of the stomach.
[23]Silver dross laid over a pot,
burning lips but a bad mind.
[24]With his lips a hostile person disguises himself;
inside him, he puts deceit.
[25]When he makes his voice gracious, don't trust him;
because seven offences are in his mind.
[26]His hostility will be concealed by deception;
his bad action will reveal itself in a congregation.
[27]One who digs a pit will fall into it;
one who rolls a stone, it will come back on to him.
[28]A false tongue is hostile to the people crushed by it;
a smooth mouth works a pushing down.

Trustworthy are the wounds of a friend

27 Don't take pride in tomorrow,
because you don't know what a day will give birth to.
[2]A stranger should praise you and not your mouth,
a foreigner and not your lips.
[3]A stone is weighty and sand is heavy,
but a dense person's vexation is heavier than both of them.
[4]The cruelty of wrath and the flooding of anger:
but who can stand before jealousy?
[5]Reproof openly expressed is better
than friendship concealed.
[6]The wounds of a friend are trustworthy;
the kisses of someone hostile are importunate.

[7]Someone full despises honey,
but someone hungry: anything bitter is sweet.
[8]Like a sparrow flitting from its nest,
so is someone flitting from his place.
[9]Oil and incense rejoice the heart,
and the sweetness of one's friend, more than one's own counsel.
[10]Don't abandon your friend or your father's friend,
and don't come to your brother's house on your day of disaster.
Better one who dwells near
than a brother far away.
[11]Be smart, son, and rejoice my heart,
so I may speak back to one who reviles me with a word.
[12]When someone shrewd sees something bad, he hides;
naïve people pass on and pay the penalty.
[13]Take his garment, because he made a pledge to a stranger;
bind him, on account of a foreign woman.

The crucible of praise

[14]One who blesses his neighbour in a loud voice
in the morning, early:
it will be thought of for him as a slighting.
[15]A continuing drip on a rainy day,
and a disputatious woman, are similar.
[16]People who hide her could hide the wind,
or he could grasp oil in his right hand.
[17]Iron sharpens iron,
and a person sharpens the face of his friend.
[18]One who guards a fig tree will eat its fruit,
and one who keeps watch on his lord will be honoured.
[19]Like water, face to face,
so the heart of a person to a person.
[20]She'ol and Abaddon don't get full,
and the eyes of a human being don't get full.
[21]A crucible for silver, a furnace for gold,
and an individual for a mouth praising him.
[22]If you grind the dense person in a mortar,
in the middle of the grain in a pestle,
his denseness will not depart from him.
[23]You should really know the faces of your flock,
apply your mind to your herds,
[24]Because riches aren't permanent
or a crown for generation after generation.
[25]Hay goes away and new grass appears
and the growth of the mountains is gathered.
[26]Lambs are for your clothing,
goats for the price of a field,
[27]Enough goats' milk for your meal,
for a meal for your household and life for your young girls.

Interest and profiteering

28 The faithless flee when there's no one pursuing,
but faithful people are as confident as a lion.
[2]When there's rebellion in the country,
its rulers are many.
But when there's someone who understands,
someone who knows, established order will last long.
[3]A man who is destitute and who oppresses the poor:
rain beating down and there's no bread.
[4]People who abandon instruction praise the faithless person;
people who keep instruction fight against them.
[5]Bad people don't understand the exercise of authority,
but people who seek Yahweh understand everything.
[6]Better someone destitute walking in integrity,

than someone crooked in his ways, but he's wealthy.
[7]An understanding son observes instruction,
but one who befriends gluttons disgraces his father.
[8]Someone who increases his riches through interest and profiteering
amasses it for someone who will be gracious to the poor.
[9]One who turns his ear aside from listening to instruction:
even his plea is an offence.
[10]One who misleads the upright into a bad way,
he'll fall into his own pit, but people of integrity get good things as their domain.
[11]A wealthy person is smart in his own eyes,
but a poor person of understanding can search him out.
[12]At the exulting of the faithful there's much glorying,
but at the rise of the faithless, people have to be searched for.
[13]One who covers his rebellions will not succeed,
but one who confesses and abandons will be shown compassion.
[14]The blessings of the person who continually reveres,
whereas one who toughens his mind falls to bad fortune.

The peril of shutting the eyes

[15]A roaring lion or an advancing bear:
a faithless ruler over a poor people.
[16]A leader lacking understanding and abundant in acts of oppression;
one hostile to dishonest gain will extend his days.
[17]When one oppressed by shedding someone's blood
flees to a cistern, people should not take hold of him.
[18]A person who walks in integrity will find deliverance,
but one who's crooked in his ways will fall at once.
[19]One who serves his land will be full of bread,
but one who pursues empty things will be full of destitution.
[20]A person of trustworthy deeds will be abundant in blessings,
but one hasty to get wealthy will not go free of guilt.
[21]Recognizing a person isn't good,
but a man may rebel for a bit of bread.
[22]One who is bad in eye hurries for riches,
and doesn't acknowledge that lack will come to him.
[23]One who reproves a person in the end
will find more grace than one who makes his tongue smooth.
[24]One who robs his father and his mother
and says 'It's not an act of rebellion' –
he is a companion of one who devastates.
[25]One wide of appetite provokes dispute,
but one who relies on Yahweh will be enriched.
[26]One who relies on his own mind – he's a dimwit,
but one who walks in smartness – he'll escape.
[27]One who gives to a destitute person – there's no lack,
but one who shuts his eyes – many are the curses.
[28]When the faithless rise up, people hide,
and when they perish, the faithful become many.

You could suddenly break and there could be no healing

29 A person of many reproofs who toughens his neck
will suddenly break, and there will be no healing.
[2]When the faithful increase, the people rejoice,
but when a faithless person rules, the people groan.
[3]Someone who loves smartness rejoices his father,
but one who befriends whores obliterates riches.
[4]A king enables a country to stand by the exercise of authority,
but a man of great deceit tears it down.
[5]A man who flatters his neighbour
spreads a net for his steps.
[6]In the rebellion of someone bad there's a snare,
but a faithful person resounds and rejoices.
[7]A faithful person acknowledges the cause of the poor;

a faithless person doesn't understand acknowledgement.
[8]Arrogant people stir up a township,
but the smart turn back anger.
[9]Someone smart may enter into judgement with a dense person,
but he'll rage and have fun and there'll be no settlement.
[10]People inclined to bloodshed may be hostile to someone of integrity,
but the upright will seek the person out.
[11]A dimwit lets all his spirit out;
someone smart holds it back.
[12]A ruler who gives heed to a false word:
all his ministers will be faithless.
[13]A destitute man and a man given to deceit meet:
Yahweh enlightens the eyes of them both.

How the throne will stand firm

[14]A king who exercises authority for the poor in truth:
his throne will be established permanently.
[15]Club and reproof give smartness,
but a youth sent off shames his mother.
[16]When the faithless increase, rebellion increases,
but the faithful will see their downfall.
[17]Discipline your son and he'll enable you to settle down,
and give much delight to your entire being.
[18]When there's no vision, the people throw off restraint,
but someone who keeps instruction – his blessings!
[19]By words a servant will not be disciplined,
when he understands but there's no answer.
[20]If you behold someone hasty with his words,
there's hope for a dimwit more than for him.
[21]Someone who indulges his servant from youth:
at the end he'll become his offspring.
[22]Someone angry provokes a dispute,
and someone given to wrath rebels much.
[23]A person's majesty will make him fall,
but one lowly of spirit will take hold of splendour.
[24]Someone who shares with a thief is hostile to himself;
he hears the oath and doesn't tell.
[25]A person's trembling sets a snare,
but one who relies on Yahweh will be set on high.
[26]Many seek the regard of a ruler,
but the ruling about a person comes from Yahweh.
[27]An evildoer is an offence to the faithful,
and someone upright in his way is an offence to the faithless person.

I'm just a weary sojourner but I have some words from God

30 Words of Agur ben Yaqeh. The oracle. The man's pronouncement to Iti'el, to Iti'el and Ukal.

[2]Truly I'm a brute more than a person,
and I don't have human understanding.
[3]I haven't learned smartness
and I don't possess the knowledge of the sacred ones.
[4]Who has gone up to the heavens and come down,
who has gathered the wind in his open hands?
Who has confined the water in a cloak,
who has set all earth's ends?
What is his name and what is his son's name,
if you know?

[5]Everything God says is tested;
he's a shield to those who take shelter with him.
[6]Don't add to his words,
so that he doesn't reprove you and you prove a liar.
[7]Two things I ask of you;

don’t hold back from me before I die.
[8]Emptiness and a lying word keep far from me,
destitution and wealth don’t give me,
let me grab the bread that is my due,
[9]So that I don’t get full and renounce
and say, ‘Who is Yahweh?’
Or so that I don’t get poor and rob,
and take the name of my God.

[10]Don’t mention a servant to his lord,
in case he slight you, and you’re liable.

[11]A generation that slights its father,
and doesn’t bless its mother!
[12]A generation that’s pure in its own eyes,
but its filth isn’t washed off!
[13]A generation – how its eyes are high,
and its eyelids rise!
[14]A generation whose teeth are swords,
and their jaws knives,
To consume the humble from the earth,
the needy from humanity!

Creation and numbers

[15]The leech has two daughters,
‘Give, give!’
These are three things that don’t get full,
four that don’t say ‘Plenty!’ –
[16]She’ol, a barren womb,
a country that isn’t full of water,
and fire that doesn’t say ‘Plenty!’

[17]The eye that ridicules a father
and despises obedience to a mother:
The ravens in the wadi will gouge it out,
and young eagles will eat it.

[18]Those are three things too extraordinary for me,
four that I don’t know:
[19]An eagle’s way in the heavens,
a snake’s way on a crag,
A ship’s way in the heart of the sea,
and a man’s way with a girl.

[20]Such is the way of an adulterous woman:
she eats and wipes her mouth,
and says, ‘I haven’t brought trouble.’

[21]Under three things the earth shudders,
and under four that it cannot bear:
[22]Under a servant when he becomes king,
and villain when he’s full of bread,
[23]Under a woman who has met with hostility when she marries,
and a maidservant when she dispossesses her mistress.

[24]Those are four smallest things on earth,
but they are the smartest of the smart:
[25]Ants are a people not strong,
but they prepare their bread in summer;
[26]Hyraxes are a people not numerous,
but they make their home in a cliff;
[27]Locusts have no king,
but they go out organized, all of them;
[28]You can take hold of a lizard in your hands,
but it’s in a king’s palaces.

[29]Those are three things good in their stride,
four that are good in moving:
[30]The lion is the strong man among animals,
it doesn't turn back from before anyone;
[31]One belted round the hips; or a goat;
and a king – no rising against him.

[32]If you've been villainous in exalting yourself,
and if you've schemed – hand on your mouth!
[33]Because pressing milk issues in butter,
pressing the nose issues in blood,
and pressing anger issues in an argument.

The demon drink

31 The words of King Lemu'el. A pronouncement with which his mother disciplined him.

[2]What, my son, what, son of my womb,
what, son of my pledges?
[3]Don't give your resources to women,
your ways to women who wipe out kings.
[4]It's not for kings, Lemuel,
not for kings to drink wine,
and for rulers, or liquor.
[5]In case they drink and put out of mind what has been decreed,
and are hostile to the cause of all humble people.
[6]Give liquor to someone who is perishing,
wine to one who is bitter inside.
[7]He can drink and put out of mind his destitution,
and his oppression he won't keep in mind any more.
[8]Open your mouth for the dumb,
for the cause of all the people who are passing away.
[9]Open your mouth, exercise authority faithfully,
give judgement for the humble and needy person.

The resourceful woman

[10]Who can find a resourceful woman?
– her value is far above rubies.
[11]Her husband's mind relies on her,
and he lacks no spoil.
[12]She deals him good, not bad,
all the days of her life.
[13]She looks for wool and flax,
and works with delight with the palms of her hands.
[14]She becomes like a trader's ships,
when she brings her bread from far away.
[15]She rises while it's still night,
and gives a bite to her household,
and an allocation to her girls.
[16]She schemes about a field and gets it;
from the fruit of the palms of her hands she plants a vineyard.
[17]She wraps her hips in vigour,
and firms up her arms.
[18]She checks that her trading is good;
her lamp doesn't go out at night.
[19]She puts out her hands to the spindle,
and her palms take hold of the wheel.
[20]She opens her palm to the humble person,
puts out her hands to the needy person.
[21]She isn't afraid for her household because of snow,
because her entire household is dressed in crimson.
[22]She makes coverlets for herself;
her clothing is linen and purple.
[23]Her husband is acknowledged at the gateways,

as he sits with the country's elders.
[24]She makes fabric and sells it,
and gives a sash to the merchant.
[25]Vigour and magnificence are her clothing;
she can make fun of a future day.
[26]She opens her mouth with smartness;
committed instruction is on her tongue.
[27]She watches over the goings of her household;
she doesn't eat the bread of laziness.
[28]Her children rise up and declare her blessed;
her husband praises her:
[29]'Many women produce resources,
but you surpass all of them.'
[30]Grace is false, beauty is hollow,
but a woman who lives in awe of Yahweh – she is to take pride.
[31]Give to her from the fruit of her hand;
her deeds should praise her at the gateways.

Ecclesiastes

Ecclesiastes is one of the most reassuring books in the Bible in the way it encourages us to face facts about how life is. Whereas Proverbs majors on positive aspects to the way life works out, Ecclesiastes acknowledges that things are more complicated than a first, surface reading of Proverbs might seem to imply. Often Ecclesiastes proceeds by quoting the kind of observation that appears in Proverbs and saying 'Yes, but . . .'

A substantial chunk of the beginning of the book takes Solomon as a test case for looking at life, though the book never mentions Solomon by name. It refers to the author as Qohelet, which is related to the Hebrew word for 'congregation'. I translate it as 'congregant'. An implication of using this name is that this book is proper 'congregational teaching', proper teaching for the people of God. It refers to its 'hero' as 'David's son', which probably suggests Solomon, though there are many other people to whom the phrase applies. But Solomon was the man who had everything – women, wisdom, achievement, power, pleasure. So he provides a test case for whether these things can make life worthwhile. And his answer is, they don't.

It's not that these things are totally useless. They are all worthwhile. But they are not ultimately significant. They don't provide the ultimate answers. In the absence of such ultimate answers, really everything is 'hollow'. This declaration forms a bracket round the book as a whole. When one looks empirically at life in the world, one can see ways in which things make sense and ways in which life is worthwhile, but also ways in which they don't make sense and in which the things that people tell themselves make life worthwhile are not really of ultimate significance. Qohelet encourages us to remember that they are nevertheless things that 'God gives' – that phrase recurs in the book. There's some value in seeking to live a faithful life and in enjoying life with one's family, work, and food and drink. It's not enough, but it's not nothing.

Everything is hollow

1 The words of Congregant, son of David, king in Yerushalaim.

2 Utter hollowness, said Congregant,
utter hollowness, everything is hollow.
3 What value is there for a person
in all the labour that he undertakes under the sun?

4 A generation goes, a generation comes;
the earth stands permanently.
5 The sun rises and the sun sets
and rushes to its place where it rises.
6 The wind goes to the south and turns round to the north,
it turns, turns as it goes,
and on its turnings the wind goes back.
7 All the wadis go to the sea, but the sea isn't full;
to the place where the wadis go,
there they go again.
8 All the things are laborious;
no one could speak of it.
The eye isn't replete as regards looking,
the ear isn't full as regards listening.
9 What has happened is what will happen;
what has occurred is what will occur;
there's nothing new under the sun.
10 Where there is a thing that someone says,
'See this, it's new',
Already it has happened
for ages that were before us.
11 There is no commemoration for the earlier people,
and also for future people who are to come.
For them there will be no commemoration,
with the people who will be in the future.

A king's achievement

12 I, Congregant, began to reign over Yisra'el in Yerushalaim. 13 I gave my mind to looking into and exploring with smartness everything that occurs under the heavens. It's a bad business God gave human beings to be busy with. 14 I saw all the actions that occur under the sun. There, everything is hollow, a shepherding of wind.

15 Something crooked cannot become straight, and something lacking cannot be counted.

16 I myself spoke inside myself: 'Here, I've got big and increased in smartness above everyone who has been over Yerushalaim before me. My mind has seen much of smartness and knowledge. 17 I've given my mind to a knowledge of smartness and a

knowledge of madness and apparent insight. I've come to acknowledge that this, too, was a shepherding of wind.

[18]Because with abundance of smartness there's much vexation,
and one who increases knowledge increases pain.

2 I myself said inside myself, 'Come on, please, I'll test you with rejoicing. Look into what's good.' There, that is also hollow.

[2]Of having fun, I said, 'It's mad',
and of rejoicing, 'What does this do?'

[3]I explored inside myself, stretching my flesh with wine while directing my mind with smartness and taking hold of idiocy, until I could see which one was good for human beings, which they should practise under the heavens for the number of the days of their life. [4]I made my achievements big. I built houses for myself, I planted vineyards for myself, [5]I made gardens and parks for myself and planted in them trees with every fruit. [6]I made pools of water for myself, to water from them a forest flourishing with trees. [7]I acquired servants and maidservants and ones born in my household. I also had livestock, herd and flock; I had more than all who were before me in Yerushalaim.

Wealth and learning

[8]I also amassed for myself silver and gold and the personal treasure of kings and provinces. I made for myself male and female singers, and the pleasures of human beings, many women. [9]I got big and increased more than anyone who was before me in Yerushalaim; also my smartness stood with me. [10]Nothing that my eyes asked for did I keep from them. I didn't hold my mind back from any rejoicing; rather, my mind rejoiced in all my labour. This was my share from all my labour.
[11]But I myself turned my face to all the things that my hands had done and to the labour that I had put into doing it. There, everything was hollow, a shepherding of wind. There was no value under the sun.
[12]I turned my face to see smartness, madness and idiocy. Because what will the person do who comes after the king? That which people have already done. [13]I myself saw that

There is value to smartness over idiocy,
like the value of light over darkness.
[14]The smart person – his eyes are in his head,
but the dimwit walks in darkness.

But I myself also acknowledged that one experience happens to each of them. [15]So I myself said inside myself: like the experience of the dimwit, so it will happen to me, too. So why have I myself then been exceedingly smart? I spoke inside myself: 'This is hollow, too.' [16]Because there's no commemoration permanently of the smart person, just like the dimwit, in that already in the coming days each will have gone out of mind. But how can the smart man die just like the dimwit? [17]So I was hostile to life, because the action that occurs under the sun is bad with me, because everything is hollow, a shepherding of wind.
[18]So I myself was hostile to all the labour that I myself have expended under the sun, which I shall leave to the person who will be after me. [19]Who knows whether he'll be a smart person or an idiot? But he'll hold power over all the labour that I've expended and the smartness that I've exercised under the sun. This too is hollow.

Everything has its time

[20]So I myself turned round to letting myself despair about all the labour that I've expended under the sun. [21]Because there's a person whose labour was with smartness, with knowledge and with skill, and he gives his share from it to a person who didn't labour for it. This is also hollow, something very bad. [22]Because what does the person have for all his labour and for his mind's shepherding, with which he's laboured under the sun? [23]Because all his days, his busyness is pain and vexation. By night, too, his mind doesn't lie down. This is also hollow.
[24]There's nothing better with a person than that he eats and drinks and lets himself see good things through his labour. I myself have also seen that this is from God's hand. [25]Because who eats and who hastens apart from me? [26]Because to the person who is good before him he gives smartness, knowledge and rejoicing, and to the wrongdoer he gives the busyness of gathering and collecting – to give to someone who is good before God.
This too is hollow, a shepherding of wind.

3 Everything has a moment, every purpose under the sun has a time:

[2]A time of birthing, a time of dying,
a time of planting, a time of uprooting what is planted,
[3]A time of killing, a time of healing,
a time of demolishing, a time of building,
[4]A time of crying, a time of having fun,
a time of wailing, a time of dancing,
[5]A time of throwing stones, a time of collecting stones,
a time of embracing, a time of staying far from embracing,

[6]A time of searching, a time of obliterating,
a time of keeping, a time of throwing out,
[7]A time of tearing, a time of mending,
a time of being silent, a time of speaking,
[8]A time of being loyal, a time of being hostile,
a time of battle and a time of peace.

[9]What's the value for the person who acts, in what he labours over? [10]I've seen the busyness that God has given human beings to be busy with. [11]He's made everything beautiful in its time; he's also put permanence into their mind, but not so that humanity can find out what God has done from the beginning until the end.

There's no justice

[12]I acknowledged that there is nothing good with them except to rejoice and do what's good in their lifetime. [13]Also, everyone who eats and drinks and sees good things through all his labour – it's God's gift. [14]I acknowledged that

Everything that God does,
it will be permanent.
To it there is nothing to add,
and from it, there's nothing to take away.

God has acted so that people live in awe before him.

[15]What has happened already is,
and that which is to happen has already happened.

And God seeks out what has been driven away. [16]Further, I've seen under the sun:

In the place for the [proper] exercise of authority, faithlessness was there,
in the place for faithfulness, faithlessness was there.

[17]I myself said inside myself,

Over the faithful person and the faithless
God will exercise authority.
Because there will be a time for every purpose and for every activity there.

[18]I myself said inside myself with regard to human beings, it's for God to purify them and for them to see that they are animals. [19]Because the experience of human beings and the experience of animals is a single experience for them. Like the dying of the one, so is the dying of the other. Each has the same spirit. The advantage of humanity over animals – there is none, because each is hollow. [20]Each goes to the same place. Each came into being from earth and each goes back to earth. [21]Who knows if the spirit of human beings goes up and the spirit of animals goes down beneath the ground?
[22]So I saw that there is nothing better than that a person enjoys his activities, because this is his share, because who can give him discernment to see what will happen after him?

4 I again saw all the oppressed people that are appearing under the sun. There, the tears of the oppressed, and there is no comforter for them; yes, from the hand of their oppressors is the energy, and there is no comforter for them. [2]I myself extolled the dead people, who had already died, more than the living people, who were still alive. [3]Better than both of them is the one who hasn't yet come into being, who hasn't seen the bad activity that occurs under the sun.

Two people who lie together can be warm

[4]I myself saw all labour and all skill in activity: it's the jealousy of a person by his neighbour. This too is hollow, a shepherding of wind.

[5]The dimwit folds his hands,
and eats his own flesh.

[6]Better a palmful with settlement than two fistfuls with labour, and a shepherding of wind.
[7]I again saw hollowness under the sun. [8]There's one person, and he has no second person, either son or brother. And there's no end to all his labour; nor is his eye full of wealth. 'But for whom am I labouring and depriving myself of good things?' This too is hollow, a bad business. [9]Two are better than one, in that they have better reward for their labour. [10]Because if they fall, one can lift up his companion; but alas for the single person who falls and has no second person to lift him up. [11]Further, if two people lie down together, they are warm, but for one – how can he be warm? [12]And if someone overpowers him (the one person), the two can stand up in front of him. And a triple cord doesn't break quickly.
[13]Better a young man who's poor but smart than a king who's old but a dimwit, who doesn't know how to heed a warning any more, [14]because from the prison house he can get out to become king, even when he was born destitute in the kingdom. [15]I saw all

the living who walk about under the sun with the youth, the second [king], who stands in place of him. [16]There was no end to all the people, to all before whom he stood; also those who are after him will not rejoice in him. Because this too is hollow, a shepherding of wind.

Sell your tongue and buy a thousand ears

5 Keep watch on your feet as you go to God's house. Drawing near to listen is better than the giving of a sacrifice by dimwits, because they don't acknowledge that they are doing something bad. [2]Don't be hasty with your mouth; your mind shouldn't be quick to let out a word before God, because God is in the heavens and you're on the earth. Thus your words should be few. [3]Because

A dream comes with an abundance of busyness,
and the voice of a dimwit with an abundance of words.

[4]When you make a pledge to God, don't delay making it good, because there's no delight in dimwits. What you pledge, make it good. [5]It's better that you don't make a pledge than that you make a pledge and don't make it good. [6]Don't give your mouth to causing your flesh to do wrong. Don't say before the envoy, 'It was a mistake.' Why should God be furious at your voice and destroy what your hands have made? [7]Because in an abundance of dreams is much hollowness, and many words. Rather, live in awe of God.

[8]If you see oppression of the destitute person and violation of the faithful exercise of authority in the province, don't marvel at the matter, because one who is lofty keeps watch over one who is lofty, and ones who are lofty over them. [9]The value for the land in every way is this: a king for the field that's worked.

It's not enough but it's not nothing

[10]Someone who loves silver doesn't have his fill of silver, nor whoever loves riches of his yield. This too is hollow. [11]With the increase of his goods, the people who consume them increase, so what's the profit of their owners except his eyes seeing them? [12]The sleep of someone who serves is sweet whether he eats little or much, but the richness of the wealthy person doesn't leave him to sleep. [13]There is a sick bad fortune I saw under the sun: wealth kept by its owner to his bad fortune, [14]or that wealth perishes through a bad business; and he fathers a son but there's nothing in his hand. [15]As he got out from his mother's womb, naked he again goes, as he came; he carries nothing of his labour in his hand when he goes. [16]This too is a sick bad fortune. Corresponding to the way he comes, so he goes, and what's the value to him that he labours for the wind? [17]Further, all his days he eats in darkness with much vexation, illness and fury.

[18]Here's what I myself saw as good, that it's beautiful to eat and to drink and to see what's good in all his labour that he expends under the sun for the number of the days of his life that God gives him, because this is his share. [19]Further, each person to whom God gives wealth and possessions and whom he empowers to consume some of them, to take up his share and to rejoice in his labour – this is God's gift. [20]Because he won't be very mindful of the days of his life, because God busies him with his mind's rejoicing.

Everyone is going to the same place

6 There's a something bad that I saw under the sun, and there's much of it with human beings: [2]a person to whom God gives wealth, possessions and splendour, and who has no lack regarding his appetite for anything that he desires, but God doesn't empower him to consume any of it, and a stranger consumes it. This is hollow and a bad sickness. [3]If a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years, and however many are the days of his years, his appetite can't be full from the good things: then even if it was not buried, I say the stillbirth is better off than him. [4]Because it comes in hollowness and it goes in darkness, and its name is covered in darkness; [5]though it doesn't see or know the sun, that one is more settled than the other one.

[6]Even if he lives a thousand years twice over but doesn't see the good things, each is going to one place, isn't he. [7]All a person's labour is for his mouth, but his appetite doesn't get full. [8]Because what's the value for the smart person over the dimwit? What does the humble person have, who knows how to walk in front of the living? [9]The eyes seeing is better than the appetite journeying. This too is hollow, a shepherding of wind.

[10]What happens has already been named, and what a person is has become known. He cannot contend with one who is stronger than him, [11]because the more the words are, the more is the hollowness. What's the value for a person? [12]Because who knows what is good for a person in life for the number of the days of his hollow life? He spends them like a shadow, so who can tell the person what will happen under the sun after him?

Better the house of mourning than the house of feasting

7 A good name is better than good oil, and the day of death than the day of birth.

[2]Going to a house of mourning
is better than going to a house of feasting,
Inasmuch as that is the end of everyone
and the living person should put it into his mind.
[3]Vexation is better than fun,

because despite a bad look in the face,
the mind will be good.
[4]The mind of smart people is in a house of mourning,
the mind of dimwits in a house of rejoicing.

[5]It's better to listen to the reprimand of a smart person
than be listening to the song of dimwits,
[6]Because the fun of a dimwit
is like the sound of thistles under a pot.
But this too is hollow,
[7]because fraud can make a fool out of a smart person,
and a gift can obliterate the mind.
[8]The end of something is better than its beginning,
endurance of spirit is better than loftiness of spirit.
[9]Don't be quick to feel vexed in your spirit,
because vexation settles in the heart of dimwits.
[10]Don't say, 'How did it happen
that the former days were better than these?',
because it's not out of smartness that you ask about this.
[11]Smartness is good, like a domain,
and something valuable to people who see the sun.
[12]Because as smartness is a veritable shelter,
silver is a veritable shelter.
But the value of knowledge
is that smartness keeps its masters alive.

[13]Look at God's activity,
because who can straighten
what he has twisted?
[14]In the day when things are good, be with what is good,
and in the day when things are bad, see:
God made both this one as well as that one,
with the result that a person cannot find out
anything after him.

I haven't found a woman

[15]I've seen everything in my hollow days.

There's a faithful person who perishes in his faithfulness
and there's a faithless person who endures in his faithlessness.
[16]Don't be exceedingly faithful
and don't act excessively smart: why should you be devastated?
[17]Don't be exceedingly faithless and don't be idiotic:
why should you die when it's not your time?
[18]It's good that you take hold of the one
but also not let go of your grasp of the other,
because someone in awe of God will go out with all of them.
[19]Smartness strengthens a smart person
more than ten people holding power who were there in a town.

[20]Because there's no faithful human being on earth who does good and doesn't do wrong. [21]Further, don't give your mind to all the things that people speak, so that you don't hear your servant slighting you, [22]because many times your mind also knows that you too have slighted other people.

[23]When I tested all this with smartness, I said 'I shall be smart', but it's far away from me. [24]What happens is far away and deep, deep; who can find it out? [25]I myself turned round with my mind to know and to explore, and to seek smartness and thought, and to know faithlessness as dim-wittedness and idiocy as madness.

[26]I myself find more bitter than death the woman who is a great trap, whose mind is a great snare, whose hands are a great chain. One who is good before God escapes from her, but a wrongdoer is caught by her. [27]Look, this is what I've found, Congregant said, adding one thing to another to find some thinking, [28]which I myself sought further but didn't find. I found one human being among a thousand, but a woman among these I didn't find. [29]Only, look at this, I found that God made humanity upright, but they have sought many thoughts.

For every purpose there's a time to make a decision

8 Who is like the smart person, and who knows the meaning of a saying:
'A person's smartness lightens up his face,
and the strength of his face is changed.'
[2]I [say]: keep the king's bidding,
and on account of the oath to God [3]don't be fearful.
You should go out from before him;
don't stand against something bad.
Because he can do anything that he purposes,
[4]in that the king's word has power,
And who can say to him, 'What are you doing?';
[5]one who keeps an order will not know something bad.
And the time to exercise authority
the mind of a smart person will know.
[6]Because for every purpose there's a time to exercise authority,
when what is bad for a person is great for him.
[7]Because he doesn't know what will happen,
because who can tell him when it will happen?
[8]There's no one who has power over the spirit,
to restrain the spirit,
And there's no one who has power
over the day of death.
There's no discharge during a battle,
and faithlessness cannot rescue the people who are masters of it.

[9]All this I saw as I gave my mind to every action that occurs under the sun, the time when a human being held power over a human being, with bad results for him. [10]And then I saw faithless people buried, when they came from the sacred place. They went about and they were put out of mind in the town where they had so acted. This too is hollow.

To eat and to drink and to rejoice

[11]When the edict regarding something bad isn't enacted quickly, consequently the mind of people inside them is full of dealing badly, [12]when a wrongdoer does something bad a hundred times, and it is extended for him. Because I do know that

It will be good for people who live in awe of God,
because they live in awe of him,
[13]And it will not be good for the faithless person
and he won't extend his days, like a shadow, because he doesn't live in awe of God.

[14]There's a hollowness that occurs on the earth, that there are faithful people to whom things befall in accordance with the action of the faithless, and there are faithless people to whom things befall in accordance with the action of the faithful. I said, 'This too is hollow.' [15]So I myself extolled rejoicing, because there's no good for a person under the sun except to eat and to drink and to rejoice. That can accompany him in his labour for the days of his life that God has given him under the sun.

[16]When I gave my mind to knowing smartness and looking at the busyness that is fulfilled on the earth (because even day and night one does not see sleep with one's eyes), [17]and looked at all the action of God: a human being cannot find out about the action that is undertaken under the sun. When a human being persists in seeking, he doesn't find. Even if a smart person says he'll know, he cannot find out.

Remember you're going to die

9 Because all this I put into my mind, and I sifted all this, that faithful and smart people and their acts of service are in God's hands. Both love and hostility: a person doesn't know anything beforehand. [2]Everything is as it is for everyone. One experience comes to the faithful person and to the faithless, to the good and to the pure and to the polluted, to the person who sacrifices and to the person who doesn't sacrifice. As the good person so is the wrongdoer. The person who swears is like the person who is afraid of an oath. [3]This is something bad about everything that occurs under the sun, that there is one experience for everyone.

Further, the mind of human beings is full of bad things and there is madness in their mind during their life, and afterwards – to the dead. [4]Because whoever is joined to all the living – there is confidence, because a living dog is better than a dead lion. [5]Because the living know that they will die, but the dead don't know anything. There is no more reward for them, because their commemoration has gone out of mind. [6]Both their love and their hostility and their passion has already perished. They have no more share permanently in all that occurs under the sun.

[7]Go, eat your bread with rejoicing, drink your wine with a good mind, because God has already approved your actions. [8]At all times your clothes should be white and oil should not be lacking on your head. [9]See life with the woman that you love all the days of your hollow life that you've been given under the sun, all your hollow days, because that is your share in life and in your labour that you expend under the sun. [10]Everything that your hand finds to do, do with all your energy, because there is no action,

thought, knowledge or smartness in She'ol, where you're going.

. . . and it may be sooner than you think

[11]I again saw under the sun that

The race doesn't belong to the swift people,
the battle doesn't belong to the strong people,
Nor bread to the smart people,
nor wealth to the discerning people,
Nor grace to the knowledgeable people,
because time and chance happen to all of them.

[12]Rather, a person cannot know his time.

Like fish that are taken in a bad net
and like birds that are taken by a trap,

like them, human beings are snared by a bad time when it falls on them suddenly.
[13]This too I've seen as smartness under the sun, and it seemed big to me. [14]There was a small town and the people in it were few. A big king came to it, surrounded it and built big strongholds against it. [15]There was found in it a poor man who was smart, and he saved the town by his smartness, but no one was mindful of that poor man. [16]I myself said,

Smartness is better than strength,
but the poor man's smartness is despised
and his words are not listened to.
[17]The words of smart people with calmness
are listened to more than the crying out of a ruler among dimwits.
[18]Smartness is better than implements of engagement,
but one wrongdoer can obliterate much good.
10 When dead flies make a stink, they ferment the perfumer's oil.

Outweighing smartness, splendour,
is a little idiocy.
[2]The mind of a smart person goes to his right,
the mind of a dimwit goes to his left.
[3]Further, on a journey, as an idiot goes, his sense is lacking,
and he tells everyone that he's an idiot.
[4]If the spirit of the ruler arises against you,
don't let go of your place,
because calmness can let go of great wrongdoings.

The distressing dynamics of smartness and power

[5]There's something bad I've seen under the sun,
the very error that comes from someone holding power:
[6]Idiocy has been put in many high positions,
and wealthy people sit in a lowly place.
[7]I've seen servants on horses,
and officials walking on the ground like servants.
[8]The person who digs a pit falls into it;
the person who breaks down a wall – a snake bites him.
[9]The person who quarries stones is hurt by them;
the person who splits logs is endangered by them.
[10]If the iron has become dull,
and he hasn't sharpened it before,
He must exert more force,
so smartness is a value for giving success.
[11]If the snake bites when there's no spell,
there's no value in a master of the tongue.
[12]The words from the smart person's mouth mean grace,
but the lips of a dimwit swallow him.
[13]The beginning of the words from his mouth is idiocy
and the end of his mouth is bad madness,
[14]But the idiot multiplies words,
though a person doesn't know what will happen.

And what will happen after him,
who can tell him?
[15]The labour of dimwits wearies him,
because he doesn't know how to go to a town.
[16]Alas for you, country whose king is a youth
and whose ministers eat in the morning.
[17]Your blessings, country whose king is one born of important people
and whose officials eat at the proper time,
for strength and not drinking.
[18]Through laziness the roof sags,
through drooping hands the house drips.
[19]For fun people make a meal,
wine rejoices life;
silver answers everything.
[20]Even in your thinking don't slight the king,
and in your bedroom don't slight a wealthy person,
Because a bird of the heavens may make the sound travel,
an owner of wings may tell of the thing.

Enjoy your life . . .

11 Send off your bread on the surface of the water,
because in an abundance of days you will find it.
[2]Give a share to seven or even to eight,
because you don't know what bad thing may happen on the earth.
[3]If the clouds fill,
they will pour down rain on the earth;
If a tree falls
on the south or on the north,
In the place where the tree falls,
there it will be.
[4]Someone who keeps watch on the wind will not sow,
and someone who sees the clouds will not reap.
[5]As you don't know the way of the wind,
like the limbs in the womb of a pregnant woman,
So you don't know the action of God
who does everything.
[6]In the morning sow your seed
and at evening don't let your hand relax,
Because you don't know
which one will succeed,
This one or the other,
or if both of them will be equally good.

[7]The light is sweet
and it's good for the eyes to see the sun.
[8]Because if a person lives many years,
he should rejoice in all of them.
But be mindful of the days of darkness,
because they will be many; everything that will come is hollow.
[9]Rejoice, young man, during your youth;
your mind should make you feel good in the days of your youth.
Walk about in the ways of your mind
and in the sights of your eyes.
But acknowledge that for all these things
God will bring you to account.

Mindful of your creator

[10]So remove vexation from your mind
and make what is bad pass from your body
Because youth and vigour are hollow.
12 So be mindful of your creator in the days of your youth,
Before the bad days come,
and the years arrive of which you'll say,
'There's no purpose for me in them',

[2]before it goes dark,
The sun, the light, the moon and the stars,
and the clouds come back after the rain,
[3]On the day when the keepers of the house tremble,
and the strong men stoop.
The women who grind stop because they are few,
and the women who look through the windows get dark.
[4]The gateways to the street are shut,
as the sound of the mill becomes low.
One gets up at the sound of a bird,
but all the songs get weak.
[5]Further, people are afraid of a height
and there are terrors on the road.
The almond blossoms, the grasshopper carries itself along,
and the caperberry bears fruit.
But the human being is going to his eternal home
and the mourners are coming round in the street –
[6]Before the silver cord snaps,
and the gold bowl breaks,
The jar shatters at the spring,
and the wheel breaks at the cistern,
[7]The earth goes back to the ground as it was,
and the spirit goes back to the God who gave it.
[8]Utter hollowness, said Congregant,
utter hollowness, everything is hollow.

[9]But further: because Congregant was smart, he still taught the people knowledge. He weighed and examined, set in order many aphorisms. [10]Congregant sought to find purposeful words, and what is written was upright. Truthful words, [11]smart words, are like goads; the masters of collections are like fixed nails. They were given by one shepherd.

[12]But further, beyond these, son, beware. Of the making of many books there is no end, and much study is a wearying of the body. [13]The end of the thing; everything has been heard. Live in awe of God and keep his orders, because this is for everyone. [14]Because God brings every action to account, including everything hidden, whether good or bad.

Song of Songs

The expression ‘song of songs’ means it’s ‘the best song’. It’s a series of poems about the relationship between two people who are in love. They are poems that describe in an imaginative way moments in a relationship. They may all refer to the same relationship or they may be separate imaginative compositions; there are no indications that they are poems that tell one couple’s story. The relationship between the two people is evidently exclusive and it implies a commitment that will surely be lifelong, but the two are not living together, so they are apparently not married. Further, they speak of tensions and conflicts in the community over their relationship, so their relationship is apparently not yet ‘official’ in the community. They are not betrothed, though in their own minds and hearts they are evidently committed.

The opening description of the songs as Solomonic marks them as expressions of wisdom or smartness in the same way as Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. They are the kind of smart teaching of which Solomon was the patron. The description need not imply that he composed the poems, and what we know of him from his story in Kings and Chronicles doesn’t suggest he would have had the kind of experience or would think the kind of way that the poems do. Indeed, he would have a lot to learn from them. (In the imaginative picture in chapter 3, the emphasis lies on his opulence and might rather than on his love.)

There are expressions in the poems that can also describe something about relationships between God and his people: ‘I belong to my love and he belongs to me.’ But there are no indications that the poems were written to illustrate that relationship or that they were included in the Scriptures on that basis. Indeed, while the Scriptures do use marriage as an image for the relationship between God and his people, the kind of marriage they have in mind in that connection is one where the husband is master and the wife is submissive. The relationship portrayed in the Song of Songs is egalitarian rather than hierarchical, so that most of it does not correspond to the way relationships between God and his people work.

Like Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, the poems issue from reflection on how life actually works out, and what they do is invite people to live in the light of the reality that they describe. They would thus have things to say to young couples and also to the wider community. They have things to say about the wonder of the relationship between two people, and also about its frustrations, fears and pressures.

The way Hebrew works often indicates whether a male or a female is the speaker, and in these poems it is therefore generally possible to know when the man is speaking and when the woman is speaking.

Alone together

1 The Song of Songs, which is Shelomoh’s [Solomon’s].

Woman

2 May he kiss me with some of the kisses of his mouth! –
because your love is better than wine.
3 The fragrance – your oils are good,
your name is oil poured out.
Therefore girls love you;
4 pull me after you, let’s run.
The king has brought me into his rooms;
let’s celebrate and rejoice in you.
Let’s make mention of your love more than wine;
rightly they love you.

5 I am dark but lovely,
Yerushalaim daughters,
Like the tents of Qedar,
like Shelomoh’s curtains.
6 Don’t look at me because I’m dark-skinned,
because the sun has stared at me.
My mother’s sons were enraged with me,
they made me someone who guards the vineyards.
My vineyard, the one I had,
I didn’t guard.
7 Tell me, you whom my entire being loves,
where do you pasture,
where do you rest them at midday?
Why should I be like someone covering herself
by the flocks of your companions?

Man [8]If you don't know for yourself,
loveliest of women,
Get yourself out in the tracks of the flock,
pasture your goats
by the shepherds' dwellings.
[9]To a mare among Par'oh's [Pharaoh's] chariots
I have compared you, my dear.
[10]Lovely are your cheeks with earrings,
your neck with necklaces;
[11]We will make gold earrings for you,
with studs of silver.

Woman [12]While the king was on his couch,
my nard gave its fragrance.
[13]My love to me is a bag of myrrh
that lodges between my breasts.
[14]My love to me is a cluster of henna
in the vineyards of Gedi Spring.

Man [15]There you are, so lovely, my dear;
there you are, so lovely, your eyes doves.

The crocus and the apricot

Woman [16]There you are so lovely, my love,
yes beautiful, yes our couch is verdant.
[17]Cedars are the beams of our house,
junipers our rafters.
2 I am a crocus of Sharon, a lotus of the vales.

Man [2]Like a lotus among thorns,
so is my dear among the daughters.

Woman [3]Like an apricot among the trees of the forest,
so is my love among the sons.
In its shade I desired to sit,
and its fruit was sweet to my palate.
[4]He brought me into the house of wine,
and love was his standard over me.
[5]Refresh me with raisins, revive me with apricots,
because I'm ill with love.
[6]His left arm under my head,
his right arm would embrace me.
[7]I want you to swear, Yerushalaim daughters,
by the gazelles or by the deer in the fields:
If you awaken, if you arouse love,
before it wishes . . .

[8]The sound of my love! – there, he's coming,
leaping over the mountains, bounding over the hills.
[9]My love is like a gazelle,
or a young stag.

There, he's standing, behind our wall,
gazing from the window, peering from the lattice.

[10]My love affirmed and said to me:
'Get yourself up, my dear,
my lovely one, and get yourself going!
[11]Because there – the winter has passed,
the rain has stopped and taken itself off.
[12]The blossoms have appeared in the country,
the time of music has arrived,
The voice of the dove
has made itself heard in our country.
[13]The fig tree has ripened its green fruit,
the blossoming vines have given their fragrance.
Get yourself up, my dear,
my lovely one, and get yourself going!
[14]My dove, in the clefts of the crag,
in the hiddenness of the cliff,
Let me see your appearance,
let me hear your voice.
Because your voice is pleasing,
your appearance is alluring.'

[15]Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes,
ruining the vineyards, when our vineyards are in blossom.

My love is mine and I am his

Woman

[16]My love belongs to me and I belong to him,
the one who pastures among the lotuses.
[17]While the day breathes and the shadows flee,
turn round, be like a gazelle, my love,
or a young stag on the Beter Mountains.

3 On my bed by night, I searched for the one my entire being loves;
I searched for him but didn't find him.
[2]'I'll get up, please, and go round the town,
through the streets and through the squares.
I'll search for the one my entire being loves;
I've searched for him but not found him.'
[3]The watchmen found me as they went round the town:
'Have you seen the one my entire being loves?'
[4]Scarcely had I passed them,
when I found the one my entire being loves.
I took hold of him and wouldn't slacken hold of him,
until I'd brought him to my mother's house,
to the room of the one who conceived me.
[5]I want you to swear, Yerushalaim daughters,
by the gazelles or by the deer in the fields:
If you awaken, if you arouse love,
before it wishes . . .

Man

[6]Who is this coming up from the wilderness,
like columns of smoke,
Perfumed with myrrh and incense,

from every powder of a merchant?
[7]There, Shelomoh's bed,
60 strong men round it,
of the strong men of Israel.
[8]All of them are girded with a sword,
trained in battle,
Each with his sword on his side,
because of the terror of the night.
[9]King Shelomoh had made himself a sedan,
of wood from the Lebanon.
[10]He had made its posts of silver,
its base of gold, its seat of purple.
Its inside was inlaid with love
by the Yerushalaim daughters.
[11]Go out and look, Tsiyyon [Zion] daughters,
at King Shelomoh in the crown
With which his mother has crowned him on his wedding day,
on the day of his heartfelt rejoicing.

Crazy for love

Man

4 There you are, so lovely, my dear, there you are, so lovely.
Your eyes are doves
behind your veil.
Your hair is like a flock of goats
that stream from Mount Gil'ad.
[2]Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes
that climb up from the washing,
Which are all of them twinning,
and there's none bereaved among them.
[3]Like a crimson ribbon are your lips;
your mouth is lovely.
Like the splitting of a pomegranate
is your brow behind your veil.
[4]Like David's Tower is your neck,
built in courses,
Hung with a thousand shields on it,
all the bows of strong men.
[5]Your two breasts are like two fawns,
the twins of a gazelle pasturing among the lotuses.
[6]While the day breathes,
and the shadows flee,
I'll get myself to the mountain of myrrh,
to the hill of incense.
[7]Every part of you is lovely, my dear;
there's no flaw in you.
[8]With me from Lebanon, my bride,
with me from Lebanon, you should come!
You should gaze from the top of Amana,
from the top of Senir and Hermon,
From the abodes of lions,
from the mountains of leopards.

[9]You've captured my heart, my sister, my bride, you've captured my heart,
with one of your eyes,
with one strand of your necklace.
[10]How beautiful is your love,
my sister, my bride!
How much better is your love than wine,
the fragrance of your oils than all perfumes!
[11]Your lips drop honey, my bride;
syrup and milk are under your tongue.
The fragrance of your robes
is like the fragrance of Lebanon.
[12]A locked garden, my sister, my bride,
a locked fountain, a sealed fountain:
[13]Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates,
with choice fruit,
Henna with much spikenard,
[14]spikenard and saffron,
Cane and cinnamon,
with all the incense woods,
Myrrh and aloes,
with all the top perfumes:
[15]A garden spring,
a well of living water,
flowing from Lebanon.

Nightmares and dreams

Woman [16]Awake, north wind, and come, south wind,
breathe on my garden so its perfumes may spread.
May my love come to his garden,
and eat its choice fruit!

Man 5 I've come to my garden, my sister, my bride.
I've plucked my myrrh with its perfume.

Girls Eat, friends, drink,
get drunk on love.

Woman [2]I was sleeping, but my mind was awake;
the sound of my love, knocking!
'Open for me, my sister, my dear,
my dove, my perfect one.
My head is full of dew,
my hair with the moisture of night.'
[3]'I've taken off my robe; how can I get dressed?
I've washed my feet, how can I get them dirty?'
[4]My love put out his hand through the hole;
my heart was in turmoil for him.
[5]I myself got up to open to my love;
my hands dripped with myrrh.
So my fingers were flowing myrrh
on the hollows of the bolt.
[6]I myself opened the door for my love,

but my love had turned, passed on.
My entire being had gone out at his speaking;
I looked for him but I didn't find him,
I called him, but he didn't answer me.
[7]The watchmen found me as they went round the town;
they struck me down, injured me.
They took my shawl from upon me,
the watchmen on the walls.
[8]I want you to swear, Yerushalaim daughters,
if you find my love:
What are you to tell him?
– that I am ill with love.

How is your love more than another love?

Girls

[9]How is your love more than another love,
most beautiful among women?
How is your love more than another love,
that you want us to swear in that way?

Woman

[10]My love is radiant and ruddy,
outstanding among ten thousand.
[11]His head is gold, fine gold;
his hair curly, black as a raven.
[12]His eyes are like doves by water canyons,
bathing in milk, sitting by a full pool.
[13]His cheeks like a bed of spice,
towers of perfumes.
His lips are lotuses,
dripping flowing myrrh.
[14]His hands are gold rods,
covered in Tarshish-stone.
His stomach is an ivory plate,
overlaid with sapphires.
[15]His legs are alabaster pillars,
founded on sockets of fine gold.
His appearance is like the Lebanon,
choice as the cedars.
[16]His palate is total sweetness;
all of him is desirable.
This is my love, this is my dear,
Yerushalaim daughters!

Girls

6 Where has your love gone, loveliest among women?
Where has your love turned his face,
so we may search for him with you?

Woman

[2]My love has gone down to his garden,
to the beds of spice,
To pasture in the gardens,
and to pick lotuses.
[3]I belong to my love and my love belongs to me,
the one who pastures among the lotuses.

Man [4]You're beautiful, my dear, as Tirtsah,
lovely as Yerushalaim, awe-inspiring as bannered armies.
[5]Turn your eyes round from in front of me;
they – they overwhelm me.
Your hair is like a flock of goats
that stream from Mount Gil'ad.
[6]Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes
that climb up from the washing,
Which are all of them twinning,
and there's none bereaved among them.
[7]Like the splitting of a pomegranate
is your brow behind your veil.
[8]There are 60 queens,
80 secondary wives,
Girls without number;
[9]my dove, my perfect one, is unique.
She's unique to her mother,
she's special to the one who gave birth to her.
Daughters have seen her and called her blessed;
queens and secondary wives have praised her.

His desire is towards me

Girls [10]Who is this who looks out like the dawn,
beautiful as the moon,
Special like the sun,
awe-inspiring as bannered armies?

Woman [11]I went down to the garden of nut-trees
to see the blossoms in the wadi,
To see the budding of the vine,
whether the pomegranates had bloomed.
[12]Though I didn't know,
my entire being set me with the chariots of my generous people.

Girls [13]Turn back, turn back, Shulammite;
Turn back, turn back, so we may behold you!

Man Why will you behold the Shulammite,
like the Mahanayim dance?

7 How beautiful are your feet in sandals, noble daughter!
The curves of your hips are like rings,
the work of a craftsman's hands.
[2]Your navel is a round bowl;
mixed wine will not be lacking.
Your waist is a heap of wheat,
encircled by lotuses.
[3]Your two breasts are like two fawns,
the twins of a gazelle.
[4]Your neck is like an ivory tower,
your eyes are pools at Heshbon,
By the gate of Bat-rabbim,
your nose like the Lebanon tower,
Watching towards Damascus,

[5]your head upon you like Carmel,
The locks on your head like purple;
a king is captivated by your tresses.
[6]How beautiful you are, how lovely you are,
love with delights;
[7]This, your stature, is like a palm,
your breasts are clusters.
[8]I've said, I shall climb the palm,
I'll take hold of its stems.
May your breasts please be like the clusters of the vine,
the fragrance of your breath like apricots,
[9]your palate like good wine.

Woman
It goes straight to my love,
gliding over the lips of sleepers.
[10]I belong to my love
and his desire is towards me.
[11]Come, my love, let's go out to the fields,
let's lodge in the hamlets.
[12]Let's start early for the vineyards,
let's see if the vine has budded,
The blossom has opened, the pomegranates have bloomed;
there I'll give my love to you.
[13]The mandrakes have given fragrance,
and at our doors are all choice things.
Fresh and also old things, my love,
I've stored for you.

Love is as fierce as death

Woman
8 If only you could be made like a brother to me,
one who was nursing at my mother's breasts.
When I found you in the street I could kiss you;
people would not despise me, either.
[2]I would lead you, I would bring you,
to the house of my mother, the one who taught me.
I would get you to drink some spiced wine,
some of my pomegranate juice.
[3]His left hand would be under my head,
his right hand would hold me.
[4]I want you to swear, Yerushalaim daughters, don't awaken,
don't arouse love, before it wishes.

Girls
[5]Who is this coming up from the wilderness,
leaning on her love?

Woman
Under the apricot tree I aroused you;
there your mother conceived you,
there the one who gave birth to you conceived you.
[6]Make me like a seal on your heart,
like a seal on your arm.
Because love is as fierce as death,
passion as tough as She'ol.

Its darts are darts of fire,
a supernatural flame.
[7]Much water could not quench love,
nor rivers overflow it.
If someone gave all his household's resources for love,
people would totally despise him.

Boys [8]We have a little sister;
she doesn't have breasts.
What shall we do for our sister
on the day when she's spoken for?
[9]If she's a wall,
we'll build on it a silver battlement.
If she's a door,
we'll enclose it with cedar panelling.

Woman [10]I am a wall
and my breasts are like towers;
Then I've become in his eyes
like one who finds well-being.
[11]Shelomoh had a vineyard
in Ba'al Hamon;
He gave the vineyard to guards;
someone would give for its fruit
a thousand silver pieces.
[12]My vineyard is before me;
the thousand are yours, Shelomoh,
and 200 for the people who guard the fruit.

Man [13]You who live in the gardens, with friends listening:
let me hear your voice.

Woman [14]Take flight, my love,
be like a gazelle,
Or like a young stag,
on the mountains of spices.

Isaiah

The book of Isaiah [Yesha'yahu] is a collection of prophecies addressed to the people of Judah. Isaiah lived in the 700s bc, a time of crisis for Judah associated with the expansion of the Assyrian Empire into the region. A major focus of Isaiah's prophecies concerns how Judah needs to deal with different aspects of the challenge this crisis brings.

- Chapters 1—12 give dates in the time of King Ahaz, the 730s, when Ephraim and Syria are leaning on Judah to resist Assyria, and Isaiah urges Judah to trust God for its future.
- Chapters 13—23 speak of what God intends to do in relation to the other peoples around Judah, so as to urge Judah not to be afraid of them but not to trust them either.
- Chapters 24—27 widen the horizon to speak of God's purpose for the world as a whole.
- Chapters 28—39 return to focus directly on Judah, but now in the time of King Hezekiah, the 700s, when Ephraim and Syria have fallen and Judah is seeking help from Egypt in order to resist Assyria.

Isaiah's prophecies are thus quite coherently organized on a large scale, though readers are often bemused about the train of thought within these major collections of chapters. The chapters collect short prophecies delivered on different occasions. So any given chapter probably brings together several separate prophecies that did not originally belong together.

Isaiah wants Judah and its king to live by trust in the commitment Yahweh made to David and his successors and to Jerusalem as the place he himself deigned to dwell. The promises that work out God's commitment to David are ones that help us understand Jesus. But in origin they brought God's word to his people in Isaiah's day. So Christians need to read them as indications of the way God was speaking to his people in that context and as promises that can help us understand Jesus, and understand what God still intends to do.

The first 39 chapters of Isaiah close with a declaration that members of Hezekiah's family are going to end up in exile in Babylon. It happened a century or so later. When we then turn over the page into Isaiah 40 we read a message of comfort to those exiles: the time of their restoration from exile has arrived. Babylon is about to fall to the Persians, which happened in 539 BC.

These prophecies are not couched as promises that one day Yahweh will restore his people. They are declarations that Yahweh is taking that action now. The implication is that they were given in the sixth century, not the eighth century. In the chapters that follow Isaiah 40 we can see links with earlier prophecies in the book. They continue to use Isaiah's favourite title for Yahweh, that he is 'Israel's Holy One' or 'Sacred One'. So in these chapters a prophet or a series of prophets are taking up Isaiah's message and proclaiming what he would say if he were here now. He had spoken of how Yahweh's being Israel's Holy One had been bad news – it meant Yahweh was going to discipline Judah for its rebellion against him. These chapters declare that Yahweh's being Israel's Holy One is now good news for Judah – it is this Holy One who is their restorer. Once again there are prophecies that helped the New Testament understand the significance of Jesus, particularly Isaiah 52.13—53.12. It describes a servant of God who has been persecuted but will be restored. This description will have applied to someone in the prophet's day, but it helped Jesus and people who believed in Jesus to understand him.

When we turn over the page again after Isaiah 40—55, we discover that the situation has again moved on. Isaiah 56—66 relates to the situation of Judah when people have been free to return there after their exile but where things are not as wonderful as they might have expected, and they bring together messages designed to enable the community to live in that context and keep being hopeful and committed. In Isaiah 61 there is a testimony by a prophet called to bring that message, and it is another chapter that Jesus took up and applied to himself.

Haven't you had enough?

1 The vision of Yesha'yahu ben Amots which he beheld concerning Yehudah and Yerushalaim in the days of Uzziyyahu, Yotam, Ahaz and Yehizqiyyahu [Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah], kings of Yehudah.

[2]Listen, heavens, give ear, earth,
because Yahweh has spoken.
I reared children, I raised them,
but they – they rebelled against me.
[3]An ox acknowledges its owner,
a donkey its master's manger.
Yisra'el doesn't acknowledge,
my people doesn't show any discernment.
[4]Hey, wrongdoing nation,
a people heavy with waywardness!
Offspring of people who deal badly, devastating children,
they've abandoned Yahweh.
They've disdained Yisra'el's sacred one,
they've become estranged, backwards.

[5]Why will you be struck down more,
continue being defiant?
The whole head has come to sickness,
the whole mind is faint.
[6]From the sole of the foot to the head,

there's no integrity in it.
Bruise, blotch, fresh wound –
they haven't been pressed out.
They haven't been bandaged,
it hasn't been softened with oil.
[7]Your country's a desolation,
your towns burned with fire.
Your land – in front of you,
foreigners are consuming it,
A desolation, quite overthrown by foreigners,
[8]and Miss Tsiyyon [Zion] is left like a shelter in a vineyard,
Like a place to stay the night in a melon field,
like a town besieged.
[9]Had Yahweh of Armies
not left us survivors, a few,
We'd have been like Sedom [Sodom],
we'd have resembled Amorah [Gomorrah].

I'm fed up to the teeth with your worship

[10]Listen to Yahweh's word,
rulers of Sedom!
Give ear to our God's instruction,
people of Amorah!
[11]What use to me is the large number of your sacrifices?
(Yahweh says).
I'm full of burnt offerings of rams
and the fat of fatlings.
In the blood of bulls and lambs and goats
I do not delight.
[12]When you come to appear to my face,
who sought this from your hand?
Trampling my courtyards – [13]you will do it no more,
bringing an empty offering.
Incense is an offence to me,
new month and sabbath, the calling of a convocation.
I cannot bear trouble and assembly;
[14]your new moons and your appointed times my entire being dislikes.
They've become a burden to me
that I'm weary of carrying.
[15]And when you spread the palms of your hands,
I shall lift up my eyes from you.
Even when you offer many a plea,
there will be no listening on my part.
Your hands are full of bloodshed –
[16]wash, get clean.
Remove the badness of your practices
from in front of my eyes.
Stop dealing badly,
[17]learn doing good.
Require the exercise of authority, put the oppressor right,
exercise authority for the orphan, argue for the widow.

[18]Come on, please, let's argue it out
(Yahweh says).
If your wrongdoings are like scarlet,
they're to be white like snow.
If they're red like crimson,
they're to be like wool.
[19]If you're willing and you listen,
you will consume the good things of the country.
[20]But if you refuse and rebel,
you'll be consumed by the sword;
because Yahweh's mouth has spoken.

Second-degree manslaughter

[21]Aagh, she's become a whore,
the trustworthy township, full of the exercise of authority.
Faithfulness was lodging in it,
but now murderers.
[22]Your silver has become slag,
your drink is diluted with water.
[23]Your officers are defiant, the associates of thieves;
every one of them loves a bribe, chases gifts.
They don't exercise authority for the orphan;
the widow's cause doesn't come to them.

[24]Therefore the declaration of the Lord,
Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's champion, is:
'Hey, I shall get relief from my adversaries,
take redress from my enemies,
[25]turn back my hand against you.

But I shall smelt your slag as with lye,
remove all your contamination.
[26]I shall restore your leaders as of old,
your counsellors as at the beginning.
Afterwards you will be called faithful town,
trustworthy township.'

[27]Tsiyyon will find redemption through the exercise of authority,
and the people in it who turn back, through faithfulness.
[28]But there will be a breaking of rebels and wrongdoers, all together,
and the people who abandon Yahweh will be finished.
[29]Because they'll be shamed on account of the oaks that you desired;
you will be confounded on account of the gardens that you chose.
[30]Because you'll be like an oak wilting of foliage,
like a garden for which there's no water.
[31]The strong person will become tinder,
his work a spark.
The two of them will burn all together,
and there will be no one quenching.

2 The word that Yesha'yahu ben Amots beheld concerning Yehudah and Yerushalaim.

Study war no more

[2]It will come about at the end of the time:

The mountain of Yahweh's house will have become established
at the head of the mountains, and it will lift up higher than the hills.
All the nations will stream to it;
[3]many peoples will come and say,
'Come on, let's go up to Yahweh's mountain,
to the house of Ya'aqob's [Jacob's] God,
So he may instruct us in his ways,
and we may walk in his paths.'
Because instruction will go out from Tsiyyon,
Yahweh's word from Yerushalaim.
[4]He will exercise authority among the nations,
and issue reproof to many peoples.
They'll beat their swords into hoes,
their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation will not carry sword against nation;
they will no more learn about battle.
[5]Ya'aqob's household, come on,
let's walk by Yahweh's light.

[6]Because you have left your people alone,
Ya'aqob's household.
Because they are full from the east,
yes, of diviners like the Pelishtites [Philistines],
and they abound in children of foreigners.

[7]Its country's full of silver and gold;
there's no end to its treasures.
Its country's full of horses;
there's no end to its chariots.
[8]Its country's full of non-entities;
they bow low to the making of their hands,
to what their fingers made.
[9]So humanity bows down, the individual falls down
(may you not carry them).

[10]Come into the crag,
bury yourself in the earth,
Before the fearfulness of Yahweh,
from the dreadfulness of his majesty.
[11]Lofty human eyes have fallen down,
the exaltedness of individuals has bowed down.
Yahweh alone will be on high
on that day.

The destiny of all that is humanly impressive

[12]Because Yahweh of Armies has a day
against all majesty and exaltedness,
Against all that is high –
and it will fall down,
[13]Against all the cedars of the Lebanon, exalted and high,
against all the oaks of the Bashan,
[14]Against all the exalted mountains,
against all the high hills,
[15]Against every lofty tower,
against every fortified wall,
[16]Against every Tarshish ship,
against all the impressive vessels.
[17]Human loftiness will bow down,
people's exaltedness will fall down.
Yahweh alone will be on high on that day;
[18]non-entities – they will completely vanish.
[19]People will go into caves in the crags,
into holes in the earth,
From before the fearfulness of Yahweh,
from the dreadfulness of his majesty,
when he arises to terrify the country.
[20]On that day humanity will throw away
its silver non-entities and its gold non-entities,
Which they made for it to bow down to,
to the moles and to the bats,
[21]To come into the clefts in the crags,
into the crevices in the cliffs,
Before the fearfulness of Yahweh,
from the dreadfulness of his majesty.
when he arises to terrify the earth,
[22]Get yourselves away from humanity,
that has breath in its nostrils,
because what is it to count for?

You have a coat, you can be a leader

3 Because there,
the Lord Yahweh of Armies
Is removing from Yerushalaim and from Yehudah
supply and support:
All supply of bread
and all supply of water,
[2]Strong man and man of battle,
leader and prophet, diviner and elder,
[3]Officer over 50, person held in high regard, counsellor,

person smart with charms and understanding chants.
[4]I will make youths their officials;
infants will rule over them.
[5]The people will oppress one another,
each his neighbour.
The youth will be arrogant towards the elder,
one who is slighted towards someone honourable.
[6]Because a man will seize one of his brothers,
his father's household:
'You have a coat, you will be a leader for us,
this ruin will be under your hand.'
[7]On that day he will shout,
'I won't be one to bind up.
In my house there's no bread and no coat –
you won't make me leader of the people.'

[8]Because Yerushalaim has collapsed,
Yehudah has fallen.
Because their tongue and their practices have been towards Yahweh
to be rebellious against his glorious eyes.
[9]The look on their face testifies against them;
they declare their wrongdoing like Sedom and don't hide it.
Aagh, for their lives,
because they have dealt themselves bad fortune.
[10]Say of the faithful person, 'It will be good',
because they will eat the fruit of their practices.
[11]Aagh, for the faithless person, 'It will be bad',
because the dealing of his hands will be done to him.
[12]My people – infants are their bosses,
women rule over them.
My people – your guides make you wander;
they've swallowed up the course of your paths.

[13]Yahweh is taking his stand to argue,
he's rising to give judgement for peoples.
[14]Yahweh will come in the exercise of authority
with his people's elders and its officials.
'You – you've burned up the vineyard,
the humble person's plunder is in your houses.
[15]What do you mean that you crush my people,
grind the faces of humble ones?
(a declaration of the Lord Yahweh of Armies).'

Dresses, shawls and purses

[16]Yahweh has said:

Since Tsiyyon's daughters are lofty,
and walk outstretched with their neck,
Flirting with their eyes,
walking and mincing as they walk,
and they jingle with their feet,
[17]The Lord will bare the crown of Tsiyyon's daughters,
Yahweh will expose their forehead.
[18]On that day the Lord will remove the splendour of the anklets, the bands and the necklaces, [19]the earrings, the bracelets and the veils, [20]the hats, the armlets, the scarves, the amulets and the charms, [21]the rings and the nose rings, [22]the dresses, the capes, the shawls, the purses, [23]the gowns, the vests, the tiaras, the veils and the sashes.

[24]Instead of perfume there will be a stench;
instead of a wrap, a rope;
Instead of a hairdo, a shorn head;
instead of a robe, a wrapping of sack;
branding instead of beauty.
[25]Your men [Tsiyyon] will fall by the sword,
your strength by battle.
[26]Her gateways will lament and mourn;

she'll be empty, she'll sit on the ground.
4 Seven women will take strong hold of one man
on that day,
Saying, 'We'll eat our bread,
we'll wear our clothes,
Only may your name be called out over us –
gather up our reviling.'

[2]On that day, Yahweh's shoot will be
for beauty and for splendour,
And the country's fruit
for majesty and for glory for Yisra'el's escape group.
[3]What remains in Tsiyyon,
what is left in Yerushalaim –
'Sacred' will be said of it,
everyone who's been written down for life in Yerushalaim.

[4]If the Lord has washed away
the filth of Tsiyyon's daughters,
And cleanses from within it
the shed blood of Yerushalaim,
By a spirit of the exercise of authority
and by a spirit of burning away,
[5]Yahweh will create
over the entire establishment of Mount Tsiyyon,
and over its meeting place,
A cloud by day, and smoke,
and a brightness of flaming fire by night.
Because over all the splendour will be a canopy,
[6]and it will be a bivouac,
For shade by day from the heat,
and for shelter and for a hiding place from storm and from rain.

A singer-songwriter's strange song

5 I want to sing a song for my friend,
my love song about his vineyard.
My friend had a vineyard
on a fertile ridge.
[2]He dug it and stoned it,
and planted it with choice vine.
He built a tower in the middle of it,
and also hewed a press in it.
He hoped it would make grapes,
but it made rotten grapes.
[3]So now, population of Yerushalaim,
people of Yehudah,
decide, please, between me and my vineyard.
[4]What more was there to do for my vineyard,
and I didn't do in it?
Why, when I hoped for it to make grapes,
did it make rotten grapes?
[5]So now I want to let you know, please,
what I'm doing about my vineyard:
Remove its hedge, so it will be for burning up,
break down its wall so it will be for trampling,
[6]so that I make an end of it.
It won't be pruned and it won't be hoed;
briar and thorn will grow.
I shall order the clouds
not to send rain on it.
[7]Because the vineyard of Yahweh of Armies
is the household of Yisra'el.
The people of Yehudah
are the planting in which he took pleasure.
He hoped for the exercise of authority, but there – blood pouring out;
for faithfulness, but there – a cry.

She'ol has broadened its appetite

[8]Hey, people adding house to house,
who join field to field,
Until there's no room,
and you're made to live alone in the middle of the country.
[9]In my ears Yahweh of Armies [has said]:

If many houses do not become desolation,
big and good ones without inhabitant . . .
[10]Because ten acres of vineyard
will make five gallons.
Ten barrels of seed
will make a barrel.

[11]Hey, people who start early in the morning
so they can chase liquor,
Stay late in the dusk
so wine can inflame them.
[12]There'll be guitar and mandolin,
tambourine and pipe and wine at their banquets.
But Yahweh's deed they don't look to,
the action of his hands they haven't watched.
[13]Therefore my people are going into exile
because of not acknowledging.
Its splendour – hungry people,
its horde – parched with thirst.
[14]Therefore She'ol has broadened its appetite,
opened its mouth without limit.
Its magnificence will go down,
its horde and its din and the one who exults in it.
[15]Human beings bow down, individuals fall down,
the eyes of the lofty fall down.
[16]And Yahweh of Armies is lofty in exercising authority;
the sacred God shows himself sacred in faithfulness.
[17]Lambs will pasture as in their meadow,
aliens will eat the fatlings' wastes.

[18]Hey, people who haul waywardness
with cords of emptiness,
and wrongdoing as with cart ropes,
[19]Who say, 'He should hurry,
he should speed up his action, in order that we may see.
It should draw near and come about,
the counsel of Yisra'el's sacred one, so we may acknowledge.'

[20]Hey, people who say about what is bad, 'Good',
and about what is good, 'Bad',
Who make darkness into light,
and light into darkness,
Who make bitter into sweet,
and sweet into bitter.

Yahweh will whistle

[21]Hey, people who are smart in their eyes,
who in their view are understanding.
[22]Hey, strong men at drinking wine,
forceful people at mixing a drink,
[23]Who declare a faithless person to be in the right
in return for a bribe,
And the faithfulness of the faithful people
they remove from them.
[24]Therefore: like the consuming of straw in a tongue of fire,
when hay sinks down in the flame,
Their root will become veritable rot,
and their blossom will go up like dust,

Because they've rejected the instruction of Yahweh of Armies,
spurned the word of Yisra'el's sacred one.

[25]On account of this Yahweh's anger flared against his people;
he stretched out his hand against it and struck it down.
Mountains shook, and their corpses became
like refuse in the middle of the streets.
For all this his anger did not turn back;
his hand was still stretched out.

[26]He will lift a signal to the nations from afar,
he will whistle to one from the end of the earth,
and there – with speed, quick, it will come.
[27]There's none weary, there's none collapsing, in it;
it doesn't slumber, it doesn't sleep.
The belt on its waist doesn't come loose,
the thong on its boots doesn't break.
[28]Its arrows are sharpened,
all its bows are directed.
Its horses' hoofs are thought of like flint,
its wheels like a whirlwind.
[29]Its roar is like a cougar's;
it roars like lions.
It growls and seizes prey,
and carries it off and there's no one rescuing.
[30]It will growl over it on that day, like the growling of the sea;
and he will look to the land,
And there, darkness, pressure,
and the light will have gone dark with its thunderclouds.

A commission to frighten people into repentance

6 In the year King Uzziyyahu died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty, with his train filling the palace. [2]Seraphs were standing above him; each had six wings. With two it would cover its face, with two it would cover its feet, with two it would fly. [3]One would call to another, 'Sacred, sacred, sacred, Yahweh of Armies, his splendour is the filling of the entire earth.' [4]The doorposts on the sills shook at the sound of the one who called, while the house was filling with smoke.

[5]I said, 'Aagh me, because I'm ruined, because I'm a man polluted of lips, and I live among a people polluted of lips, because my eyes have seen the King, Yahweh of Armies.' [6]But one of the seraphs flew to me, in his hand a coal that he had taken with tongs from on the altar. [7]He made it touch my mouth, and he said, 'There, this has touched your lips, and you waywardness will depart, your wrongdoing will be expiated.'

[8]I heard the Lord's voice saying, 'Whom shall I send, who will go for us?' I said, 'Here I am, send me.' [9]He said,

Go, and say to this people:
'Keep listening, but don't understand,
keep looking, but don't acknowledge.'
[10]Fatten this people's mind,
make its ears heavy, smear its eyes,
So it doesn't see with its eyes and listen with its ears,
and its mind understands and it turns and there is healing for it.

[11]I said, 'For how long, Lord?' He said,

'Until towns have crashed into ruins,
so that there is no inhabitant,
And houses so that there are no people,
and the land crashes into ruins, a desolation.'
[12]Yahweh will send the people away;
vast will be the abandonment in the middle of the country.
[13]When there is still a tenth in it,
it will again be for burning up.
But like a terebinth or like an oak
of which there's a stump after their felling,
the sacred seed will be its stump.

Stand firm in faith, or you won't stand at all

In the days of Ahaz ben Yotam son of Uzziyyahu king of Yehudah, Retsin king of Aram and Peqah ben Remalyahu king of Yisra'el went up to Yerushalaim for a battle against it, but they couldn't do battle against it.

7 [2]It had been told David's household, 'Aram has set down on Ephrayim', and his mind and his people's mind shook like
the trees in a forest shaking before wind. [3]Yahweh said to Yesha'yahu, 'Go out, please, to meet Ahaz, you and "A
Remainder Will Go Back" your son, at the end of the Upper Pool channel at the Washer's Field causeway. [4]You're to say to him,
"Keep watch over yourself, be calm. Don't be afraid; your mind is not to go soft on account of these two stumps of smoking
firewood, because of the angry burning of Retsin and Aram and ben Remalyahu. [5]Since Aram has counselled something bad
against you (Ephrayim and ben Remalyahu), saying [6]'We'll go up against Yehudah and dismay it and break it open for ourselves
and enthrone as king within it ben Tabe'el', [7]the Lord Yahweh has said this:

It won't arise,
    it won't happen.
[8]Because the head of Aram is Dammeseq [Damascus],
    and the head of Aram is Retsin.
Within yet 65 years
    Ephrayim will shatter from being a people.
[9]The head of Ephrayim is Shomron [Samaria],
    and the head of Shomron is ben Remalyahu.
If you don't stand firm in trust,
    indeed you won't stand firm at all."'

[10]Yahweh again spoke to Ahaz: [11]'Ask for yourself a sign from Yahweh your God. Make it deep, to She'ol, or make it lofty to
the heights.' [12]Ahaz said, 'I won't ask, I won't test Yahweh.'
[13]He said, 'Listen, please, household of David. Is it too small for you, wearying human beings, that you weary my God as well?
[14]Therefore the Lord – he will give you a sign. There – a girl is pregnant and she's going to give birth to a son, and she'll name
him Immanu El ['God Is with Us']. [15]He will eat yoghurt and syrup in knowing how to reject the bad and choose the good.
[16]Because before the boy knows how to reject the bad and choose the good, the land whose two kings you're dismayed at will be
abandoned.'

Plunder Hurries Loot Rushes

[17]Yahweh will bring on you and on your people and on your father's household days that have not come since the day
Ephrayim departed from Yehudah (the king of Ashshur).
[18]On that day Yahweh will whistle to the fly that's at the end of the streams of Misrayim [Egypt] and to the bee that's in the
country of Ashshur. [19]They'll come and settle down, all of them, in the steep wadis, in the craggy cliffs, in all the thorn bushes
and in all the watering holes.
[20]On that day the Lord will shave with a razor hired beyond the River (with the king of Ashshur) the head and the hair on the
feet, and it will also sweep away the beard.
[21]On that day someone will keep alive a heifer from the cattle and two from the flock, [22]but from the quantity of the milk they
make he will eat yoghurt, because everyone who's left within the country will eat yoghurt and syrup.
[23]On that day every place where there used to be a thousand vines worth a thousand sheqels of silver will be for briar and for
thorn. [24]With arrows and a bow someone will come there, because the entire country will be briar and thorn. [25]But all the hills that
are hoed with a hoe – the fear of briar and thorn won't come there; it will be for the roaming of oxen and for the trampling of
sheep.
8 Yahweh said to me, 'Get yourself a big panel and write on it with an ordinary stylus, "For Plunder Hurries Loot Rushes".' [2]I
invoked as trustworthy witnesses for me Uriyyahu the priest and Zekaryahu ben Yeberekyahu. [3]I had sex with the prophetess
and she got pregnant and gave birth to a son. Yahweh said to me, 'Call him Plunder Hurries Loot Rushes', [4]because before the
boy knows how to call "father" and "mother", someone will carry off Dammeseq's wealth and Shomron's plunder before the king
of Ashshur.'

Where to look for guidance

[5]Yahweh spoke to me yet further:

[6]Since this people has rejected
    the water of Shiloah, which goes gently
    (and been glad about Retsin and ben Remalyahu),
[7]Therefore: there, the Lord is bringing up against them
    the water of the River, substantial, vast
    (the king of Ashshur and all his splendour).
It will rise up over all its canyons
    and go up over its banks.
[8]It will sweep through Yehudah, flood as it passes over,
    reach as far as its neck.
Its wings spread out will be
    the filling of the breadth of your country.

God is with us:
[9]do what is bad, peoples, and shatter.
Give ear, all you distant parts of the earth;
belt yourselves and shatter,
Belt yourselves and shatter;
[10]take counsel, but it will be contravened.
Speak a word, but it won't arise,
because God is with us.
[11]Because Yahweh said this to me as he took strong hold of my hand so that he might discipline me out of walking in the way of this people:

[12]You shall not say 'conspiracy'
about everything that this people says 'conspiracy' about.
What they're in awe of, you shall not be in awe of,
and not dread.
[13]Yahweh of Armies – regard him as sacred;
he's to be the object of your awe, he your dread.
[14]He's to be a sacred place, but a stone to trip on,
a crag to collapse on,
For the two households of Yisra'el –
a trap and a snare for Yerushalaim's inhabitants.
[15]Many people will collapse on them,
they'll fall and break, be snared and caught.
[16]Bind up the testimony, seal the instruction among my disciples. [17]I shall wait for Yahweh, who's hiding his face from Ya'aqob's household, and I shall hope for him. [18]Here am I and the children Yahweh has given me as signs and portents in Yisra'el from Yahweh of Armies who dwells on Mount Tsiyyon. [19]So when they say to you, 'Enquire of the ghosts and the spirits who chirp and whisper. A people is to enquire of its gods, isn't it, of the dead on behalf of the living, [20]for instruction and testimony': if they do not speak in accordance with this word, for which there will be no dawn . . .

Darkness and dawning

[21]It will pass through it wretched and hungry. When it is hungry it will rage and slight its king and its gods. It will turn its face upwards [22]and look to the earth, but there, pressure and darkness, oppressive gloom, driven murkiness,
because there will be no dawn for the one that experiences oppression.

9

As the earlier time has slighted
the region of Zebulun and the region of Naphtali,
The later one is bringing splendour to the Sea Way,
the other side of the Yarden [Jordan], Galilee of the nations.
[2]The people walking in darkness
has seen big light.
Those living in deathly gloom –
light has shone on them.
[3]You've made the nation many,
you've given it great rejoicing.
They've rejoiced before you like the rejoicing at harvest,
like people who celebrate at the dividing of spoil.
[4]Because the yoke that burdened it,
the rod on its shoulder,
The boss's club over it,
you've shattered as on the day at Midyan.
[5]Because every shoe of someone trampling, with shaking,
and the coat rolled in shed blood,
Have been for burning,
consumed by fire.
[6]Because a child has been born to us,
a son has been given to us,
and government has come on to his shoulder.
People have called him
'An Extraordinary Counsellor Is the Strong Man God,
the Everlasting Father Is an Official for Well-being'.
[7]Of the growing of government and of well-being
there will be no end, on David's throne and on his kingship,
To establish it and support it,
with authority and faithfulness,
From now and permanently;

the passion of Yahweh of Armies will do this.

For all this, his anger did not turn back

[8]The Lord has sent out a word against Ya'aqob,
and it has fallen on Yisra'el.
[9]But the people, all of it, acknowledge it
(Ephrayim and the inhabitants of Shomron)
with loftiness and big-headedness:
[10]'Bricks have fallen, but we'll build with dressed stone;
sycamore-figs have been cut down, but we'll substitute cedars.'
[11]But Yahweh has lifted high the adversaries of Retsin over it,
and spurred on its enemies,
[12]Aram from the east, the Pelishtites from the west,
and they've devoured Yisra'el with their entire mouth.
For all this, his anger did not turn back;
his hand was still stretched out.

[13]The people didn't turn back to the one who hit it;
they haven't enquired of Yahweh of Armies.
[14]So Yahweh cut off from Yisra'el head and tail,
palm branch and reed, in one day.
[15]The elder and the person held in high regard, he is the head,
and the prophet who instructs in falsehood, he is the tail.
[16]The guides of this people became ones who make them wander;
the ones who were guided were people who were swallowed up.
[17]Therefore the Lord does not rejoice over its young men,
and does not show compassion for its widows and orphans,
Because all of it is impious and deals badly,
and every mouth speaks villainy.
For all this, his anger did not turn back;
his hand was still stretched out.

[18]Because faithlessness has burned up like fire,
which consumes briar and thorn.
It set light to the forest thickets,
and they swirled as a column of smoke.
[19]By the fury of Yahweh of Armies
the country was scorched.
The people became like a fire consuming;
one person would not spare his brother.
[20]He carved to the right but was hungry,
and ate to the left but was not full;
An individual eats the flesh of his offspring,
[21]Menashsheh, Ephrayim, Ephrayim Menashsheh,
all together they were against Yehudah.
For all this, his anger did not turn back;
his hand was still stretched out.

My officers are kings, aren't they

10 Hey, you who make decrees that bring trouble,
who write documents that bring oppression,
[2]To subvert the case of poor people,
and steal the rights of the humble among my people,
So that widows become their spoil,
and orphans their plunder.
[3]What will you do on the day when attention is given,
when devastation comes from afar?
To whom will you flee for help,
and where will you abandon your splendour?
[4]Except bend beneath a prisoner,
fall beneath the slain?
For all this, his anger did not turn back;
his hand was still stretched out.

[5]Hey, Ashshur, my angry club –
and the mace in their hand is my condemnation.
[6]Against an impious nation I send it;
I order it against a people towards which I am wrathful,
To seize spoil and to take plunder,
and to make it into something trampled, like mud in the streets.
[7]But it doesn't picture it this way;
its mind doesn't think this way.
Because in its mind is to annihilate,
to cut off nations not a few.
[8]Because it says,
'My officers are kings, altogether, aren't they.
[9]Kalno's like Karkemish, isn't it, or Hamat like Arpad –
or Shomron like Dammeseq.
[10]As my hand found the non-entity kingdoms
(and their images were more than Shomron and Yerushalaim) –
[11]As I did to Shomron and to its non-entities,
so I will do to Yerushalaim and to its idols, won't I.'

[12]But when the Lord finishes all his action
against Mount Tsiyyon and against Yerushalaim:
'I will attend to the fruit of the king of Ashshur's big-headedness
and to the lofty splendour of his eyes.
[13]Because he said, "By the energy of my hand I've acted,
by my smartness, because I have understanding.
I've removed peoples' borders,
I've plundered their treasures,
as a champion I've subdued inhabitants.
[14]My hand found, as in a nest,
the resources of peoples.
Like one gathering abandoned eggs,
I myself gathered the entire earth.
There was not one flapping a wing,
or opening its mouth and chirping."'

The remainder of Yisra'el

[15]Does the axe glorify itself over the one who chops with it,
or the saw magnify itself over the one who wields it,
As if the club wields the one who lifts it up,
as if the mace lifted up the one who is not made of wood?
[16]Therefore the Lord Yahweh of Armies will send off
a wasting disease against his beefy ones.
Beneath its splendour it will burn,
with a burning like the burning of fire.
[17]Yisra'el's light will become fire,
its sacred one a flame.
It will burn up and consume its thorn and its thistle,
in one day.
[18]The splendour of its forest and its farmland
it will finish off, soul and body.
It will be like the fading away of a sick person;
[19]the remainder of the trees in its forest will be so few,
a boy could write them down.

[20]But on that day,
no more will the remainder of Yisra'el,
The escape group from Ya'aqob's household,
lean on the one that struck them down.
They will lean on Yahweh,
Yisra'el's sacred one, in truth.
[21]The remainder will turn back, the remainder of Ya'aqob,
to God, the God who is a strong man.
[22]Though your people, Yisra'el,
were like the sand of the sea,
It will be a remainder of it that will turn back;

a finishing is determined, overwhelming faithfulness.
[23]Because a finish, a thing determined –
the Lord Yahweh of Armies is going to do it,
within the entire country.
[24]Therefore the Lord Yahweh of Armies has said this:

Don't be afraid, my people,
who dwell on Tsiyyon, of Ashshur,
Which strikes you down with a club
and raises its mace against you in the manner of the Misrayimites.
[25]Because in a very little while more,
my condemnation will finish,
and my anger will be towards their destruction.
[26]Yahweh of Armies is lifting up a whip against it
like the striking down of Midyan at the Oreb Crag,
Like his mace over the sea,
and he will raise it in the manner of Misrayim.
[27]And on that day
its burden will depart from your shoulder,
Its yoke from upon your neck;
the yoke will be destroyed in the face of your beefiness.

Visions of threat and promise

[28]He has gone against Ayat, he has passed by Migron,
at Mikmas he put his equipment in place.
[29]They crossed at the pass;
'Geba will be lodging for us.'
The Height trembles,
Gib'ah of Sha'ul [Saul] has fled.
[30]Bellow loudly, Bat-gallim, heed, Layshah,
answer, Anatot!
[31]Madmenah has run away,
the inhabitants of Gebim have taken refuge.
[32]More, today at Nob,
standing, he will wave his hand
At the mount of Miss Tsiyyon,
the hill of Yerushalaim.

[33]There is the Lord Yahweh of Armies,
lopping off boughs with a crash.
The loftiest in height are being felled,
the tall ones fall down.
[34]The forest thickets will be cut down with iron,
the Lebanon will fall by the august one.
11 But a shoot will go out from Yishay's [Jesse's] stump,
a branch will fruit from his roots.
[2]Yahweh's breath will alight on him,
a breath with smartness and understanding,
A breath with counsel and strength,
a breath with acknowledgement and awe for Yahweh;
[3]his scent will be awe for Yahweh.
He will not exercise authority by the seeing of his eyes,
he will not reprove by the hearing of his ears.
[4]He will exercise authority with faithfulness for the poor,
and reprove with uprightness for the humble people in the country.
He will strike the country down with the club in his mouth,
with the breath from his lips he will put the faithless person to death.
[5]Faithfulness will be the belt round his hips,
truthfulness the belt round his thighs.
[6]Wolf will reside with lamb,
leopard will lie down with goat,
Calf, lion and fatling together,
with a little boy driving them.
[7]Cow and bear will pasture,
their young will lie down together.

Cougar, like cattle,
will eat straw.
[8]A baby will play over the cobra's burrow;
an infant will hold its hand over the viper's hole.
[9]People will not deal badly, they will not devastate,
in all my sacred mountain.
Because the country will be full of the acknowledgement of Yahweh
like the water covering the sea.
[10]On that day,
Yishay's root which will be standing
as a signal for peoples.
Nations will enquire of him,
and where he settles down will be [a place of] splendour.

A day when there will be a song to sing

[11]On that day,
the Lord will again act, a second time,
with his hand to acquire the remainder of his people,
That remain from Ashshur, from Misrayim, from Patros,
from Kush [Sudan], from Elam, from Shin'ar,
from Hamat and from the shores across the Sea.
[12]He will lift up a signal to the nations,
and gather the men of Yisra'el who were driven out,
And the women of Yehudah who were scattered he will collect
from the four corners of the earth.
[13]Ephrayim's jealousy will go away,
and the people putting pressure on Yehudah will be cut off.
Ephrayim won't be jealous of Yehudah,
and Yehudah won't put pressure on Ephrayim.
[14]They will fly against the back of the Pelishtites to the west;
together they will plunder the easterners,
The putting out of their hand: Edom and Mo'ab;
the people obeying them: the Ammonites.
[15]Yahweh will dry up the tongue of the Misrayimite sea,
and wave his hand over the River
with the heat of his breath.
He will strike it down into seven wadis,
and let people make their way in boots.
[16]There will be a causeway for the remainder of his people
that remain from Ashshur,
As there was for Yisra'el
on the day it went up from the country of Misrayim.
12 You will say on that day,
I will confess you Yahweh, because whereas you were angry with me,
your anger turned back and you comforted me.
[2]There is God, my deliverance,
I will be confident and not be fearful,
Because Yah, Yahweh, is my vigour and might,
and he has been my deliverance.

[3]You will draw water with joy
from the deliverance fountains.
[4]And you will say on that day,

Confess Yahweh,
call out in his name.
Make his deeds known among the peoples,
make mention that his name is on high.
[5]Make music for Yahweh, because he has acted in majesty;
this is to be acknowledged in the entire earth.
[6]Bellow and resound, inhabitants of Tsiyyon,
because great among you is Yisra'el's sacred one.

The downfall of the superpower

A pronouncement about Babel, which Yesha'yahu ben Amots beheld.

13 [2]On a bare mountain lift up a banner,
raise your voice to them.
Wave your hand,
so they'll come through the leaders' entrances.
[3]I myself have ordered the people I made sacred,
yes, I've called my strong men in connection with my anger,
the people who exult in my majesty.
[4]The sound of a horde on the mountains,
the semblance of a great company,
The sound of the din of kingdoms,
nations gathering:
Yahweh of Armies is numbering
an army for war.
[5]They're coming from a distant country,
from the end of the heavens,
Yahweh and the instruments of his condemnation,
to destroy the entire earth.
[6]Howl, because Yahweh's day is near;
like destruction from the Destroyer it comes.
[7]Therefore all hands go limp,
every human mind melts.
[8]They're terrified, spasms and throes grasp them,
they writhe like a birthing woman.
An individual looks aghast at his neighbour;
their faces are faces aflame.

[9]There, Yahweh's day is coming, ruthless,
with fury and angry blazing,
To turn the earth into a desolation,
so it can annihilate its wrongdoers from it.
[10]Because the stars in the heavens and their constellations
will not flash their light.
The sun will have gone dark when it comes out,
the moon will not shine its light.
[11]I will attend to the world for its bad dealing,
to the faithless for their waywardness.
I will put a stop to the majesty of the arrogant,
and make the dignity of the violent fall down.
[12]I will make people scarcer than pure gold,
human beings than Ophir gold.
[13]Therefore I will make the heavens quake,
and the earth will shake out of its place,
At the fury of Yahweh of Armies,
on the day of his angry blazing.
[14]Like a hunted gazelle,
like sheep with no one collecting them,
Each person will turn his face to his people,
each will flee to his country.
[15]Everyone who is found will be thrust through,
everyone who is swept up will fall by the sword.
[16]Their little ones will be smashed before their eyes,
their homes will be despoiled, their wives bedded.

Deliverance and compassion

[17]Here am I, stirring up Maday [the Medes] against them,
who don't think about silver,
Gold – they don't want it,
[18]but their bows will smash the young,
They won't have compassion on the fruit of the womb,
their eye won't spare children.
[19]So Babel, the most splendid of kingdoms,
the majestic glory of the Kasdites [Babylonians],
will become like God's overturning of Sedom and Amorah.
[20]It will not be inhabited ever,
it will not be dwelt in for generation after generation.

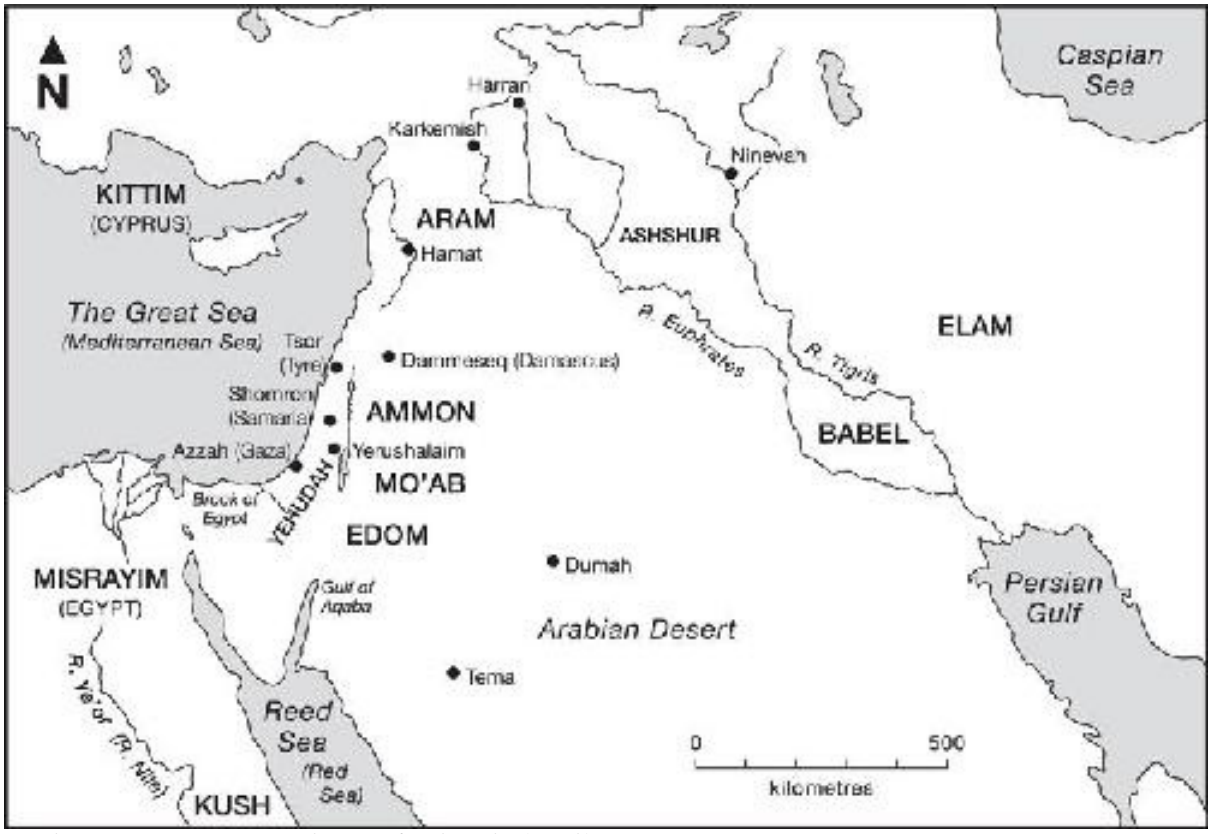
Arab will not camp there,
shepherds will not make flocks lie down there.
[21]Wild creatures will lie down there;
their houses will be full of owls.
Ostriches will dwell there,
wild goats will leap about there.
[22]Hyenas will live in its citadels,
dragons in its luxurious palaces.
Its time is near coming,
its days will not draw on.

14 Because Yahweh will have compassion on Ya'aqob
and will again choose Yisra'el.
He will settle them down on their land and the alien will join them,
and attach themselves to Ya'aqob's household.
[2]Peoples will get them
and bring them to their place.
The household of Yisra'el will have them as their domain on Yahweh's land
as servants and maidservants.
They will be captors to their captors
and will rule over their bosses.

A greeting from the ghosts

[3]On the day Yahweh settles you down after your suffering, after your turmoil and after the tough service that was imposed on you, [4]you will take up this poem about the king of Babel:

Ah, the boss has stopped,
the storm has stopped.
[5]Yahweh has broken the mace of the faithless,
the club of the rulers,
[6]That strikes down peoples with fury,
a striking down without turning aside,
Subdues nations in anger,
a persecution without holding back.
[7]The entire earth has settled down, it's calm;
people have broken out in resounding.
[8]The juniper trees have also rejoiced over you,
the cedars of Lebanon:
'Now you've lain down,
no one will go up who will cut us down.'
[9]She'ol below has been astir for you,
to meet your coming,
Rousing the ghosts for you,
all earth's big guys,
Raising from their thrones
all the nations' kings.
[10]All of them answer
and say to you,
'You too have been made weak as we are,
you have become like us!'
[11]Your majesty has been taken down to She'ol,
the sound of your mandolins.
Beneath you worm is spread out,
maggot is your covering.



Isaiah 14: Ancient Near East at the time of Yesha'yahu (Isaiah)

Thus you have fallen from the heavens

[12]Ah, you've fallen from the heavens,
bright one, son of dawn!
You've been felled to the earth,
enfeebler of nations!
[13]But you yourself said within yourself,
'I shall go up to the heavens.
Above the supernatural stars
I shall raise my throne.
I shall sit on the mountain for the appointed meeting,
on the extremities of Tsaphon.
[14]I shall go up on cloud tops,
I will be like the One on High.'
[15]Yet you're taken down to She'ol,
to the extremities of the Pit.
[16]The people who see you stare,
they consider you.
'Is this the man who shook the earth,
who made kingdoms tremble,
[17]Who made the world a veritable wilderness
and tore down its towns?
Its prisoners he did not release for home,
[18]all the nations' kings.'
All of them lay down in splendour,
each in his 'house'.
[19]But you've been thrown away from your tomb,
like offensive carrion,
Clothed in the slain,
pierced by the sword,
People who go down to the stones of the Pit
like a trampled corpse.
[20]You won't be one with them in burial,
because you devastated your country, you killed your people.
The offspring of people who deal badly

will not be named permanently.
[21]Prepare a place of slaughter for his children
because of the waywardness of their ancestors.
They are not to arise and possess the earth,
so that towns cover the face of the world.

[22]I shall arise against them
(a declaration of Yahweh of Armies),
And cut off for Babel name and remainder,
offspring and descendants (Yahweh's declaration).
[23]I shall make it into the possession of the owl, and pools of water;
I shall sweep it with a sweeper bringing annihilation
(a declaration of Yahweh of Armies).

No one can frustrate Yahweh's plans

[24]Yahweh of Armies has sworn:

Yes, as I envisaged, so it is happening;
as I counselled, it arises,
[25]To break Ashshur in my country –
I will crush it upon my mountains.
Its yoke will depart from upon them,
its burden will depart from upon his shoulder.
[26]This is the counsel that has been formulated for the entire earth,
this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations.
[27]Because Yahweh of Armies has taken counsel,
and who can contravene it?
His hand is stretched out,
and who can turn it back?
[28]In the year King Ahaz died, this pronouncement came:

[29]Don't rejoice, all you Pelishtites,
because the club of the one who struck you down has broken.
Because from the snake's root a viper will come out,
its fruit a flying seraph.
[30]The firstborn of poor people will pasture,
the needy will lie down in confidence.
But I will put your root to death with hunger,
I will slay the remainder of you.
[31]Howl, gateway; cry out, town;
melt, all you Pelishtites.
Because a cloud is coming from the north,
and there's no one straggling in its appointed ranks.

[32]So what should one answer the nation's envoys? –
that Yahweh has established Tsiyyon,
and in it the humble of his people will take shelter.

Compassion for Mo'ab

15 A pronouncement about Mo'ab.
Yes, by night Ar has been destroyed,
Mo'ab has been terminated.
Yes, by night Qir has been destroyed,
Mo'ab has been terminated.
[2]Dibon has gone up to the house,
to the shrines, to cry.
Over Nebo and over Medeba
Mo'ab howls.
On every head in it there is shornness, every beard is cut off,
[3]in its streets they wrap on sack.
On its roofs, in its squares,
everyone in it howls, falling down with crying.
[4]Heshbon and Ele'aleh cry out,
their voice makes itself heard in Yahats.
Therefore the equipped men of Mo'ab shout,

its entire being trembles for it.
[5]My heart cries out for Mo'ab –
its fugitives as far as So'ar, Eglat Shelishiyyah.
Because the ascent of Luhit – with crying they climb it;
because the road to Horonayim – they raise a broken cry.
[6]Because the water of Nimrim
becomes a great desolation.
Because the grass is dry, the vegetation is finished,
there is no greenery.
[7]Therefore the gains they've made and what they have in their charge –
they carry them across the Willows Wadi.
[8]Because the cry has surrounded Mo'ab's border,
as far as Eglayim its howl, and in Be'er Elim its howl.
[9]Because Dimon's water is full of blood,
because I put more on Dimon –
A lion for Mo'ab's escape group,
for the remainder of the land.

16 Send a ram belonging to the country's ruler,
from Sela in the wilderness to the mountain of Miss Tsiyyon.
[2]Like a bird flitting, a nest thrown out,
are the Mo'abite women at the fords of the Arnon.
[3]'Bring counsel,
make a decision.
Make your shadow like night
in the middle of the day.
Hide the banished, don't betray the fugitive;
[4]the people banished from Mo'ab should reside with you.
Be a hiding place for them
from the face of the destroyer.'

When the oppressor is no more, when destruction finishes,
when the devastator has come to an end from the country,
[5]A throne will be established with commitment,
there will sit on it in truthfulness
In David's tent one who exercises authority,
enquiring after judgement, and quick with faithfulness.

Mo'ab open to learning

[6]We have heard of Mo'ab's majesty,
very majestic,
Its majesty, its loftiness and its arrogance –
its empty talk is not like that.
[7]Therefore Mo'ab should howl,
everyone in it should howl for Mo'ab,
For the raisin blocks from Qir-hareset you should moan,
utterly stricken.
[8]Because the terraces of Heshbon languish,
the vines of Sibmah.
The nations' lords have struck down their clusters
that had reached as far as Ya'zer,
That wandered into the wilderness;
when its shoots spread, they crossed to the sea.
[9]Therefore I cry with Ya'zer's crying for Ya'zer,
for Sibmah's vines.
I drench you with my tears,
Heshbon and Ele'aleh.
Because over your summer fruit and over your harvest
the cheering has fallen still.
[10]Rejoicing and gladness have gathered up from the farmland,
in the vineyards no one resounds, no one shouts.
Wine in the presses – the treader doesn't tread;
I have made the cheering stop.
[11]Therefore my heart murmurs for Mo'ab like a guitar,
my inner being for Qir Heres.

[12]When Mo'ab appears, when it wearies itself,
at the shrine,
Comes to its sanctuary to plead,
it won't prevail.
[13]This is the word that Yahweh spoke for Mo'ab then. [14]But now Yahweh has spoken:
'In three years in accordance with the years of an employee, Mo'ab's splendour with all its great horde will be slighted. The remainder will be a small thing, tiny, not much.'

Don't worry about the Aramites

17 A pronouncement about Dammeseq.
There is Dammeseq, removed from being a town;
it will become a fallen ruin.
[2]The towns of Aro'er will be abandoned,
they will be for flocks,
and they will lie down with no one disturbing.
[3]Fortress will cease from Ephrayim,
kingship from Dammeseq.
The remainder of Aram
will become like the Yisra'elites' splendour
(a declaration of Yahweh of Armies).

[4]On that day
Ya'aqob's splendour will become poor,
the beefiness of his body will become thin.
[5]It will be like the gathering of the standing harvest,
when someone harvests the ears in his arm.
It will be like someone gleaning ears
in Repha'ites Vale.
[6]There will remain garnerings in it,
like the beating of an olive tree:
Two, three berries on the top (the height);
four, five on a fruitful bough
(a declaration of Yahweh, the God of Yisra'el).
[7]On that day a person will pay regard to his maker,
and his eyes will look to Yisra'el's sacred one.
[8]He won't pay regard to the altars that are the making of his hands,
he won't look to what his fingers made,
both the totem poles and the incense stands.

[9]On that day,
his strong towns will be
like an abandoned piece of woodland and height
That people abandoned from before the Yisra'elites,
and it will be a desolation.
[10]Yes, you have put out of mind the God who delivers you;
your strong crag you have not kept in mind.
Therefore you may plant the plants of the Lovely One
and sow the cutting of an alien god.
[11]On the day you plant, you may get them to grow,
and in the morning you sow, get it to blossom,
Though the harvest disappears
on the day of sickness and grave pain.

Who would want to be a superpower?

[12]Hey, the horde of many peoples
that roar like the seas' roar,
The din of nations
that make a din like the din of mighty water!
[13]Nations make a din like the din of much water,
but he reprimands it and it flees far away,
Driven like the chaff on the mountains before the wind,
like tumbleweed before a storm.
[14]Towards evening time there – terror;
before morning, it is no more.
This is the share of the people who despoil us,

the lot of the people who plunder us.

18 Hey, country of the buzzing of wings,
which is beyond the rivers of Kush,
[2]Which sends envoys by sea
in papyrus boats on the face of the water.
Go, swift envoys,
to a nation towering and smooth,
To a people feared far and near,
a nation of gibberish and aggressiveness,
whose country rivers divide.
[3]All you inhabitants of the world,
people who dwell in the earth:
At the raising of a signal on the mountains, you should look,
and at the sounding of the horn, you should listen.
[4]Because Yahweh has said this to me:
'I shall be calm and I shall look to my established place,
Like glowing heat in daylight,
like a dew cloud in the heat of harvest.'
[5]Because before harvest, when the blossom is complete,
and the flower becomes a ripening grape,
He will cut the shoots with pruning knives,
and the tendrils he has removed he will have taken away.
[6]They will be abandoned, altogether, to the birds of prey of the mountains,
and to the animals of the earth.
The birds of prey will summer on them
and all the animals of the earth will winter on them.
[7]At that time
tribute will be brought to Yahweh of Armies,
(A people towering and smooth,
a people feared far and near,
A nation of gibberish and aggressiveness,
whose country rivers divide)
To the place of the name of Yahweh of Armies,
Mount Tsiyyon.

Misrayim at a loss

19 A pronouncement about Misrayim.
There is Yahweh, riding on a swift cloud,
coming to Misrayim.
Misrayim's non-entities will tremble from before him,
and Misrayim's mind will melt within it.
[2]I will stir up Misrayimites against Misrayimites,
and one will do battle against his brother,
One against his neighbour, town against town,
kingdom against kingdom.
[3]Misrayim's spirit will drain away within it,
and I will swallow up its counsel.
They will enquire of the non-entities and of the ghosts,
of the mediums and of the spirits.
[4]But I will put Misrayim
into the hand of a tough master.
A vigorous king will rule over them
(a declaration of the Lord Yahweh of Armies).

[5]Water will dry up from the sea,
the river will wither and parch.
[6]Rivers will stink as they get low,
the channels of Misrayim will dry up.
Reed and rush will wither,
[7]the plants by the Ye'or [Nile], by the mouth of the Ye'or.
Everything sown at the Ye'or will wither,
blow away, and there will be none of it.
[8]The fishermen will lament and mourn,
all the people who throw a hook into the Ye'or.
The people who spread a net

on the face of the water will have languished.
[9]The workers with combed flax will be shamed,
and the weavers of linen.
[10]Its textile workers will become crushed,
all the wage-earners troubled in their entire being.
[11]The officials at Tso'an are simply dense,
Par'oh's [Pharaoh's] smart counsellors – stupid counsel.
How can you say to Par'oh,
'I'm a son of experts, a son of the kings of Qedem?' –
[12]Where on earth are your experts,
so they may please tell you, may acknowledge
what Yahweh of Armies has planned against Misrayim.

[13]The officials at Tso'an have become fools,
the officials at Noph have deceived themselves.
They've made Misrayim wander –
they, the cornerstone of its clans.
[14]Yahweh has mixed within it
a spirit of distortion.
They'll make Misrayim wander in all it does,
like the wandering of a drunk in his vomit.
[15]There'll be no action by Misrayim
that head or tail can take,
palm branch or reed.

Misrayim my people

[16]On that day, Misrayim will be like women, and will be trembling and in dread before the shaking of the hand of Yahweh of Armies, which he is shaking against it. [17]The land of Yehudah will be a terror to the Misrayimites. Everyone to whom someone makes mention of it will be fearful in the face of the counsel of Yahweh of Armies, which he is formulating against it.
[18]On that day, there will be five towns in the country of Misrayim speaking the tongue of Kena'an [Canaan] and taking oaths to Yahweh of Armies. 'Sun Town', one will be called.
[19]On that day there will be an altar for Yahweh in the middle of the country of Misrayim and a column for Yahweh at its border. [20]It will be a sign and a testimony for Yahweh of Armies in the country of Misrayim; when they cry out to Yahweh before oppressors, he will send them someone to deliver and argue, and he will rescue them.
[21]Yahweh will cause himself to be acknowledged by the Misrayimites, and the Misrayimites will acknowledge Yahweh on that day. They will serve with sacrifice and offering, and make pledges to Yahweh and make good on them. [22]Yahweh will strike Misrayim, striking but healing, and they will turn back to Yahweh and he will let himself be entreated by them and will heal them.
[23]On that day there will be a causeway from Misrayim to Ashshur. Ashshur will come to Misrayim and Misrayim to Ashshur. Misrayim will serve with Ashshur.
[24]On that day Yisra'el will be the third for Misrayim and for Ashshur, a blessing in the middle of the earth, [25]because Yahweh of Armies has blessed it, saying 'Blessed be my people Misrayim, my handiwork Ashshur and my domain Yisra'el.'

Prophet as crazy man

20 In the year the commander-in-chief came to Ashdod when Sargon king of Ashshur sent him, and battled against Ashdod and took it, [2]at that time Yahweh spoke by means of Yesha'yahu ben Amots: 'Go, loose the sack from on your hips and unfasten the boot from on your feet.' He did so, going stripped and barefoot. [3]Yahweh said, 'As my servant Yesha'yahu has gone stripped and barefoot three years as a sign and portent for Misrayim and Kush, [4]so the king of Ashshur will drive off the captives of Misrayim and the exiles of Kush, young and old, stripped and barefoot, bare of behind, Misrayim's nakedness. [5]People will be shattered and shamed because of Kush their confidence and Misrayim their glory. [6]The one who lives on this foreign shore will say on that day, "There, such is the state of the one on whom we had confidence, where we fled for help, to find rescue from before the king of Ashshur. How can we ourselves escape?"'

What is there of the night?

21 A pronouncement about the Sea Wilderness.

Like storms in the Negeb passing through,
from the wilderness it comes, from a fearful country.
[2]A tough vision has been told me:
'The betrayer is betraying, the destroyer is destroying.
Go up, Elam, lay siege, Maday [Media] –
I have stopped all its groaning.'

[3]Therefore my hips are full of convulsing,
pains have grasped me, like the pains of someone giving birth.
I'm too struck down to listen, I'm too terrified to look;
[4]my mind wanders, shuddering has overwhelmed me.
The dusk to which I was attracted
he has turned to horror for me.
[5]Setting the table, spreading the rug,
eating, drinking . . .
'Get up, officers,
oil the shield.'
[6]Because the Lord said this to me:

Go, set a watch,
so he may tell what he sees.
[7]He will see a rider, a cavalry pair,
a donkey chariot, a camel chariot.
He is to heed, with heeding,
great heeding.
[8]The lookout called:

On the watchtower, my lord, I've been standing,
continually by day,
And on my watch I have been taking my position,
every night.
[9]And there, a chariot with men is coming,
a cavalry pair.
He avowed:

Babel has fallen, fallen,
all its gods' images.
He has smashed to the ground [10]my crushed one,
my son on the threshing-floor.
What I heard from Yahweh of Armies,
Yisra'el's God, I have told you.
[11]A pronouncement about Dumah.

Someone is calling to me from Se'ir:
'Watchman, what is there of the night,
Watchman, what is there of the night?'
[12]The watchman said,
'Morning came, and night, too;
if you enquire, enquire; come back again.'
[13]A pronouncement in the steppe.

In the forest, in the steppe, you lodge,
caravans of Dedanites.
[14]Meet the thirsty one, bring water,
you who inhabit the country of Tema,
present the fugitive with his bread.
[15]Because they've fled from before swords,
from before the drawn sword,
From before the directed bow,
from before the weight of battle.
[16]Because the Lord has said this to me:

Yet a year according to the years of an employee,
all the splendour of Qedar will be finished.
[17]The remainder of the number of the bows,
the strong men of the Qedarites, will be few,
because Yahweh, Yisra'el's God, has spoken.

Yerushalaim (aka Vision Ravine)

22 A pronouncement about Vision Ravine.

What are you doing here, then,
that you have gone up, all of you, on to the roofs,

[2]You, full of din, tumultuous town,
exultant township?
Those of you who were run through were not run through by the sword,
they were not dead in battle.
[3]All your leaders fled together,
without the bow they were captured.
All those of you who were found were captured together,
they took flight far away.
[4]Therefore I have said, 'Look away from me,
I will express bitterness in crying.
Don't try to comfort me
over the destruction of the daughter of my people.'
[5]Because the Lord Yahweh of Armies
had a day of tumult, trampling and confusion,
In Vision Ravine someone tearing down the wall,
and a cry for help to the mountain.
[6]Elam carried the quiver,
in chariotry with men, cavalry;
Qir bared the shield.
[7]Your choicest vales became full
of chariotry and cavalry.
They took their stand at the gateway
[8]and it exposed Yehudah's covering.

You'd looked that day
to the armoury in the Forest House.
[9]The breaches in David's Town –
you'd seen them, that there were many.
You'd collected the water of the Lower Pool
[10]and counted the houses in Yerushalaim.
You'd torn down the houses to strengthen the wall
[11]and made a basin between the two walls
for the water from the old pool.
But you didn't look to the one who made it,
you didn't consider the one who formed it long before.

[12]The Lord Yahweh of Armies called
on that day
To crying and to lamenting,
to shaving the head and to wrapping on sack.
[13]But here – celebration and rejoicing,
killing cattle and slaughtering sheep,
Eating meat and drinking wine:
'Eat and drink, because tomorrow we die!'
[14]Yahweh of Armies revealed himself in my ears:
'If this waywardness of yours is to be expiated before you die . . .'
(the Lord Yahweh of Armies has said).

The administrator who fancied himself

[15]The Lord Yahweh of Armies said this: 'Come, go to this administrator, to Shebna, who is in charge of the house.

[16]What are you doing here,
and whom do you have here,
that you have hewn a tomb for yourself here,
You who have hewn his tomb on high,
who has carved a dwelling for himself in the cliff?
[17]There: Yahweh is going to hurl you far;
strong man, he's going to grasp you firmly.
[18]He's going to roll you up tight, rolling you up like a ball,
to a country broad on both sides.
There you'll die;
there will be your splendid chariots,
a slight for your master's house.
[19]I shall thrust you out from your position;
you'll be torn down from your office.

[20]On that day I shall call my servant Elyaqim ben Hilqiyyahu. [21]I shall clothe him in your coat and fasten him with your belt, and put your ruling power in his hand. He will become a father to the inhabitants of Yerushalaim and to the household of Yehudah. [22]I shall put the key of David's household on his shoulder; he will open and no one will shut, he will shut and no one will open. [23]I shall fix him as a peg in a trustworthy place; he will be a throne of splendour for his father's household. [24]All the splendour of his father's household will hang on him, offspring and shoots, all the little articles, from the bowls to all the jars.'
[25]On that day (a declaration of Yahweh of Armies) the peg fixed in a trustworthy place will move away. It will be hacked off and it will fall, and the load that's on it will be cut down. Yahweh has indeed spoken.

The great sea power broken

23 A pronouncement about Tsor [Tyre].
Howl, Tarshish ships,
because it has been destroyed so that there is not a house.
After they came from the country of Kittim [Cyprus],
it was revealed to them.
[2]Be still, inhabitants of the foreign shore,
merchants of Tsidon.
Seafarers filled you;
[3]by mighty waters came the seed of Shihor.
The harvest of the Ye'or was its yield,
and it became the marketplace of the nations.
[4]Be shamed, Tsidon, because the sea has said,
the stronghold of the sea,
'I haven't laboured, I haven't given birth,
I haven't brought up young men or raised girls.'
[5]When the report came to Misrayim, they were in anguish,
when the report came about Tsor.

[6]Cross over to Tarshish;
howl, inhabitants of the foreign shore.
[7]Is this your exultant one,
whose antiquity is from ancient days,
Whose feet carried it
to reside far away?
[8]Who counselled this for Tsor,
the giver of crowns,
Whose merchants were officials,
its traders the most honoured in the earth?
[9]Yahweh of Armies counselled it,
to defile all its splendid majesty,
to slight all the most honoured in the earth.
[10]Pass through your country like the Ye'or, Miss Tarshish;
there's a harbour no more.
[11]He stretched out his hand over the sea,
shook kingdoms.
It was Yahweh gave an order regarding Kena'an,
to annihilate its strongholds.
[12]He said, 'You will no more exult,
afflicted maiden, Miss Tsidon.
Get up, cross over to Kittim;
there will be no settling for you, even there.'
[13]There, the country of the Kasdites –
this is the people that is no longer.
Ashshur founded it for ships;
they set up its citadels.
They've stripped its strongholds,
they've made it into a ruin.

What to do with a whore's fee

[14]Howl, ships of Tarshish,
because your stronghold has been destroyed.
[15]On that day,
Tsor will be put out of mind for 70 years,
like the days of a king.
At the end of 70 years

it will be for Tsor like the song about the whore:
[16]‘Get a guitar, go about the town,
whore put out of mind.
Be good, play, sing many a song,
in order that you may be brought to mind.’
[17]At the end of 70 years
Yahweh will attend to Tsor.
It will go back to its ‘gift’ and its whoring
with all the world’s kingdoms on the face of the earth.
[18]But its profits and its ‘gifts’ will be sacred to Yahweh;
it won’t be treasured, it won’t be stored,
Because its profit will be for the people who live before Yahweh,
for eating till they are full, and for fine clothes.

The broken world covenant

24 There:
Yahweh is laying waste to the earth and making it desolate,
twisting its surface and scattering its inhabitants.
[2]It will be: as people, so priest;
as servant, so his lord;
As maidservant, so her mistress;
as buyer, so seller;
As creditor, so borrower;
as lender, so the one to whom he lends.
[3]The earth will be totally wasted,
it will be totally plundered,
(because it is Yahweh who has spoken this word).

[4]The earth dries up, withers;
the world languishes, withers;
the height languishes with the earth.
[5]The earth was impious under its inhabitants,
because they transgressed instructions.
They violated statute,
contravened an age-old pact.
[6]That’s why a vow has consumed the earth;
the people who live in it incurred liability.
That’s why earth’s inhabitants have been ablaze,
and few people remain.

[7]The new wine dries up, the vine has languished,
all the people who were rejoicing in heart groan.
[8]The joy of tambourines has stopped,
the din of the exultant has left off,
the joy of the mandolin has stopped.
[9]They do not drink wine with a song,
liquor is bitter to the one who drinks it.
[10]The empty township is broken up,
every house is closed against entering.
[11]There’s a cry over the wine in the streets,
all rejoicing has reached evening,
earth’s joy has gone into exile.
[12]Desolation is what remains in the town;
the gateway is struck down, a ruin.
[13]Because so it will be within the earth,
among the peoples,
Like the beating of an olive tree,
like gleanings if the harvest finishes.

[14]Those people lift their voice, resound,
because of Yahweh’s majesty they’ve bellowed from the west.
[15]Therefore honour Yahweh in the east,
in shores across the sea,
the name of Yahweh, Yisra’el’s God.

[16]From a corner of the earth we’ve heard melodies,

‘Splendour belongs to the Faithful One.’
But I said, I waste away,
I waste away! Oh, me!
People have broken faith,
in broken faith people have broken faith.

Heavenly powers shamed

[17]Dread and pit and trap
for you who inhabit the earth!
[18]The one who flees at the dreadful sound
will fall into the pit.
The one who climbs up from the pit
will be caught in the trap.
Because sluices have opened on high,
and earth’s foundations have shaken.
[19]The earth has quite broken up;
earth has quite split up;
earth has quite slipped.
[20]The earth quite reels like a drunk,
it sways about like an overnight shelter.
Its rebellion weighs heavy upon it;
it will fall, and not get up again.

[21]On that day Yahweh will attend
to the army of the height, in the height,
and to the kings of the earth, on the earth.
[22]They will be gathered as a gathering,
as captives in a pit.
They will be imprisoned in a prison,
but after many days will get attention.
[23]The moon will be confounded,
the sun will be disgraced.
Because Yahweh of Armies will have begun to reign
in Mount Tsiyyon and in Yerushalaim,
with his splendour in front of his elders.

25 Yahweh, you are my God, I will exalt you,
I will confess your name,
Because you have done something extraordinary,
plans from a distant time, truthfulness, truth.
[2]Because you’ve made out of a town a heap,
a fortified township into a ruin.
The citadel of foreigners is no longer a town;
it won’t be built up ever.
[3]Therefore a vigorous people will honour you,
a township of violent nations will revere you.
[4]Because you’ve been a stronghold for the poor person,
a stronghold for the needy person in his pressures,
A shelter from rain,
a shade from heat,
When the spirit of the violent was like winter rain,
[5]the din of aliens like heat in the desert.
You subdue the heat with a cloud shade;
the music of the violent succumbs.

Grief brought to an end

[6]And Yahweh of Armies will make
for all peoples on this mountain
A banquet with rich foods, a banquet with aged wines,
juicy rich foods, refined aged wines.
[7]He will swallow up on this mountain the layer of wrapping,
the wrapping over all the peoples,
The covering that is spread out over all the nations;
[8]he will have swallowed up death permanently.

The Lord Yahweh will wipe the tears
from on all faces.
The reviling of his people
he will take away from on all the earth;
because Yahweh is the one who has spoken.
[9]On that day one will say:

There, this is our God,
we hoped for him and he delivered us.
This is Yahweh, we hoped for him;
let's celebrate and rejoice in his deliverance.
[10]Because Yahweh's hand will alight
on this mountain.
Mo'ab will be trodden down in its place
like the treading of straw at Madmenah.
[11]It will spread out its hands within it,
as a swimmer spreads his hands to swim.
He will bring down its majesty
with the spoils of its hands.
[12]The towering fortification of its walls
he will have laid low, taken down,
knocked down to the ground, right to the earth.

26 On that day this song will be sung in the country of Yehudah:

We have a strong town;
he makes walls and rampart into deliverance.
[2]Open the gateways so that the faithful nation may come in,
one that keeps truthfulness.
[3]A mind that is sustained, you preserve in well-being,
in well-being because it's filled with reliance on you.
[4]Rely on Yahweh permanently, because in Yah –
Yahweh is crag for the ages.
[5]Because he has laid low the people who live in the height;
the towering township he brings down.
He brings it down right to the ground,
knocks it down right to the earth.
[6]The foot treads it down, the feet of the humble person,
the soles of the poor people.

Your dead will live

[7]The path is clear for the faithful person,
when you level the faithful person's track clear.
[8]Yes, on the path determined by your rulings,
Yahweh, we have hoped for you.
The longing of our entire being
has been for your name and your renown.
[9]With my entire being I've longed for you by night;
yes, my spirit within me seeks urgently for you.
Because when your rulings are in the earth,
the inhabitants of the world learn faithfulness.
[10]Were the faithless person shown grace,
he wouldn't learn faithfulness.
In a country characterized by straightness he does what's evil,
and doesn't live in awe of Yahweh's majesty.
[11]Yahweh, they don't behold your hand raised;
they should behold and be shamed.
Your passion for the people,
yes, your fire for your adversaries, should consume them.
[12]Yahweh, may you institute well-being for us,
because all the things we've done, you did for us.
[13]Yahweh our God,
lords apart from you have been masters over us,
but of you alone we will make mention, of your name.

[14]Dead people don't live,
ghosts don't rise.
That's why you attended to them and annihilated them,
and obliterated any mention of them.
[15]You added to the nation, Yahweh;
when you added to the nation you were honoured,
you furthered all the country's boundaries.
[16]Yahweh, under pressure they attended to you,
a whispered prayer during your correction of them.

[17]Like a pregnant woman who draws near to giving birth,
who writhes, cries out in her pain,
So have we become,
because of you, Yahweh.
[18]We were pregnant, we writhed,
it is as if we gave birth to wind.
We don't achieve deliverance in the earth;
the inhabitants of the world don't fall.

[19]Your dead will live, my corpse will rise;
wake up and resound, you who dwell in the earth!
Because your dew is the dew of the lights,
and you make the country of ghosts fall.
[20]Go, my people, come into your rooms,
and shut your door after you.
Hide for a little moment,
until condemnation passes.
[21]Because there, Yahweh is going to come out from his place,
to attend to the waywardness of the earth's inhabitants upon them.
The earth will uncover its shed blood,
and will no more cover over its slain.

Livyatan (Leviathan) meets its end

27 On that day Yahweh will attend with his sword,
tough and big and strong,
To Livyatan the fleeing serpent,
to Livyatan the twisting serpent;
he will slay the dragon that's in the sea.

[2]On that day,
a delightful vineyard, chant of it!
[3]I Yahweh am going to preserve it;
moment by moment I will water it.
In case someone attends to it,
night and day I will preserve it.
[4]I have no wrath;
if only someone gives me briar and thorn!
In battle I will march against it,
and set fire to them altogether.
[5]Or he can take hold of my stronghold,
he can make peace with me,
peace he can make with me.

[6]Coming days: Ya'aqob will root,
Yisra'el will bud and blossom,
and the face of the world will be full of produce.

[7]Did he strike it down like the striking of the one who struck it down,
was it slain like the slaying of the ones slain by him?
[8]By driving away, by sending off, you argue with it;
he removed it by a tough blast on a day of east wind.
[9]Therefore by this Ya'aqob's waywardness will be expiated;
this is the entire fruit of the removing of its wrongdoing.
Through his making all the altar stones
like shattered blocks of limestone,
totem poles and incense altars won't stand.

[10]Because the fortified town is desolate,
the abode sent off and abandoned like the wilderness.
There a calf pastures,
there it lies down and consumes its boughs.
[11]When its branches wither, they break;
women come, set light to them.
Because it is not a people of understanding;
therefore its maker will not have compassion on it,
its former will not be gracious to it.

[12]On that day
Yahweh will thresh from the channel of the River [Euphrates]
to the Misrayimite Wadi,
And you will be gleaned
one by one, Yisra'elites.
[13]On that day
there will be a sound on a great horn.
The people will come who are perishing in the country of Ashshur,
and who are scattered in the country of Misrayim.
They will bow low to Yahweh
on the sacred mountain, in Yerushalaim.

The drunks of Ephrayim and Yehudah

28 Hey, majestic crown of Ephrayim's drunks,
and its splendid beauty, a fading flower,
One that's on the majestic head of beefy people,
struck down by wine!
[2]Here, the Lord has someone strong and powerful,
like a storm of hail, a destructive tempest.
Like a storm of water, forceful, rushing,
he has set it down on the earth by his power.
[3]It will be trampled underfoot,
the majestic crown of Ephrayim's drunks.
[4]The fading flower, its splendid beauty,
that's on the majestic head of beefy people,
Will be like a fig before harvest
that someone sees.
The one who sees it –
while it's still in his palm, he swallows it.
[5]On that day,
Yahweh of Armies will become
A splendid crown and a glorious diadem
for the remainder of his people,
[6]An authoritative spirit
for the one who sits over the exercise of authority,
and the strength of the people who turn back the battle at the gateway.

[7]But these also wander because of wine,
stagger because of liquor:
Priest and prophet wander because of liquor,
they're swallowed up by wine, they stagger because of liquor.
They wander when they are seeing,
they go astray in giving judgement.
[8]Because all the tables are full of vomit, filth –
there's no place.

[9]'Whom does he instruct in knowledge,
whom does he help to understand a report?
People weaned from milk,
moving on from the breast?
[10]Because order upon order,
order upon order,
Rule upon rule, rule upon rule,
a little there, a little there.
[11]Because with mockings of lip and in another tongue
he speaks to this people,

[12]The one who has said to them,
"This is the place to settle down,
Settle the weary person down,
yes, this is the place of repose."'

But they have not been willing to listen,
[13]so to them Yahweh's word will be
Order upon order,
order upon order,
Rule upon rule, rule upon rule,
a little there, a little there,
In order that they may go, but fall back,
and be broken and snared and captured.

God's strange work

[14]Therefore listen to Yahweh's word,
you arrogant,
Who rule this people,
which is in Yerushalaim.
[15]Because you've said:

'We have solemnized a pact with death,
with She'ol we've made an agreement.
The sweeping flood, when it passes,
won't come to us,
Because we've made a lie our shelter,
we have hidden in falsehood.'
[16]Therefore the Lord Yahweh has said this:

Here am I founding in Tsiyyon a stone,
a testing stone, a valuable cornerstone,
A well-founded foundation;
the one who stands firm in faith will not be hasty.
[17]I will make authority the rule,
faithfulness the weight.
Hail will sweep away the lying shelter;
water will flood the hiding place.
[18]Your pact with death will be covered over,
your agreement with She'ol won't stand up.
The sweeping flood, when it passes –
you will be for trampling by it.
[19]The times when it passes, it will get you,
because it will pass morning after morning,
By day and by night,
and understanding the report will be simply a horror.
[20]Because the bed will be too short for stretching out,
the blanket too narrow for gathering round oneself.
[21]Because Yahweh will arise as on Mount Peritsim,
he will be astir as in Gib'on Vale,
To do his deed – strange is his deed,
to perform his service – foreign is his service.
[22]So now, don't be arrogant,
or your chains will get strong.
Because I've heard of a finish, a thing determined,
by the Lord Yahweh of Armies,
against the entire country.

[23]Give ear, listen to my voice,
heed, listen to what I say.
[24]Is it all the time that the ploughman ploughs to sow,
opens up and harrows his ground?
[25]When he's levelled its surface,
he scatters caraway and sprinkles cumin,
Sets wheat (millet) and barley in its place,
and spelt in its border, doesn't he.
[26]One disciplines him for acting with judgement:

his God instructs him.
[27]Because caraway isn't threshed with a sled,
and the wheel of a cart isn't rolled over cumin.
Because caraway is beaten with a rod,
and cumin with a club.
[28]Cereal is crushed,
because the thresher doesn't thresh permanently.
The wheel of his cart may rumble,
but he doesn't crush it with his horse riders.
[29]This too comes from Yahweh of Armies;
he formulates extraordinary plans,
he shows great skill.

Like a ghost from the earth

29 Hey, God's Hearth, God's Hearth,
township where David camped!
Add year to year;
the festivals may come round.
[2]But I will oppress God's Hearth,
and there'll be sorrow and sighing.
It will be to me God's very hearth;
[3]I shall camp against you with a very encircling.
I shall lay siege against you with a rampart,
set up siege works against you.
[4]You'll be lower than the ground when you speak,
your words will be lower than the earth.
Your voice will be like a ghost from the ground,
your words will chirp from the earth.
[5]But like fine dust will be the horde of your adversaries,
like passing chaff the horde of the violent.
In an instant, suddenly,
[6]by Yahweh of Armies you will be attended,
With thunder and with shaking, and a loud voice,
storm and hurricane and a flame of consuming fire.
[7]It will be like a dream, a vision in the night:
the horde of all the nations,
Which are making war against God's Hearth,
and all its besiegers and its stronghold and its oppressors.
[8]It will be like when someone hungry dreams,
and there, he's eating, but he wakes up,
and his throat is empty,
Or like when someone thirsty dreams,
and there, he's drinking, but he wakes up,
and there, he's faint, and his throat is craving.
So will the horde of all the nations be
that are making war against Mount Tsiyyon.

[9]Wait about and be stupefied,
blind yourselves and be blind.
They are drunk but not from wine,
they totter but not from liquor.
[10]Because Yahweh has poured over you
a spirit of coma.
He has closed your eyes, the prophets,
and covered your heads, the seers.
[11]The vision of anything has become for you
like the words of a sealed scroll,
Which they give to someone who knows writing,
saying 'Read this out, please',
And he says, 'I can't,
because it's sealed.'
[12]So the scroll is given to someone who doesn't know writing,
saying 'Read this out, please',
but he says, 'I don't know writing.'

Who sees us?

[13]The Lord has said,

‘Since this people has come near with its mouth,
and with its lips has honoured me,
But has kept its mind far from me,
and their awe for me has been a learned human order:
[14]Therefore here I am,
once more doing something extraordinary with this people,
acting in an extraordinary way, something extraordinary.
The smartness of its smart people will perish,
the understanding of its people of understanding will hide.’
[15]Hey, you who go deeper than Yahweh
to hide your counsel,
Whose action is in the dark and who say,
‘Who sees us, who knows about us?’
[16]Your overturning of things, if the potter is thought of as like the clay,
or the thing that’s made says of its maker, ‘He didn’t make me’,
Or the pot says of its potter,
‘He didn’t understand.’

[17]In yet a little while,
Lebanon will turn back into farmland, won’t it,
and the farmland be thought of as forest.
[18]Deaf people will listen on that day to the words of a document,
and out of murk and darkness the eyes of blind people will see.
[19]The humble will regain rejoicing in Yahweh,
and the neediest of people will celebrate Yisra’el’s sacred one.
[20]Because the violent person will not exist, the arrogant person will be finished,
and all the people who are wakeful over trouble will be cut off,
[21]The people who make someone into a wrongdoer with a statement they make,
who trap the judge at the gateway,
and who turn aside the one in the right with empty words.
[22]Therefore, Yahweh has said this to Ya’aqob’s household, the one who redeemed Abraham:

Ya’aqob won’t now be shamed;
his face won’t now be pale.
[23]Because when he (his descendants) sees
the action of my hands within him,
he’ll make my name sacred.
People will make Ya’aqob’s sacred one sacred,
and be in dread of Yisra’el’s God.
[24]The people who wander in spirit will acknowledge understanding,
and the people who complain will learn a grasp of things.

God is our refuge and strength, really?

30 Hey, defiant sons (Yahweh’s declaration),
in forming counsel but not from me,
In pouring a drink offering but not from my spirit,
in order to heap wrong on wrong,
[2]You who go to descend to Misrayim,
but have not asked my bidding,
In protecting yourselves by Par’oh’s protection
and in taking shelter in Misrayim’s shade.
[3]But Par’oh’s protection will become shame for you,
and shelter in Misrayim’s shade, disgrace.
[4]Because his officials have been at Tso’an,
his envoys reach Hanes:
[5]Everyone will have come to shame
because of a people that’s no use to them,
No help and no use,
but rather shame and yes, reviling.
[6]A pronouncement about The Animals of the Negeb.

In a country of pressure and distress,
lion and cougar among them,
viper and flying serpent,

They carry their resources on the back of donkeys,
their treasures on the hump of camels,
To a people that's no use,
[7]Misrayim which helps with a breath, emptiness.
Therefore I call this
'They are Rahab sitting.'

[8]Now, come,
write it on a tablet with them,
inscribe it on a scroll,
So that it may be for a future day
a witness permanently.
[9]Because it's a rebellious people,
deceitful children,
Children who didn't wish to listen
to Yahweh's instruction,
[10]People who've said to seers,
'Don't see',
And to visionaries,
'Don't give us visions of straightness.
Speak nice things to us,
give us visions that are deceptions.
[11]Depart from the way, turn away from the path,
make Yisra'el's sacred one cease from before us.'
[12]Therefore Yisra'el's sacred one has said this:

Since you've rejected this word,
and relied on fraud and crookedness,
and leaned on it,
[13]Therefore this waywardness will be for you
like a breach falling,
Swelling out in a high wall,
whose breaking comes suddenly, in an instant.
[14]Its breaking is like the breaking of a potters' jug,
smashed so he doesn't spare:
Through its smashing there won't be found a fragment
for picking up fire from a hearth
or for skimming water from a pool.

Yahweh waits

[15]Because the Lord Yahweh, Yisra'el's sacred one, has said this:

By turning back and settling down you'll find deliverance;
in calm and reliance will be your strength.
But you were unwilling,
[16]and you said 'No',
'Rather we'll flee on a horse' –
therefore you'll flee.
'We'll ride on a swift one' –
therefore your pursuers will be swift.
[17]A thousand from before the reprimand of one,
from before the reprimand of five, you'll flee,
Until you're left like a beacon on the top of a mountain,
like a banner on a hill.

[18]Therefore Yahweh waits to be gracious to you;
but therefore he will arise to show compassion to you.
Because Yahweh is a God with authority –
the blessings of all who wait for him!
[19]Because, people in Tsiyyon, which dwells in Yerushalaim,
you really will not weep.
He really will be gracious to you at the sound of your cry;
as he hears it, he'll have answered you.
[20]The Lord will give you pressure bread
and affliction water.
But your instructors will no longer be marginalized;

your eyes will be seeing your instructors.
[21]Your ears will listen to a word from behind you,
saying, ‘This is the way, walk in it’,
when you go right and when you go left.
[22]You’ll defile the plating of your silver images,
and the sheath of your gold idol.
You’ll scatter them like something sick;
‘Get out’, you’ll say to it.
[23]And he’ll give the rain for your seed
with which you sow your ground,
And the bread that’s the yield of your ground,
and it will be rich and fat.
Your livestock will pasture on that day
in a broad pasture.
[24]The oxen and the donkeys that serve the ground
will eat seasoned fodder
that’s been winnowed with shovel and fork.

The Hearth prepared for the King

[25]There will be, on every high mountain
and on every lofty hill,
streams running with water,
On the day of great slaughter,
when towers fall.
[26]But the moon’s light will be like the sun’s light,
and the sun’s light will be sevenfold,
like the light of seven days,
On the day when Yahweh bandages his people’s wound,
and heals the wound from his striking down.

[27]There, Yahweh’s name is coming from afar,
his anger burning, his load a weight.
His lips are full of condemnation,
his tongue is like a consuming fire.
[28]His breath is like a rushing wadi
that comes halfway to the neck,
To shake the nations in an empty shaker,
with a halter that makes them wander on the peoples’ jaws.
[29]The song will be for you
like the night when a festival gets made sacred,
The rejoicing of heart like someone going with a pipe,
to come on Yahweh’s mountain, to Yisra’el’s crag.
[30]Yahweh will make the majesty of his voice heard,
and show the alighting of his arm,
In angry wrath and consuming fiery flame,
cloudburst, storm and hailstone.
[31]Because at Yahweh’s voice
Ashshur that strikes down with a club will be shattered.
[32]Every passing of the appointed mace,
which Yahweh causes to alight on him,
Will be with tambourines and guitars,
and with battles involving its shaking he will battle against them.
[33]Because the Hearth is laid out already;
yes, it’s prepared for the King.
He’s made its firepit deep and wide,
fire and wood a-plenty,
Yahweh’s breath
like a sulphur wadi burning up in it.

The hawks hovering over the town

31 Hey, you who are going down to Misrayim for help,
who lean on horses,
Who’ve relied on chariotry because it’s vast,
and on cavalry because they’re very numerous,
And not turned to Yisra’el’s sacred one,

and not enquired of Yahweh.
[2]But he too is smart, and he has brought bad fortune,
and not made his words turn away.
He will arise against the household of people who deal badly,
and against the help of people who bring trouble.
[3]The Misrayimites are human, not God,
their horses are flesh and not spirit.
When Yahweh stretches out his hand,
helper will collapse and the one who is helped will fall;
all of them will be finished together.
[4]Because Yahweh has said this to me:

As a lion murmurs,
or a cougar over its prey
(When a whole group of shepherds
is called against it,
At their voice it isn't shattered,
at the horde of them it doesn't succumb),
So Yahweh of Armies will go down
to fight on Mount Tsiyyon and on its hill.
[5]Like birds flying,
so Yahweh of Armies will shield Yerushalaim,
Shielding and rescuing,
passing over and saving.
[6]Turn back to the one whom you have deeply defied,
Yisra'elites.
[7]Because on that day they will reject, each one,
his silver non-entities and his gold non-entities,
which your hands made for you, a wrongdoing.
[8]Ashshur will fall by a sword not human;
a sword that doesn't belong to a human being will consume it.
It will flee for its life from before the sword;
its young men will become a workforce.
[9]Its cliff will pass away because of the terror,
its officers will be shattered because of the ensign
(a declaration of Yahweh, whose fire is in Tsiyyon,
his furnace in Yerushalaim).

32 There, a king will reign to promote faithfulness;
as for officials, they'll govern to promote the exercise of authority.
[2]Each will be a veritable hiding place from wind,
a place of concealment from rain,
Like channels of water in the desert,
like the shade of a heavy cliff in a weary country.
[3]The eyes of people who see won't be blind,
the ears of people who listen will heed.
[4]The mind of the quick will understand knowledge,
the tongue of the hesitant will be quick
to speak dazzling words.
[5]No more will a villain be called a leader,
or a rogue called a deliverer.
[6]Because a villain speaks villainy,
and his mind brings trouble,
Acting impiously,
and speaking of wandering in regard to Yahweh,
Leaving the hungry person empty,
and letting the drink of the thirsty fail.
[7]The rogue: his tools are bad,
he's one who counsels schemes,
To destroy the humble by false words,
and when the needy person speaks his case.
[8]But a leader will counsel acts of leadership,
and that man will rise up with acts of leadership.

When the spirit empties itself

[9]Carefree women, get up, listen to my voice;
confident daughters, give ear to what I say.
[10]Some days over a year
you confident ones will shake,
Because the harvest will be finished,
the ingathering won't come.
[11]Tremble, you carefree; shake, you confident,
strip, be bare, a skirt round your waist,
[12]Lamenting upon your breasts for the lovely fields,
for the fruitful vine,
[13]For my people's soil,
which will produce thorn and briar,
Indeed, for all the joyful households,
the exultant township.
[14]Because the fortress will have been deserted,
the uproar of the town will have been abandoned.
Citadel and tower will have become
empty spaces permanently,
Enjoyment for donkeys,
pasture for flocks:
[15]Until spirit empties on us from on high,
and wilderness becomes farmland,
and farmland is thought of as forest.
[16]Authority will dwell in the wilderness,
faithfulness will live in the farmland.
[17]The effect of faithfulness will be well-being,
the service of faithfulness will be calm and confidence permanently.
[18]My people will live in an abode characterized by well-being,
in secure dwellings, in carefree places to settle down.

[19]Though it hails when the forest flattens,
and the town falls utterly down,
[20]The blessings you will have as you sow by all water,
as you let loose the foot of ox and donkey.

The offensive hope of the city of God

33 Hey, destroyer, and you're not destroyed,
one who breaks faith, and people have not broken faith with you!
When you finish destroying you will be destroyed,
when you stop breaking faith, they'll break faith with you.
[2]Yahweh, be gracious to us,
we have hoped in you.
Be people's arm every morning,
yes, our deliverance in time of pressure.
[3]Before the sound of uproar peoples fled,
before your rising nations scattered.
[4]Your spoil was gathered like the gathering of locusts;
like the rushing of grasshoppers someone rushes on it.
[5]Yahweh is lofty, because he dwells on high;
he filled Tsiyyon with authority and faithfulness.
[6]He will become the truthfulness of your times;
smartness and knowledge are the wealth that brings deliverance,
awe for Yahweh – that is its treasure.

[7]There – the people in God's Hearth have cried out aloud in the streets,
the envoys of Shalom cry bitterly.
[8]Causeways have become desolate,
people passing on the road have ceased.
He has contravened the pact, rejected the towns,
not taken account of anyone.
[9]The country has withered, wasted away;
Lebanon is confounded, it has shrivelled.
The Sharon has become like the steppe,
Bashan and Carmel are shaking things off.
[10]'Now I will arise,' Yahweh says,

‘now I will exalt myself, now I will lift myself.
[11]You will conceive hay, give birth to straw;
your breath a fire that consumes you.
[12]Peoples will be burnings of lime,
thorns cut off that are set on fire.
[13]Listen, you far off, to what I have done;
acknowledge, you that are near, my strength.’

Your eyes will behold the King in his beauty

[14]Wrongdoers in Tsiyyon are frightened,
trembling grasps the impious.
Who of us can reside with consuming fire,
who of us can reside with the permanent blaze?
[15]One who walks in faithfulness,
speaks uprightly,
Rejects profit from fraud,
waves the palms of his hands rather than grasping a bribe,
Stops his ear rather than listening to talk of bloodshed,
closes his eyes rather than look at what is bad –
[16]That person can dwell on the heights,
with fortresses in the cliffs as his high tower.
His food will be given,
his water reliable.

[17]Your eyes will behold the King in his beauty,
they’ll see the country stretching far.
[18]Your mind will murmur about what you dreaded –
where’s the person counting, where’s the person weighing?
Where’s the person counting the towers? –
[19]when you don’t see the barbarous people,
The people too way-out of speech to listen,
so stammering of tongue that there’s no understanding.
[20]Behold Tsiyyon, the township of our appointed festivals;
your eyes will see Yerushalaim,
A carefree abode,
a tent that will not move about,
Whose pegs one will never pull up,
none of whose ropes will break.
[21]Rather, there the august one, Yahweh, will be for us
a place of rivers, streams, broad on both sides.
No rowing vessel can go in it,
no august ship can pass through it.
[22]Because Yahweh is the one exercising authority for us,
Yahweh is the one who makes decrees for us.
Yahweh is our King, he is the one who will deliver us,
[23]when your ropes are loose.
They cannot take strong hold on the base of their mast,
they cannot spread a sail.
Then much spoil is divided,
lame people take plunder.
[24]No dweller will say, ‘I’m ill’;
the people that lives in it – its waywardness is carried.

Putting down Edom

34 Come near to listen, nations,
heed, peoples.
The earth and what fills it should listen,
the world and all who come out from it.
[2]Because Yahweh has fury for all the nations,
wrath for all their army.
He’s ‘devoting’ them, giving them to slaughter,
[3]and those of them who are run through will be thrown out.
Their corpses – their stench will go up,
and the mountains will dissolve with their blood.

[4]All the army of the heavens will rot,
and the heavens will roll up like a document.
All their army will droop
like the droop of foliage from a vine,
and the droop from a fig tree,
[5]because my sword will have drunk its fill in the heavens.

There, on Edom it goes down,
and on a people I am devoting, so as to exercise authority.
[6]Yahweh's sword is full of blood,
soaked in fat,
In the blood of lambs and goats,
in fat from the kidneys of rams.
Because Yahweh has a sacrifice in Botsrah,
a big slaughter in the country of Edom.
[7]Oryxes will go down with them,
bullocks with sturdy steers.
Their country will be full of blood,
their earth will be soaked in fat.
[8]Because it's a day of redress for Yahweh,
a year of making good for Tsiyyon's argument.
[9]Its wadis will turn to pitch,
its earth to sulphur.
Its country will become pitch burning up;
[10]day and night it won't go out.
Its smoke will go up permanently;
from generation to generation it will lie waste.
Lastingly and permanently
there will be no one passing through it.
[11]Hawk and hedgehog will possess it,
owl and raven will dwell in it.
He'll stretch out over it the measuring line of emptiness,
and the weights of the void [12]over its nobles.
People will call it 'There's No Kingship There';
all its officials will be nothing.
[13]Thorns will grow up in its citadels,
briar and thistle in its fortresses.
It will become an abode of jackals,
a dwelling for ostriches.
[14]Wildcats will meet hyenas,
a wild goat will call to its neighbour.
Indeed, the night creature is resting there,
finding herself a place of repose.
[15]There the snake is nesting and laying eggs,
sitting and hatching in its shade.
Yes, there buzzards are gathering,
each with her mate.

Giving the mute their voice

[16]Enquire from in Yahweh's document, and read out:

Not one of these is lacking,
they do not miss, any of them, her mate,
Because by my mouth he ordered,
and with his spirit he collected them.
[17]He's the one who made the lot fall for them,
his hand shared it out for them with the line.
They will possess it for all time,
to generation after generation they will dwell there.
35 The wilderness and the dry land will be glad,
the steppe will celebrate and bloom like a crocus.
[2]It will bloom abundantly and celebrate,
indeed with celebration and resounding.
The Lebanon's splendour will be given it,
the Carmel and the Sharon's glory.
Those people will see Yahweh's splendour,

our God's glory.

[3]Strengthen slackening hands,
firm up collapsing knees.
[4]Say to the hesitant of mind,
'Be strong, don't be afraid, there is your God.
Redress will come, God's dealing,
he will come and deliver you.'

[5]Then the eyes of the blind will open,
the ears of the deaf will unfasten.
[6]Then the handicapped person will jump like a deer,
the mute's tongue will resound.
Because water will burst out in the wilderness,
wadis in the steppe.
[7]The burning sand will become a pool,
the thirsty ground fountains of water.
In the abode of jackals, its resting place,
the dwelling will be reed and rush.

[8]There will be a highway there, a way,
the sacred way it will be called;
an unclean person won't pass along it.
It will be for them, the one who walks the way;
stupid people won't wander there.
[9]There'll be no lion there;

violent beast won't go up on it,
It won't be found there;
the restored people will go.
[10]The people redeemed by Yahweh will go back,
they will come to Tsiyyon with resounding,
With eternal rejoicing on their head,
as joy and rejoicing overtake them
and sorrow and sighing flee.

What are you relying on?

36 In the fourteenth year of King Hizqiyyahu, Sanherib [Sennacherib] king of Ashshur went up against all the fortified towns of Yehudah and captured them.
[2]The king of Ashshur sent the Rab-shaqeh from Lakish to Yerushalaim to King Hizqiyyahu with a heavy force, and he stood at the Upper Pool channel at the Washer's Field causeway. [3]Elyaqim ben Hilqiyyahu who was in charge of the household, Shebna the secretary and Yo'ah ben Asaph the recorder went out to him.
[4]The Rab-shaqeh said to them, 'Say to Hizqiyyahu, please, "The Great King, the king of Ashshur, has said this: 'What is this reliance that you have: [5]"I've said, 'Just the word on some lips are counsel and strength for battle'"? Now, on whom have you relied, that you've rebelled against me? [6]There, you've relied on the support of this broken reed, on Misrayim, which when someone leans on it, comes into his palm and pierces it. Such is Par'oh king of Misrayim to all the people who rely on him. [7]But when you say to me, "On Yahweh our God – we've relied on him", he's the one whose shrines and whose altars Hizqiyyahu removed, isn't he, and who's said to Yehudah and to Yerushalaim, "Before this altar you're to bow low."
[8]But now, please make a wager with my lord the king of Ashshur. I'll give you 2,000 horses if you can put riders on them for yourself. [9]So how could you turn back the face of the governor of one of my lord's lesser servants and rely on Misrayim for chariotry and for cavalry for yourself? [10]And now, is it without Yahweh that I've gone up to this country to devastate it? It was Yahweh who said to me, "Go up to this country and devastate it."'"'

Don't rely on Yahweh

[11]Elyaqim, Shebna and Yo'ah said to the Rab-shaqeh, 'Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, because we're listening. Don't speak to us in Yehudahite in the ears of the people, which is on the wall.' [12]The Rab-shaqeh said, 'Was it to your lord and to you that my lord sent me to speak these words? Wasn't it to the individuals who are sitting on the wall, to eat their faeces and drink the water between their legs with you?'
[13]The Rab-shaqeh stood and said and called in a loud voice in Yehudahite: 'Listen to the words of the Great King, the king of Ashshur. [14]The king has said this: "Hizqiyyahu must not deceive you", because he won't be able to rescue you. [15]And Hizqiyyahu must not get you to rely on Yahweh, saying, "Yahweh will definitely rescue us, this town won't be given into the hand of the king of Ashshur." [16]Don't listen to Hizqiyyahu.
Because the king of Ashshur has said this: "Make a blessing [agreement] with me. Go out to me, and eat each one his vine and each one his fig tree, and drink each one the water from his cistern, [17]until I come and take you to a country like your country, a country of grain and new wine, a country of bread and vineyards. [18]Don't let Hizqiyyahu incite you, saying 'Yahweh will rescue us.' Have the gods of the nations, any of them, rescued his country from the hand of the king of Ashshur? [19]Where were the gods of Hamat and Arpad? Where were the gods of Sepharvayim? And indeed did they rescue Shomron from my hand? [20]Who was it among all the gods of these countries that rescued their country from my hand?"'
[21]They were silent. They didn't answer him a word, because it was the king's order, 'Don't answer him.' [22]But Elyaqim ben Hilqiyyahu who was in charge of the household, Shebna the secretary and Yo'ah ben Asaph the recorder came to Hizqiyyahu, their clothes torn, and told him the Rab-shaqeh's words.

A politician's one fatal mistake

37 When King Hizqiyyahu heard, he tore his clothes and covered himself in sack. He came into Yahweh's house, [2]but he sent Elyaqim, who was in charge of the household, Shebna the secretary and the priestly elders, covered in sack, to Yesha'yahu ben Amots. [3]They said to him, 'Hizqiyyahu has said this: "This day is a day of pressure, reproof and disdain, when 'children have come to breaking but there's no energy to give birth'. [4]Perhaps Yahweh your God will listen to the words of the Rab-shaqeh, whom the king of Ashshur his lord sent to revile the living God, and will issue a reproof for the words that Yahweh your God has heard, and you will lift up a plea on behalf of the remainder that are to be found here."'
[5]King Hizqiyyahu's servants came to Yesha'yahu, [6]and Yesha'yahu said to them, 'You're to say this to your lord: "Yahweh has said this: 'Don't be afraid before the words you've heard with which the king of Ashshur's boys have insulted me. [7]Here – I'm going to put a spirit in him, and he'll hear a report and go back to his country, and I shall cause him to fall by the sword in his country.'"'
[8]The Rab-shaqeh went back and found the king of Ashshur battling against Libnah, because he heard that he had moved on from Lakish, [9]and he heard about Tirhaqah king of Kush, 'He's gone out to do battle with you.' So he heard and sent envoys to Hizqiyyahu, saying, [10]'You're to say this to Hizqiyyahu king of Yehudah: "Your God on whom you're relying mustn't deceive you, saying 'Yerushalaim won't be given into the hand of the king of Ashshur.' [11]Here, you yourself have heard what the kings of Ashshur have done to all the countries, 'devoting' them, and are you the one who'll be rescued? [12]Did the gods of the nations that

my ancestors devastated rescue them – Gozan, Harran, Reseph, and the Edenites who were in Tela'ssar? [13]Where is the king of Hamat, the king of Arpad, the king of La'ir, Sepharvayim, Hena and Yivvah?"'

Dealing with tricky mail

[14]Hizqiyyahu took the documents from the envoys' hand, read it out and went up to Yahweh's house. Hizqiyyahu spread it before Yahweh, [15]and Hizqiyyahu pleaded with Yahweh: [16]'Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's God, sitting above the sphinxes: you are God, you alone, for all the kingdoms of the earth. You are the one who made the heavens and the earth. [17]Yahweh, bend your ear and listen. Yahweh, open your eye and see. Listen to all the words of Sanherib that he has sent to revile the living God.
[18]Truly, Yahweh, the kings of Ashshur have put to the sword all the countries, and their own country, [19]and put their gods into the fire, because they were not gods but rather the making of human hands, wood and stone, and they obliterated them. [20]But now, Yahweh our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may acknowledge that you alone are Yahweh.'
[21]Yesha'yahu ben Amots sent to Hizqiyyahu saying, 'Yahweh, Yisra'el's God, with whom you pleaded concerning Sanherib king of Ashshur, has said this. [22]This is the word that Yahweh has spoken about him:

Maiden Miss Tsiyyon
despises you, she ridicules you.
Behind you Miss Yerushalaim
has shaken her head.
[23]Whom have you reviled and insulted,
against whom have you lifted your voice?
You've raised your eyes on high
towards Yisra'el's sacred one.
[24]By the hand of your servants
you've reviled the Lord, and said,
"With the large number of my chariotry I'm the one who has gone up
to the mountains' height, Lebanon's farthest parts.
I've cut down the highest of its cedars,
the choicest of its junipers.
I've come to its ultimate height,
its forest of farmland.
[25]I'm the one who has dug
and drunk water,
I've dried with the sole of my feet
all Misrayim's streams."

Reminder to Sanherib, promise to Hizqiyyahu

[26]Haven't you heard?
– long ago I did it.
From days of old I formed it;
now I've made it come about.
It's happened, crashing fortified towns
into wasted heaps.
[27]Their inhabitants, short of ability,
are scared and shamed.
They were vegetation of the fields,
green herbage,
Grass on the roofs,
blasted before it grows up.
[28]Your sitting, your going out and your coming I know,
and your raging at me.
[29]Since you raged at me,
and your din came up into my ears,
I shall put my hook in your nose,
my bit in your mouth,
I shall make you go back
by the way that you came.'
[30]This will be the sign for you:

This year, eat the natural growth;
in the second year, the secondary growth.
In the third year, sow and reap,
plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
[31]An escape group from Yehudah's household that remains
will add root downwards and produce fruit above.

[32]Because a remainder will go out from Yerushalaim,
and an escape group from Mount Tsiyyon.
The passion of Yahweh of Armies
will do this.
[33]Therefore Yahweh has said this concerning the king of Ashshur:
'He will not come into this town;
he will not shoot an arrow there.
He will not meet it with a shield;
he will not heap up a ramp against it.
[34]By the way that he came he will go back;
into this town he will not come
(Yahweh's declaration).
[35]I will shield this town so as to deliver it,
for my sake and for the sake of David my servant.'

The praying Hizqiyyahu

[36]Yahweh's envoy went out and struck down 185,000 in the Ashshurites' camp. People started early in the morning – there, all of them were dead corpses.
[37]Sanherib the king of Ashshur moved on and went, and returned and lived in Nineveh. [38]He was bowing low in the house of Nisrok his god when Adrammelek and Sar'etser his sons struck him with the sword. While they escaped to the country of Ararat, Esar-haddon his son began to reign in place of him.
38 In those days Hizqiyyahu became deathly ill. Yesha'yahu ben Amots the prophet came to him and said to him, 'Yahweh has said this: "Give orders to your household, because you're dying. You won't live on."' [2]Hizqiyyahu turned his face round to the wall and pleaded with Yahweh, [3]'Oh, Yahweh, please be mindful of how I've walked before you in truth and with a perfect mind, and done what is good in your eyes.' Hizqiyyahu cried and cried much.
[4]Yahweh's word came to Yesha'yahu: [5]'Go and say to Hizqiyyahu: "Yahweh, the God of David your ancestor, has said this: 'I have listened to your plea, I've seen your tears. Here, I am going to add to your time 15 years. [6]From the fist of the king of Ashshur I shall rescue you and this town, and I shall shield this town.'" [7]This will be the sign for you from Yahweh that Yahweh will do this thing that he has spoken of. [8]"Here, I'm going to make the shadow go back on the steps, which has gone down on the steps of Ahaz with the sun, back ten steps."' And the sun went back ten steps by the steps that it had gone down.

The prayer

[9]Something written for Hizqiyyahu king of Yehudah, when he was ill and came back to life from his sickness.

[10]I myself said,
'In the middle of my days I shall go.
I've been appointed to She'ol's gateways
for the rest of my years.'
[11]I said, 'I shall not see Yah;
Yah is in the land of the living.
I shall not look to humanity again,
with the inhabitants of the world.
[12]My dwelling has moved on and gone into exile from me,
like a shepherd's tent.
I've rolled up my life like a weaver,
as he cuts me from the loom.
While from day until night you make an end of me,
[13]I have composed myself until morning.
Like a lion that thus breaks up all my bones,
from day until night you make an end of me.
[14]Like a swift, a swallow, so I chirp;
I murmur like a dove.
My eyes have looked to the height:
'Lord, it's oppression to me, make a pledge to me.
[15]What shall I speak of when he has said it to me,
and he himself has acted?
I shall walk all my years
in the bitterness of my heart.
[16]Lord, in such things people live,
and in all of them is the life of my spirit;
may you restore me and let me live.'

[17]There – as regards well-being,
it was bitter for me, bitter.

But you yourself delighted in me,
out of the pit of nothingness,
Because you threw all my wrongdoings
behind your back.
[18]Because She'ol does not confess you,
death praise you.
People who go down to the Pit
don't expect your truthfulness.
[19]The living person, the living person, that one confesses you,
this very day.
A father makes known to his children
your truthfulness.
[20]Yahweh will deliver me,
and we will make music,
All the days of our lives
at Yahweh's house.
([21]Yesha'yahu had said, 'They are to get a block of figs and apply it to the infection, and he will live on', and Hizqiyyahu had said, 'What will be the sign that I shall go up to Yahweh's house?')

How to lose God's sympathy

39 At that time Merodak Bal'adan ben Bal'adan king of Babel sent documents and an offering to Hizqiyyahu; he had heard that he had been ill and had regained strength. [2]Hizqiyyahu rejoiced about them and let them see his repository house, the silver, the gold, the spices and the fine oil, and his entire equipment house, and everything that was to be found in his storehouses. There was not a thing that Hizqiyyahu didn't let them see in his house and his entire kingdom.
[3]Yesha'yahu the prophet came to King Hizqiyyahu and said to him, 'What did these men say? Where did they come from to you?' Hizqiyyahu said, 'From a far country, they came to me from Babel.' [4]He said, 'What did they see in your house?' Hizqiyyahu said, 'They saw everything that's in my house. There wasn't a thing that I didn't let them see in my storehouses.'
[5]Yesha'yahu said to Hizqiyyahu, 'Listen to the word of Yahweh of Armies. [6]"There, days are going to come when everything that's in your house, and that your ancestors have stored up until this day, will be carried to Babel. Not a thing will be left", Yahweh has said. [7]"Some of your descendants who will issue from you, whom you will father, will be taken and will become courtiers in the palace of the king of Babel."' [8]Hizqiyyahu said to Yesha'yahu, 'The word from Yahweh that you have spoken is good.' He said, 'Because there'll be well-being and truthfulness in my days.'

Comfort my people

40 'Comfort, comfort my people',
says your God.
[2]'Speak to Yerushalaim's heart,
call to it
That its tour of duty is fulfilled,
that its waywardness is paid for,
That it has taken from Yahweh's hand
double for all its wrongdoings.'
[3]A voice is calling:

'In the wilderness clear Yahweh's way,
make straight in the steppe a causeway for our God.
[4]Every ravine is to rise up,
every mountain and hill is to fall down.
The ridge is to become level,
the cliffs a valley.
[5]Yahweh's splendour will appear,
and all flesh will see it together,
because Yahweh's mouth has spoken.'

[6]A voice is saying, 'Call',
but someone says, 'Call what?
All flesh is grass,
and all its commitment is like a wild flower's.
[7]Grass withers, a flower fades,
when Yahweh's wind blows on it.'
'Yes, the people is grass;
[8]grass withers, a flower fades –
but our God's word rises up permanently.'

[9]Get yourself up on to a high mountain
as a bringer of news to Tsiyyon.
Raise your voice with energy
as a bringer of news to Yerushalaim.
Raise it, don't be afraid,
say to Yehudah's towns,
'Here is your God,
[10]here is the Lord Yahweh.'
He comes as the strong one,
his arm is going to rule for him.
Here, his reward is with him,
his earnings before him.
[11]Like a shepherd who pastures his flock,
he collects lambs in his arm.
He carries them in his embrace,
guides the nursing ones.

[12]Who gauged the water in his palm,
surveyed the heavens with his span,
Measured the world's earth by the gallon,
weighed the mountains with a balance,
the hills with scales?
[13]Who directed Yahweh's spirit,
or as the person to give him counsel made it known to him?
[14]With whom did he take counsel, so that he helped him understand,
taught him the way to exercise authority,
Taught him knowledge,
made known to him the way of understanding?
[15]There, nations count like a drop from a pan,
like a cloud on scales;
there, foreign shores are like a fine cloud that rises.
[16]Lebanon – there's not enough to burn up,
its animals – there aren't enough as a burnt offering.
[17]All the nations are like nothing over against him;
they count as less than naught, emptiness, to him.

Hope means energy

[18]So to whom would you compare God,
or what comparison would you line up for him?
[19]The image, which a craftworker casts? –
a smith beats it out with gold,
and a smith with silver chains.
[20]Is it sissoo fit for tribute,
wood that doesn't rot, that someone chooses?
He seeks for himself a smart craftworker
to set up an image so it doesn't slip.

[21]You acknowledge, don't you,
you listen, don't you?
It's been told you from the beginning, hasn't it,
you've understood earth's foundations, haven't you?
[22]There's one who sits above earth's horizon,
with its inhabitants like grasshoppers,
One who stretched out the heavens like net,
spread them like a tent for sitting in,
[23]One who turns sovereigns into nothing,
makes earth's authorities pure emptiness.
[24]They're really not planted, really not sown,
their stem is really not rooting in the earth,
Then he blows on them and they shrivel,
and a hurricane carries them off like straw.

[25]So to whom would you compare me,
so I could be similar (says the Sacred One)?
[26]Lift your eyes on high and see –
who created these?

The one who takes out their army by number
calls to all of them by name.
Because of the greatness of his power,
and as one firm in energy, not one lags behind.

[27]Why do you say, Ya'aqob,
and speak, Yisra'el,
'My way has hidden from Yahweh,
a ruling for me passes away from my God'?
[28]Haven't you acknowledged,
or haven't you listened?
Yahweh is God of the ages,
creator of earth's ends.
He doesn't get faint or weary;
there's no searching out of his understanding.
[29]He gives energy to the faint,
and to the one who has no resources he gives much strength.
[30]Youths may get faint and weary,
young men may totally collapse.
[31]But people who hope in Yahweh get new energy,
they grow pinions like eagles.
They run and don't get weary,
they walk and don't faint.

Don't be afraid

41 Be silent for me, foreign shores;
peoples must renew their energy.
They must come up, then speak;
together let us draw near for making a ruling.
[2]Who aroused someone from the east
whom faithfulness calls to its heel?
He gives up nations before him,
enables him to put down kings.
He makes them like earth with his sword,
like driven straw with his bow.
[3]As he pursues them, he passes on with things being well
by a path on which he doesn't come straight.
[4]Who acted and did it,
calling the generations from the beginning?
I am Yahweh, the first,
and I myself am with the last.
[5]Foreign shores have seen and become afraid,
earth's ends tremble,
they've drawn near and come.
[6]An individual helps his neighbour,
and says to his brother, 'Be strong!'
[7]Craftworker bids smith be strong,
one who flattens with a hammer [bids] one who strikes with a mallet.
One who says of the joint, 'It's good',
strengthens it with fastenings so it doesn't slip.

[8]But you as Yisra'el are my servant,
as Ya'aqob you're the one that I chose.
As the offspring of Abraham you're my friend,
[9]the one of whom I took strong hold from earth's ends,
Called from its corners, and said to you,
'You're my servant, I chose you, and didn't spurn you.'
[10]Don't be afraid, because I'm with you;
don't be frightened, because I'm your God.
I'm making you firm, yes, helping you,
yes, supporting you with my faithful right hand.
[11]There, they'll be shamed and disgraced,
all who rage at you.
They'll become absolutely nothing, they'll perish,
the people who argue with you.
[12]You will seek them and not find them,

the people who attack you.
They will become absolutely nothing, zero,
the people who do battle against you.
[13]Because I am Yahweh your God,
who takes strong hold of your right hand,
Who says to you, 'Don't be afraid,
I myself am helping you.'

[14]Don't be afraid, worm Ya'aqob,
relics Yisra'el.
I'm helping you (Yahweh's declaration),
Yisra'el's sacred one is your restorer.
[15]There, I am making you into a harrow,
a new thresher fitted with points.
You'll trample mountains and crush them,
and make hills like chaff.
[16]You'll winnow them and the wind will carry them,
the hurricane will scatter them.
And you yourselves will rejoice in Yahweh;
in Yisra'el's sacred one you'll exult.

Do anything!

[17]When the humble and the needy are seeking water,
but there is none, their tongue is parched with thirst.
I Yahweh will answer them;
the God of Yisra'el will not abandon them.
[18]I will open up rivers on the bare places,
springs in the middle of the valleys.
I will make the wilderness into a pool of water,
dry land into water courses.
[19]In the wilderness I will put cedar,
acacia, myrtle and oil tree.
In the steppe I will set juniper,
maple and cypress, together,
[20]In order that people may see and acknowledge,
consider and discern together,
That Yahweh's hand did this,
Yisra'el's sacred one created it.

[21]'Present your argument',
Yahweh says.
'Bring up your strong points',
says Ya'aqob's King.
[22]They should bring them up
and tell us what will happen.
The previous events – tell us what they were,
so we may apply our mind and acknowledge their outcome.
Or let us hear about the coming events,
[23]tell us things that will arrive after,
so we may acknowledge that you are gods.
Yes, do something good or do something bad,
so we may bow low and see together.
[24]Here, you're less than nothing,
your action is less than a sigh;
it's an offence that someone chooses in you.

[25]I aroused one from the north and he arrived,
from the rising of the sun one who would call on my name.
He came on viceroys as if they were mire,
as if he was a potter who treads clay.
[26]Who told of it from the beginning so we might acknowledge him,
beforehand so we might say 'He was right'?
No, there was no one telling of it;
no, there was no one letting us hear about it;
no, there was no one hearing your words.
[27]The first for Tsiyyon ('Here, here they are'),

for Yerushalaim, I give a bringer of news.
[28]Were I to look, there was no one;
of them, there was no counsellor,
who could speak a word back if I asked them.
[29]There, they are all a bane, their acts are zero,
their images are a breath, emptiness.

There is my servant

42 There is my servant whom I support,
my chosen whom I myself accept.
I'm putting my breath on him;
he will see that my exercise of authority gets out to the nations.
[2]He won't cry out and he won't raise
or make his voice heard, in the streets.
[3]A broken cane he won't snap,
a flickering lamp he won't snuff.
For the sake of truthfulness he'll see the exercise of authority gets out,
[4]he won't flicker or break,
Until he sets the exercise of authority in the earth,
as foreign shores wait for his instruction.

[5]The God Yahweh has said this,
the one who created the heavens and stretched them,
beating out the earth and its produce,
Giving air to the people on it,
breath to those who walk on it:
[6]'I am Yahweh, I called you in faithfulness,
took strong hold of your hand.
I formed you and gave you as a pact for the people,
a light for the nations,
[7]In opening blind eyes,
in getting the captive out from the dungeon,
from the prison people who are living in the dark.
[8]I am Yahweh, that is my name;
my splendour I do not give to another,
or my praise to images.
[9]The previous events – here, they came about;
and I'm telling of new events –
before they grow, I let you hear.'

[10]Sing Yahweh a new song,
his praise from the end of the earth,
You who go down to the sea, and what fills it,
foreign shores and those who live in them.
[11]The wilderness and its towns are to raise their voice,
the villages where Qedar lives.
The people who live in Sela are to resound,
they are to yell from the top of the mountains.
[12]They are to ascribe splendour to Yahweh,
to tell of his praise on foreign shores.

What will we do when God's servant is deaf and blind?

[13]Yahweh goes out like a strong man,
like a man of battle he arouses his passion.
He shouts, yes roars,
acts as a strong man against his enemies.
[14]'I've been quiet from of old;
I've been being still and restraining myself.
Like a woman giving birth I shall shriek,
I shall devastate and crush together.
[15]I shall waste mountains and hills,
wither all their growth.
I shall turn rivers into shores,
wither wetland.

[16]I shall enable blind people to go by a way they haven't known,
lead them on paths they haven't known.
I shall make the darkness in front of them into light,
rough places into level ground.
These are the words I am acting on,
and I will not abandon them.'
[17]They're turning back, they're utterly shamed,
the people who trust in an image,
Who say to an idol,
'You're our god.'

[18]Listen, you deaf people;
you blind people, look and see!
[19]Who is blind except my servant,
as deaf as my envoy I send?
Who is as blind as the one made good to,
as blind as Yahweh's servant?
[20]While seeing many things, you don't heed;
while opening ears, he doesn't listen.
[21]Yahweh wants, for the sake of his faithfulness,
that he should magnify the instruction, glorify it.
[22]But that is a people plundered and spoiled,
trapped in holes, all of them,
and they're confined in jails.
They've become plunder with no rescuer,
spoil with no one saying, 'Give it back!'
[23]Who among you will give ear to this,
will heed and listen for the future?
[24]Who gave Ya'aqob as spoil, Yisra'el to plunderers? –
it was Yahweh, against whom we had done wrong, wasn't it.
They were not willing to walk in his ways,
they didn't listen to his instruction.
[25]So he poured wrath upon it,
his anger and battling vigour.
It blazed upon it all round, but it didn't acknowledge;
it burned it up, but it doesn't take it into its mind.

You'll still be my witnesses

43 But now Yahweh has said this,
your creator, Ya'aqob, your former, Yisra'el:
'Don't be afraid, because I'm restoring you;
I call you by name, you're mine.
[2]When you pass through water, I'll be with you,
and through rivers, they won't overwhelm you.
When you go in the middle of fire you won't burn,
and into flames, they won't consume you.
[3]Because I am Yahweh your God,
Yisra'el's sacred one, your deliverer.
I gave Misrayim as your ransom,
Kush and Seba in place of you.
[4]Because you were valuable in my eyes;
you were honoured and I myself was loyal to you,
So that I would give people in place of you,
nations in place of your life.
[5]Don't be afraid,
because I'll be with you.
From the east I shall bring your offspring,
from the west I shall gather you.
[6]I shall say to the north, "Give",
and to the south, "Don't restrain.
Bring my sons from far away,
my daughters from the end of the earth,
[7]Everyone called in my name and for my splendour,
whom I created, formed, yes made."'

[8]Take out the people that is blind though it has eyes,

those who are deaf though they have ears.
[9]All the nations must collect together,
the peoples must gather.
Who among them could tell of this,
could let us hear of the earlier events?
They must give their witnesses so they may prove right,
so people may listen and say, 'It's true.'
[10]You're my witnesses (Yahweh's declaration),
and my servant whom I chose,
In order that you may acknowledge and trust in me,
and understand that I am the one.
Before me no god was formed,
and after me there will be none.
[11]I myself, I am Yahweh,
and apart from me there's no deliverer.
[12]I'm the one who told of it and delivered;
I let you hear, and there was no stranger among you.
And you're my witnesses (Yahweh's declaration);
I am God.
[13]Yes, from this day I'm the one,
and there is no one rescues from my hand;
I act, and who can make it go back?

I'm sending to Babel

[14]Yahweh has said this,
your restorer, Yisra'el's sacred one:
'For your sake I am sending to Babel,
and I shall take down all of them as fugitives,
the Kasdites into their boats with a shout.
[15]I am Yahweh, your sacred one,
Yisra'el's creator, your King.'
[16]Yahweh has said this,
the one who made a way in the sea,
A path in vigorous water,
[17]who took out chariot and horse,
force and vigorous one, altogether.
(They lie down, they don't get up;
they were extinguished, they went out like a wick):
[18]Don't be mindful of the earlier events,
don't consider previous events.
[19]Here am I, doing something new;
now it is to grow – you will acknowledge it, won't you.
Yes, I shall make a way in the wilderness,
rivers in the desert.
[20]The animals of the wild will honour me,
jackals and ostriches,
Because I'm giving water in the wilderness,
rivers in the desert,
To give drink to my people, my chosen,
[21]the people that I formed for myself;
they will recount my praise.

[22]But it's not me you've called on, Ya'aqob,
because you've been weary of me, Yisra'el.
[23]You haven't brought me sheep as your whole offerings,
nor honoured me with your sacrifices.
I haven't made you serve me with an offering,
nor made you weary with incense.
[24]You haven't gained me cane with silver,
nor soaked me with the fat of your sacrifices.
Actually you have made me serve with your wrongdoings,
wearied me with your wayward acts.
[25]I, I'm the one,
who wipes away your rebellions for my sake,
and your wrongdoings I will not keep in mind.

[26]Remind me; let's enter into judgement together –
you give an account, so you may prove to be in the right.
[27]Your first ancestor – he did wrong,
and your interpreters – they rebelled against me.
[28]So I treated the sacred officials as ordinary,
give Ya'aqob to being devoted, Yisra'el to taunts.

People will say, 'I am Yahweh's'

44 But now listen, Ya'aqob my servant,
Yisra'el whom I chose.
[2]Yahweh your maker has said this,
your former from the womb, who will help you:
Don't be afraid, my servant Ya'aqob,
Yeshurun whom I chose.
[3]Because I shall pour water on the thirsty,
streams on the dry ground.
I shall pour my spirit on your offspring,
my blessing on those who go out from you.
[4]They'll grow like a grassy tamarisk,
like willows by water channels.
[5]One will say, 'I am Yahweh's',
one will call out in Yahweh's name.
One will write on his hand 'Yahweh's',
take as his name 'Yisra'el'.

[6]Yahweh, Yisra'el's King, has said this,
your restorer, Yahweh of Armies:
'I am first and I am last;
apart from me there is no God.
[7]Who is like me? – he must call out,
tell and lay it out for me.
Who let people hear of coming events from of old? –
they must tell us what will happen.
[8]Don't fear or take fright,
I let you hear of it in time past, and told of it, didn't I.
And you're my witnesses:
is there a God apart from me? –
but there is no crag, I don't acknowledge one.'

The stupidity of images

[9]People who form an image – all of them are emptiness,
and the objects of their delight are no use.
They are their witnesses – they don't see and they don't acknowledge,
in order that they may be shamed.
[10]Who forms a god or casts an image
so that it may be of no use?
[11]There, all his associates will be shamed;
craftworkers are but human.
If all of them collect together and stand up,
they'll be afraid, shamed, together.
[12]A craftworker in metal with a cutter
works in the fire.
He forms it with hammers,
works it with his energetic arm.
Should he get hungry, he'd have no energy;
should he not drink water, he'd be faint.
[13]A craftworker in wood stretches a line,
outlines it with a chalk.
He makes it with squares,
outlines it with a compass.
He makes it in the image of a person,
with the majesty of a human being, to live at home.
[14]In cutting himself cedars,
getting ilex or oak,

He secures it for himself among the trees of the forest,
plants a pine so the rain may make it grow,
[15]So it may be fuel for someone,
and he takes some of them and gets warm.
He both lights it and bakes bread,
and also makes a god and bows down to it.
He makes an image and prostrates himself to it,
[16]while half of it he burns in the middle of the fire.
Over the half of it he eats meat,
he makes a roast and is full.
He also gets warm and says,
'Ah, I'm warm, I see a flame.'
[17]The remainder of it he makes into a god, into his image,
to which he will kneel down and bow low.
He will plead with it and say,
'Rescue me, because you're my god.'
[18]They don't acknowledge,
they don't understand,
Because their eyes are smeared so they don't see,
their minds so they don't discern.
[19]He doesn't bring back to his mind,
there's no knowledge nor understanding to say,
'Half of it I burned in the middle of the fire,
also I baked bread on the coals.
I roasted meat and ate,
and the rest of it I'll make into an offence.
I'll kneel down to a lump of wood' –
[20]feeder on earth!
A deluded mind has directed him,
and he can't rescue himself.
He can't say,
'Isn't it a falsehood in my hand?'

No forgetting

[21]Be mindful of these things, Ya'aqob,
Yisra'el, because you're my servant.
I formed you as a servant, you're mine;
Yisra'el, there is to be no forgetting.
[22]I'm wiping away your rebellions like a cloud,
your wrongdoings like a thundercloud.
Turn back to me,
because I'm restoring you.

[23]Resound, heavens, because Yahweh has acted;
shout, depths of the earth.
Break out in sound, mountains,
forest and every tree in it.
Because Yahweh is restoring Ya'aqob,
and will show his majesty in Yisra'el.

[24]Yahweh, your restorer, has said this –
your former from the womb:
'I am Yahweh,
maker of everything,
Who stretched out the heavens on my own,
spread out the earth of myself,
[25]Who contravenes the signs of soothsayers,
makes fools of diviners,
Turns the smart back,
makes idiocy of their knowledge,
[26]Implements his servant's word,
fulfils his envoys' plan –
Who says of Yerushalaim, "It will be inhabited",
and of Yehudah's towns, "They'll be built up",
and "I will raise its wastes",
[27]Who says to the deep,

“Be wasted – I shall dry up your rivers”,
[28]Who says to Koresh [Cyrus], “My shepherd,
he’ll fulfil my every want”,
By saying of Yerushalaim, “It will be built up”,
and to the palace, “Be founded.”’

Creator of good and bad things

45 Yahweh has said this to his anointed, to Koresh,
‘The one whom I took by the right hand,
Putting down nations before him,
undoing the hips of kings,
Opening doors before him,
so that gateways might not shut:
[2]I will go before you and level walls;
I will break up copper doors,
cut up iron bars.
[3]I will give you dark treasuries
and hidden hoards,
In order that you may acknowledge that I am Yahweh;
Yisra’el’s God is the one who calls you by your name.
[4]For the sake of my servant Ya’aqob,
Yisra’el my chosen,
I called you by your name,
I designate you though you haven’t acknowledged me.
[5]I am Yahweh and there is no other;
apart from me there is no God.
I put the belt on you, though you have not acknowledged me,
[6]in order that people may acknowledge,
from the rise of the sun and from the setting,
That there is none apart from me,
I am Yahweh and there is no other,
[7]Forming light and creating dark,
making well-being and creating bad fortune.
I am Yahweh,
doing all these things.’

[8]Rain, heavens above;
skies are to pour down faithfulness.
Earth is to open so that deliverance may fruit,
faithfulness is to burst out all at once;
I Yahweh have created it.

[9]Hey, you who argue with the one who forms him,
a pot with earthen pots.
Can clay say to the one who forms it, ‘What do you do’,
or can the thing you make say, ‘It has no handles’?
[10]Hey, you who say to a father, ‘What do you beget?’
or to a woman, ‘What do you give birth to?’
[11]Yahweh has said this –
Yisra’el’s sacred one and the one who forms it:
‘Ask me about things to come for my children –
you can give me orders about the work of my hands.
[12]I’m the one who made the earth
and created humanity upon it.
I – my hands stretched out the heavens,
I ordered their entire army.
[13]I’m the one who aroused him in faithfulness
and level all his ways.
He’s the one who will build up my town
and send off my exiles,
Not for payment, not for a bribe’,
Yahweh of Armies has said.

Every knee will bend

[14]Yahweh has said this:

‘Misrayim’s toil, Kush’s profit,
the Seba’ites, people of stature,
Will pass over to you and be yours;
they’ll follow behind you.
They’ll pass over in fetters and bow low to you,
to you they’ll make their plea:
“God is in you only,
and there’s no other, no God.
[15]Certainly you’re the God who hides,
God of Yisra’el who delivers.”
[16]They are shamed, yes, they are disgraced, all of them at once,
they have gone in disgrace, the people who craft forms.
[17]Yisra’el has found deliverance in Yahweh,
everlasting deliverance.
You will not be shamed, you will not be disgraced,
to everlasting ages.’

[18]Because Yahweh has said this,
the creator of the heavens, he is God,
the former of the earth and its maker –
he established it, he did not create it an emptiness,
he formed it for inhabiting:

‘I am Yahweh
and there is no other.
[19]It was not in hiddenness that I spoke,
in a place in a dark country.
I didn’t say to Ya’aqob’s offspring,
“Enquire of me in emptiness.”
I am Yahweh, speaking of faithfulness,
telling of what is right.
[20]Gather, come, draw near together,
escapees of the nations.
The people who carry their wooden images have not acknowledged,
the people who plead with a god who does not deliver.
[21]Tell out, bring near,
yes, consult together.
Who let people hear of this beforehand,
told about it of old?
Was it not I, Yahweh? –
and there was no other God apart from me,
The faithful God and deliverer;
there’s none except me.
[22]Turn your faces to me and find deliverance, all the ends of the earth,
because I am God and there’s no other.
[23]By myself I’ve sworn,
faithfulness has gone out from my mouth,
a word that will not turn back:
To me every knee will bend,
every tongue swear.
[24]“Only in Yahweh (of me it is said)
are faithful acts and vigour.”’
To him they will come and be shamed,
all who rage at him.
[25]In Yahweh all Yisra’el’s offspring
will be faithful and will exult.

Gods you have to carry and the God who carries you

46 Bel has bent down, Nebo is stooping;
their images have come to belong to creatures, to animals.
The things carried by you are loaded as a burden for weary ones;
[2]they’ve stooped, they’ve bent down together.
They couldn’t save the burden;
they themselves have gone into captivity.
[3]Listen to me, Ya’aqob’s household,
all the remainder of Yisra’el’s household,

Who've been loaded from birth,
who've been carried from the womb.
[4]Even until old age I will be the one;
even until grey-headedness I will be the one who will bear.
I'm the one who made, I'm the one who carries;
I'm the one who bears, and I will save.
[5]To whom can you compare me so I should be similar,
or liken me so we are comparable?
[6]People who lavish gold from a purse,
or weigh out silver by the rod,
Hire a smith so he may make it into a god
to which they may fall down, bow low.
[7]They carry it on their shoulder, bear it,
so they can set it down in its position and it can stand;
from its place it won't move away.
Yes, someone can cry out to it, but it doesn't answer;
it doesn't deliver him from the pressure on him.

[8]Keep this in mind, be strong,
bring it back to mind, you rebels,
[9]Keep in mind earlier events of old,
because I am God and there is no other.
I am God and there is none like me,
[10]telling of the outcome from the beginning,
And from beforehand things that haven't been done,
saying 'My counsel will arise, all I want I shall do',
[11]Calling from the east a shriek,
from a far country the person in my counsel.
I both spoke and will also bring it about;
I formed and will also do it.
[12]Listen to me, you sturdy of mind,
you who are far away from faithfulness.
[13]I have brought faithfulness near; it's not far away,
and my deliverance won't delay.
I shall put deliverance in Tsiyyon,
my magnificence for Yisra'el.

The unexpected fall of the superpower

47 Get down, sit in the earth, young Miss Babel,
sit on the ground without a throne, Miss Kasdim.
Because you will not again have people call you
sensitive and delightful.
[2]Get the millstones and grind meal,
expose your hair.
Uncover your tresses, expose your leg,
cross rivers.
[3]Your nakedness will be exposed,
yes, your reviling will be visible.
I shall take redress,
no one will intervene.
[4](Our restorer: Yahweh of Armies is his name,
Yisra'el's sacred one.)

[5]Sit in silence, enter into darkness,
Miss Kasdim.
Because you will not again have them call you
mistress of kingdoms.
[6]I was angry with my people, I treated my domain as ordinary,
I gave them into your hand.
You didn't show compassion to them;
upon the aged you made your yoke very heavy.
[7]You said, 'I shall be here permanently,
mistress always.'
You didn't receive these things into your mind;
you were not mindful of its outcome.

[8]So now listen to this, charming one,
who sits in confidence,
Who says to herself,
'I and none else am still here,
I shall not sit as a widow,
I shall not know the loss of children.'
[9]The two of these will come to you,
in a moment, on one day.
The loss of children and widowhood
in full measure will have come upon you.
In the multiplying of your chants
and in the great abounding of your charms,
[10]You've been confident in your bad dealing;
you said, 'There's no one looking at me.'
Your smartness, your knowledge,
it turned you back.
You said to yourself,
'I and none else am still here.'
[11]But bad fortune is going to come upon you
whose countercharm you won't know.
Disaster will fall upon you
that you won't be able to expiate.
There will come upon you suddenly
devastation that you won't know about.
[12]Stand, please, in your charms and in the multiplying of your chants,
in which you've laboured from your youth.
Perhaps you'll be able to succeed,
perhaps you will terrify.

I knew you were tough-minded

[13]You're collapsing in the multiplying of your plans;
they should indeed stand up and deliver you,
The people who observe the heavens,
who look at the stars,
Who make known for the months
some of what will come upon you.
[14]There, they've become like straw
that fire burns up.
They can't rescue themselves
from the power of the blaze.
It's not a coal for warming,
a flame for sitting before.
[15]Such have they been for you,
those with whom you have laboured,
your charmers from your youth.
They've wandered, each of them his own way;
there's no one delivering you.

48 Listen to this, Ya'aqob's household,
you who call yourselves by Yisra'el's name,
You who came out of Yehudah's water,
who swear by Yahweh's name,
Who make mention of Yisra'el's God –
not in truthfulness, not in faithfulness –
[2]Because they call themselves by the sacred town,
lean on Yisra'el's God,
whose name is Yahweh of Armies.

[3]The earlier events I told about of old,
from my mouth they came out so I could make them heard.
Suddenly I acted and they came about,
[4]because of my knowing that you're tough.
Your neck is an iron sinew,
your forehead copper.
[5]I told you about them of old,
before they came about I let you hear,

So you couldn't say, 'My icon did them;
my image, my idol ordered them.'

[6]You've heard – look at all of it;
will you yourselves not tell of it?
I'm letting you hear of new events right now,
secrets that you didn't know.
[7]Now they're created, not of old,
or before today, and you haven't heard of them,
so you could say, 'There, I knew about them.'
[8]No, you haven't heard; no, you haven't known;
no, of old your ear didn't open up.
Because I knew you would utterly break faith;
rebel from birth, you were called.

[9]For the sake of my name I delay my anger,
for the sake of my praise I muzzle it for you
so that I don't cut you off.
[10]There, I smelted you, and not in the silver [furnace];
I chose you in the affliction furnace.
[11]For my sake, for my sake, I act,
because how can my splendour be treated as ordinary? –
I will not give it to someone else.

If only . . .

[12]Listen to me, Ya'aqob,
Yisra'el whom I called.
I'm the one, I'm the first,
yes, I'm the last.
[13]Yes, it was my hand formed earth;
my right hand spanned the heavens.
I'm going to call them
so they stand together.
[14]Collect together, all of you, and listen –
who among them told of these things?
One to whom Yahweh is loyal will do what he wants to Babel,
and his arm to the Kasdites.
[15]I, I'm the one who spoke,
yes, I called him,
I brought him and he will succeed in his journey.
[16]Draw near to me,
listen to this.
Not from the first did I speak in hiddenness;
from the time it came to be, I was there.

Now the Lord Yahweh
has sent me, with his spirit.
[17]Yahweh has said this – your restorer,
Yisra'el's sacred one.
'I am Yahweh your God,
the one who teaches you to succeed,
Who directs you in the way you should go –
[18]if only you had heeded my orders.
Your well-being would have been like a river,
your faithfulness like the waves of the sea.
[19]Your offspring would have been like the sand,
the people who went out from you like its grains.
Your name would not be cut off,
not be annihilated, from before me.'

[20]Go out from Babel,
flee from the Kasdites!
Tell it with resounding voice,
make it heard.
Send it out to the end of the earth,
say, 'Yahweh is restoring his servant Yisra'el.'

[21]They were not thirsty
as he made them go through wastes.
He made water flow from the crag for them,
he split the crag and water gushed out.

[22]There's no well-being
(Yahweh has said) for faithless people.

The servant's servant

49 Listen, foreign shores, to me;
heed, peoples far away.
Yahweh called me from the womb,
from my mother's insides he made mention of my name.
[2]He made my mouth like a sharp sword,
in the shadow of his hand he hid me.
He made me into a burnished arrow,
in his quiver he concealed me.
[3]He said to me, 'You're my servant, Yisra'el;
in you I will show my majesty.'
[4]But I myself said, 'It was to empty results that I toiled,
for futility and hollowness that I used up my energy.'
Yet a ruling for me is with Yahweh,
my earnings are with my God.
[5]Now Yahweh has said –
the one who formed me from the womb as a servant for him,
By bringing Ya'aqob back to him,
so that Yisra'el might not withdraw;
And I have found honour in Yahweh's eyes,
and my God has become my vigour –
[6]He has said, 'It's slight, your being a servant for me
to raise Ya'aqob's clans and bring back Yisra'el's shoots.
I shall make you into a light of nations,
to be my deliverance to the end of the earth.'

[7]Yahweh has said this –
Yisra'el's restorer, its sacred one –
To one despised in spirit, offensive to nations,
to a servant of rulers:

Kings will see and rise,
leaders, and they will fall low,
For the sake of Yahweh, who is trustworthy,
Yisra'el's sacred one – he chose you.
[8]Yahweh has said this:

In a time of acceptance I'm answering you,
on a day of deliverance I'm helping you.
I'll guard you and make you
into a pact for people,
By raising up the country,
by giving out the desolate domains,
[9]By saying to captives, 'Go out',
to people in darkness, 'Appear.'
Along the roads they will pasture,
on all the bare places will be their pasture.
[10]They will not hunger and not thirst;
khamsin and sun won't strike them down.
Because the one who has compassion on them will lead them,
and guide them by springs of water.
[11]I'll make all my mountains into a road;
my causeways will rise up.
[12]There – these will come from afar;
there – these from the north and the west,
and these from the country of Sinim.

Can a mother forget?

[13]Resound, heavens, celebrate, earth,
break into sound, mountains.
Because Yahweh is comforting his people;
he will have compassion on his humble ones.

[14]But Tsiyyon says, 'Yahweh has abandoned me,
the Lord has put me out of mind.'
[15]Can a woman put her baby out of mind,
so as not to have compassion on the child of her womb?
Yes, these may put out of mind,
but I – I cannot put you out of mind.
[16]There, on my palms I engraved you;
your walls are in front of me continually.
[17]Your children are hurrying the people who tore you down,
your devastators will go out from you.
[18]Lift your eyes round and look,
they're all collecting, they're coming to you.
As I am alive (Yahweh's declaration),
you will indeed put on all of them like jewellery,
bind them on like a bride.
[19]Because your wastes, your devastations,
your country that was torn down –
Because now you'll be too confined for your population,
while the people who swallowed you up go away.
[20]The children of your bereavement
will yet say in your ears,
'The place is too narrow for me,
move over for me so I can settle down.'
[21]You'll say to yourself,
'Who fathered these for me,
When I was bereaved and barren,
gone into exile and passing away?
These, who reared them,
there, when I remained alone,
these – where were they?'

Can prey be taken from a strong man?

[22]The Lord Yahweh said this:

Here, I shall raise my hand to the nations,
to the peoples I will lift up my signal.
They will bring your sons in their embrace,
carry your daughters on their shoulder.
[23]Kings will be your foster fathers,
their queens your nursing mothers.
Face to the ground they'll bow low to you,
they'll lick up the earth under your feet.
And you will acknowledge that I am Yahweh;
those who hope in me will not be shamed.

[24]Can prey be taken from a strong man
or the captives of a faithful one escape?
[25]Because Yahweh has said this:

Yes, the strong man's captives may be taken,
the prey of the violent may escape.
I myself will argue with the one arguing with you,
and your children I will deliver.
[26]I'll feed your oppressors with their own flesh;
they'll be drunk on their own blood as on grape juice.
And all flesh will acknowledge
that I am Yahweh your deliverer,
Ya'aqob's strong one, your restorer.

50 Yahweh has said this:

Where now is the divorce document
belonging to your mother whom I sent off?
Or who among my creditors was it
to whom I sold you?
There – you were sold for your wayward acts,
and for your rebellions your mother was sent off.
[2]Why did I come and there was no one there,
did I call and there was no one answering?
Has my hand become far too short for redeeming,
or is there no energy in me to rescue?
There, with my reprimand I can dry up the sea,
I can make rivers into wilderness.
Their fish will smell because there's no water;
they'll die of thirst.
[3]I can clothe the heavens in black,
make sack their covering.

Will you follow?

[4]The Lord Yahweh gave me a disciples' tongue,
so as to know how to aid someone faint.
With a word he wakens, morning by morning,
wakens my ear so as to hear like the disciples.
[5]The Lord Yahweh opened my ear,
and I didn't rebel, I didn't turn away.
[6]I gave my back to people striking me,
my cheeks to people pulling out my beard.
I didn't hide my face
from deep disgrace and spit.
[7]The Lord Yahweh helps me;
therefore I haven't been disgraced.
Therefore I set my face like flint,
and I knew I wouldn't be shamed.
[8]The one who shows that I'm in the right is near;
who will argue with me? – let us stand up together.
Who's the person with a case against me? –
he should come forward to me.
[9]There, the Lord Yahweh will help me –
who's the one who will show that I'm in the wrong?
There, all of them will wear out like clothing;
moth will consume them.

[10]Who among you lives in awe of Yahweh,
listens to his servant's voice?
One who has walked in darkness
and has no illumination
Must rely on Yahweh's name
and lean on his God.
[11]There, all of you who kindle fire,
who belted on firebrands:
Walk into your fiery flame,
into the firebrands you've lit.
This is coming about from my hand for you;
you'll lie down in pain.

Wake up, Yahweh

51 Listen to me, you who pursue faithfulness,
who seek help from Yahweh.
Look to the crag from which you were hewn,
to the cavity, the hole, from which you were dug.
[2]Look to Abraham your ancestor,
and Sarah who was labouring with you.
Because he was one when I called him,
so I might bless him and make him many.
[3]Because Yahweh is comforting Tsiyyon,
he's comforting all its wastes.

He's making its wilderness like Eden,
its steppe like Yahweh's garden.
Gladness and rejoicing will be found there,
thanksgiving and the sound of music.
[4]Heed me, my people;
give ear to me, my nation.
Because instruction goes out from me,
my exercise of authority for the light of peoples.
In a flash [5]my faithfulness is near,
my deliverance is going out,
my arm will exercise authority for peoples.
Foreign shores will hope in me,
they will wait for my arm.
[6]Lift up your eyes to the heavens,
look to the earth below.
Because the heavens are shredding like smoke,
the earth will wear out like clothing,
its inhabitants will die in like manner.
But my deliverance will be permanent,
my faithfulness will not shatter.

[7]Listen to me, you who acknowledge my faithfulness,
a people with my instruction in its mind.
Don't be afraid of human reviling,
don't shatter at their taunting.
[8]Because moth will consume them like clothing,
grub will consume them like wool.
But my faithfulness will be permanent,
my deliverance to all generations.

[9]Wake up, wake up, put on vigour,
Yahweh's arm.
Wake up as in days of old,
generations long ago.
You're the one who split Rahab,
pierced the dragon, aren't you.
[10]You're the one who dried up the sea,
the water of the great deep,
Who made the depths of the sea
a way for the restored people to pass, aren't you.
[11]The people redeemed by Yahweh will go back,
they will come to Tsiyyon with resounding.
With eternal rejoicing on their head,
as joy and rejoicing overtake them,
and sorrow and sighing flee.

Wake up, Yerushalaim

[12]I, I am the one who's comforting you –
who are you to be afraid
Of a mortal who dies,
of a human being who is treated like grass?
[13]You've put Yahweh your maker out of mind,
the one who stretched out the heavens and founded the earth.
You're fearful constantly, all day,
of the fury of the oppressor,
as he is preparing to devastate.
But where is the fury of the oppressor? –
[14]the one stooping is hastening to be released.
He won't die in the pit,
he won't lack his bread.
[15]I am Yahweh your God,
one who stills the sea when its waves roar –
Yahweh of Armies is his name.
[16]I've put my words in your mouth,
and covered you with the shade of my hand,
In planting the heavens and founding the earth,

in saying to Tsiyyon ‘You’re my people.’

[17]Wake yourself up, wake yourself up,
get up, Yerushalaim,
You who drank from Yahweh’s hand
his fury cup.
The chalice, the shaking cup,
you drank, you drained.
[18]There was no one guiding her,
of all the children to whom she gave birth.
There was no one taking her by the hand,
of all the children she brought up.
[19]There were two things befalling you
(who was to mourn for you?),
Destruction and breaking, famine and sword
(who was I to comfort you?).
[20]Your children were overcome,
they lay down at the entrance to all the streets
like a snared oryx,
The people full of Yahweh’s fury,
of your God’s reprimand.
[21]Therefore please listen to this, humble one,
drunk but not with wine.
[22]Your Lord Yahweh has said this,
your God who argues for his people:
‘There, I’m taking from your hand
the shaking cup,
My chalice, the fury cup,
which you will never drink again.
[23]I’ll put it into the hand of your tormentors,
the people who said to your neck,
“Bow down so we may pass over.”
And you made your back like the earth,
like the street for them to pass over.’

Beautiful feet

52 Wake up, wake up,
put on your vigour, Tsiyyon!
Put on your majestic clothes,
Yerushalaim, sacred town!
Because the foreskinned or taboo person
will never again come into you.
[2]Shake yourself from the earth,
get up, sit down, Yerushalaim!
They are loosening the bonds from on your neck,
captive Miss Tsiyyon.
[3]Because Yahweh has said this:

For nothing you were sold,
without silver you will be restored.
[4]Because the Lord Yahweh has said this:

My people went down to Misrayim at the beginning
to reside there.
But Ashshur oppressed them to no purpose,
[5]so now what was there for me here (Yahweh’s declaration)?
Because my people was taken to no end,
while its rulers boast (Yahweh’s declaration).
And constantly, all day,
my name stands reviled.
[6]Therefore my people will acknowledge my name,
therefore on that day [it will acknowledge]
that I’m the one who speaks – here I am.

[7]How lovely on the mountains are the feet of one who brings news,
one who lets people hear ‘All is well’,

One who brings good news, lets people hear of deliverance,
who says to Tsiyyon, ‘Your God has begun to reign.’
[8]A voice! – lookouts are lifting voice,
together they resound.
Because with both eyes
they see Yahweh going back to Tsiyyon.
[9]Break out, resound together,
wastes of Yerushalaim.
Because Yahweh is comforting his people;
he’s restoring Yerushalaim.
[10]Yahweh is baring his sacred arm
before the nations’ eyes.
All the ends of the earth
will see our God’s deliverance.

[11]Depart, depart, get out from there,
don’t touch what is taboo.
Get out from within it, purify yourselves,
you who carry Yahweh’s things.
[12]Because you won’t get out in haste,
you won’t go in flight.
Because Yahweh is going before you,
and Yisra’el’s God is bringing up your rear.

Who could have believed it?

[13]There, my servant will thrive,
he’ll rise and lift up and be very high.
[14]As many people were appalled at you,
so his appearance is anointed beyond anyone,
his look beyond that of human beings.
[15]So he’ll spatter many nations;
at him kings will shut their mouths.
Because what hadn’t been told them they will have seen,
and what they hadn’t heard they will have understood.
53 Who believed what we heard,
and upon whom did Yahweh’s arm appear?
[2]He grew before him like a sucker
or a root out of dry ground.
He had no look and no majesty so we should look at him,
no appearance so we should want him.
[3]He was despised and the most frail of human beings,
a man of great suffering and acquainted with weakness.
As when people hide their face from someone,
he was despised and we didn’t count him.
[4]Yet it was our weaknesses that he carried,
our great suffering that he bore.
But we ourselves had counted him touched,
struck down, by God, and afflicted.
[5]But he was the one who was wounded through our rebellions,
crushed through our wayward acts.
Chastisement to bring us well-being was on him,
and by means of his being hurt there was healing for us.
[6]All of us like sheep had wandered,
each had turned his face to his own way.
Yahweh – he let fall on him
the waywardness of all of us.

The man who kept his mouth shut

[7]He was put down, but he was one who let himself be afflicted,
and he wouldn’t open his mouth.
Like a sheep that’s led to slaughter
or like a ewe that’s silent before its shearers,
he wouldn’t open his mouth.
[8]By the restraint of authority he was taken;
who would complain at his generation?

Because he was cut off from the land of the living;
because of my people's rebellion the touch came to him.
[9]He was given his tomb with the faithless,
his burial mound with the rich person,
Because he'd done no violence,
and no deceit with his mouth.
[10]While Yahweh desired the crushing of the one he weakened,
if with his whole person he lays down a reparation offering,
He'll see offspring, he'll prolong his life,
and Yahweh's desire will succeed in his hand.
[11]Out of his personal trouble, when he sees he will be sated;
by his acknowledgement my servant will show many that he is indeed in the right,
when he bears their wayward acts.

[12]Therefore I'll give him a share with the many;
he'll share out the numerous as spoil,
In return for the fact that he exposed his person to death,
when he let himself be numbered with the rebels,
When he was the one who carried the wrongdoing of many people,
and was appealing for the rebels.

A time to cry and a time to whoop

54 Resound, infertile one, you who haven't given birth;
break out into sound and bellow, you who haven't laboured.
Because the children of the desolate are many,
more than the married woman's children (Yahweh has said).
[2]Enlarge your tent space;
people must stretch your dwelling curtains, don't hold back.
Lengthen your ropes, strengthen your pegs,
[3]because you'll spread out right and left.
Your offspring will dispossess the nations,
they'll inhabit the desolate towns.
[4]Don't be afraid, because you will not be shamed;
don't be disgraced, because you will not be confounded.
Because you will put out of mind the shame of your youth,
you will no more be mindful of the reviling of your widowhood.
[5]Because your maker will be the one who marries you;
Yahweh of Armies is his name.
Yisra'el's sacred one is your restorer;
he calls himself 'God of all the earth'.
[6]Because it's as a wife abandoned
and distressed in spirit that Yahweh is calling you,
The wife of his youth when she's been spurned,
your God has said.
[7]For a short moment I abandoned you,
but with great compassion I'll gather you.
[8]In a burst of anger
I hid my face from you for a moment,
But with permanent commitment I'm having compassion for you
(your restorer, Yahweh, has said),
[9]because this is Noah's water to me.
In that I swore that Noah's water
would not pass over the earth again,
So I'm swearing
not to be angry with you or to reprimand you.
[10]Because mountains may move away, hills slip,
but my commitment will not move away from you.
My pact of well-being will not slip,
the one who has compassion for you, Yahweh, has said.

David's covenant will become yours

[11]Humble, tossing, not comforted –
here I am, resting your stones in antimony.
I'll found you with sapphires,
[12]make chalcedony your pinnacles,

Your gateways into sparkling stones,
your entire border into delightful stones.
[13]All your children will be Yahweh's disciples;
great will be your children's well-being.
[14]In faithfulness you'll establish yourself;
you can be far from oppression,
Because you will not be afraid,
and from shattering, because it will not come near you.
[15]There, someone need be in dread
of nothing from me.
Who quarrels with you? –
he'll fall to you.
[16]There, I'm the one who created the smith
who blows into the fire of coals,
And who brings out a tool for his work,
and I'm the one who created the destroyer to ravage.
[17]Any tool formed against you will not succeed;
you will show to be in the wrong every tongue
that arises with you for a judgement.

This is the domain of Yahweh's servants,
their faithfulness from me (Yahweh's declaration).
55 Hey, anyone who's thirsty,
come for water.
Whoever has no silver, come,
buy and eat.
Come, buy without silver,
wine and milk without cost.
[2]Why weigh out silver for what isn't bread,
and your labour for what isn't filling?
Listen hard to me and eat what's good;
you can delight your appetite with rich food.
[3]Bend your ear, come to me;
listen, so you may come to life.
I will solemnize for you a permanent pact,
the trustworthy commitments to David.
[4]Here, I made him a witness for peoples,
a leader and commander for peoples.
[5]Here, you'll call a nation that you don't acknowledge,
and a nation that doesn't acknowledge you will run to you,
For the sake of Yahweh your God,
and for Yisra'el's sacred one, because he's glorifying you.

Our ideas and plans, and God's

[6]Enquire of Yahweh while he is letting himself be found,
call him while he's near.
[7]The faithless person must abandon his way,
the person who brings trouble [must abandon] his intentions.
He must turn back to Yahweh so he may have compassion on him,
to our God because he does much pardoning.
[8]Because my intentions are not your intentions,
your ways are not my ways (Yahweh's declaration).
[9]Because the heavens are higher than the earth;
so are my ways higher than your ways,
my intentions than your intentions.

[10]Because as the rain or snow
falls from the heavens,
And doesn't go back there
but rather soaks the earth,
And makes it bear and produce,
and give seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
[11]So will my word be that
goes out from my mouth.
It will not come back to me empty,
but rather do that which I wanted,

achieve that for which I sent it.

[12]Because you'll go out with joy,
and be brought in with well-being.
The mountains and the hills
will break out before you in resounding.
All the trees in the open country
will clap the palms of their hands.
[13]Instead of the thorn a juniper will come up,
instead of the briar a myrtle will come up.
It will be a memorial for Yahweh,
a permanent sign that will not be cut down.

An ambiguous 'Because'

56 Yahweh has said this:
Keep the exercise of authority,
act in faithfulness,
Because my deliverance is near to coming,
my faithfulness to appearing.
[2]The blessings of the person who does this,
the individual who holds on to it,
Keeping the sabbath rather than treating it as ordinary,
and keeping his hand from doing anything bad.
[3]So the foreigner who attaches himself to Yahweh
is not to say,
'Yahweh will quite separate me
from among his people.'
The eunuch is not to say,
'Here am I, a dry tree.'
[4]Because Yahweh has said this:

'To the eunuchs who keep my sabbaths,
and choose what I want, and hold on to my pact –
[5]I will give to them,
within my house and within my walls,
A memorial and name
better than sons and daughters.
I will give him a permanent name,
one that will not be cut off.
[6]And the foreign people
who attach themselves to Yahweh, to minister to him
And to give themselves to Yahweh's name,
to be servants to him,
Anyone who keeps the sabbath rather than treating it as ordinary,
and holds strongly to my pact,
[7]I will bring them to my sacred mountain,
and let them rejoice in my prayer house.
Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices
will be for acceptance on my altar.
Because my house will be called
a prayer house for all the peoples.'
[8]A declaration of the Lord Yahweh,
the one gathering the scattered people of Yisra'el:
'I will gather yet more towards it, to its gathered ones.'

Slaughter in the wadis

[9]All you animals of the wild, come and eat –
all you animals in the forest.
[10]Its lookouts are blind,
all of them; they don't know.
All of them are dumb dogs, they can't bark;
they're lying snoozing, loving to doze.
[11]But the dogs are vigorous of appetite;
they don't know about being full.
And these people – they are shepherds

that don't know how to discern.
All of them have turned their face to their own way,
each to his loot, every last bit of it.
[12]'Come on, I'll get wine,
we'll swill liquor.
Tomorrow will be like this,
exceedingly, very great!'
57 The faithful person has perished,
and there was no one taking it into their mind.
Committed people are gathered up
without anyone discerning
That it is from before a bad situation
that the faithful person has been gathered up.
[2]He goes while things are well (while they rest on their beds),
the one who walks straight.

[3]But you people, draw near here,
children of a diviner.
Offspring of an adulterer and a woman who acts the whore,
[4]in whom do you revel?
At whom do you open your mouth wide,
put out your tongue?
Are you not rebellious children,
the offspring of falsehood,
[5]You who inflame yourselves among the oaks,
under any verdant tree,
Who slaughter children in the wadis,
under the clefts in the cliffs?
[6]Among the deceptions in the wadi is your share;
they are your allocation.
Yes, to them you've poured a libation,
you've lifted up an offering:
in view of these things, should I relent?
[7]On a high and lofty mountain
you've put your bed.
Yes, you've gone up there
to offer a sacrifice.
[8]Behind the door and the doorpost
you've set your memorial.
Because from me you've gone away, you've gone up,
you've opened wide your bed.
You've solemnized things for yourself from them,
you've been loyal to their bed, you've beheld their love.

High and holy, but present with the crushed

[9]You've appeared to the King in your oils,
you've multiplied your perfumes.
You've sent off your envoys afar,
you've got them to go down to She'ol.
[10]When you grew weary with the length of your way,
you didn't say, 'It's futile.'
You found life for your capacity;
therefore you haven't weakened.
[11]For whom have you felt reverence and awe,
that you lie?
You haven't been mindful of me;
you haven't received me into your mind.
I've been still, yes from of old, haven't I,
but you're not in awe of me.
[12]I myself will tell of your 'faithfulness',
and your acts – they won't avail you.
[13]When you cry out, your abominable gatherings can rescue you;
but a wind will carry them all off, a breath will take them.
But the person who takes shelter with me will receive the country as his domain,
will possess my sacred mountain.

[14]Someone has said, 'Build up, build up, clear a way,
lift high the obstacles from my people's way.'
[15]Because the one who is high and lofty
has said this,
The one who dwells permanently,
whose name is 'Sacred One':
'I dwell on high and sacred,
but with the crushed and low in spirit,
Bringing life to the spirit of people who are low,
bringing life to the heart of the crushed.
[16]Because I will not argue permanently,
I will not be perpetually irate.
Because before me the spirit would faint,
the breathing beings I made.
[17]At the waywardness of its looting I was irate;
I hit it, hiding – I was irate.
It lived turning back to the way of its own mind;
[18]I've seen its ways, but I will heal it.
I'll lead it and make good all comfort to it;
for its mourners [19]creating as the fruit of lips well-being,
Well-being for one far away and one near
(Yahweh has said), and I'll heal it.
[20]But the faithless – they are like the sea tossing,
because it cannot be calm.
Its waters toss muck and mud;
[21]there's no well-being (my God has said) for faithless people.'

(Un)spiritual practices

58 Call with full throat, don't hold back,
lift your voice like the horn.
Tell my people about their rebellion,
Ya'aqob's household about their wrongdoings.
[2]They enquire of me day by day
and want to acknowledge my ways,
Like a nation that has acted in faithfulness,
and not abandoned its God's ruling.
They ask me for faithful rulings,
they want to draw near to God.
[3]'Why have we fasted and you haven't seen,
we've humbled ourselves and you haven't acknowledged?'
There – on your fast day you find what you want,
but you oppress the people who toil for you.
[4]There – you fast for argument and strife,
and for hitting with faithless fist.
You don't fast this very day
in such a way as to make your voice heard on high.
[5]Will the fast that I choose be of this very kind,
a day for a person to humble himself?
Will it be for bowing one's head like a bulrush,
and spreading sack and ash?
Is it this that you call a fast,
a day accepted by Yahweh?
[6]This will be the fast I choose, won't it:
loosing faithless chains,
Untying the cords of the yoke,
letting the oppressed go free,
and tearing apart every yoke.
[7]It will be dividing your food with the hungry person, won't it,
and bringing home the humble, downtrodden.
When you see the naked, you'll cover him,
and not hide from your fellow flesh and blood.
[8]Then your light will break out like dawn,
and your restoration will flourish speedily.
Your faithfulness will go before you;
Yahweh's splendour will gather you.

[9]Then you'll call and Yahweh will answer;
you'll cry for help and he'll say, 'I'm here.'
If you do away with the yoke from within you,
the pointing of the finger and the troublesome word,
[10]And offer yourself to the hungry person,
and fill the need of the humble person,
Your light will shine in the darkness,
your gloom will be like midday.
[11]Yahweh will guide you continually,
and fill your appetite in scorched places.
He'll renew your frame
and you will be like a watered garden,
Like a spring of water
whose water does not deceive.
[12]People of yours will build up the ruins of old;
you'll raise the foundations from past generations.
You'll be called 'Repairer of a Breach,
Restorer of Paths for Living On'.

Honouring the sabbath

[13]If you take back your foot from the sabbath,
doing the things you want on my sacred day,
Call the sabbath 'Revelling',
and Yahweh's sacred thing 'Honourable',
And honour it rather than acting in your ways,
or finding what you want, and speaking your word,
[14]Then you'll revel in Yahweh
and I'll let you ride over the heights of the earth.
I'll let you eat the domain of Ya'aqob your father;
because Yahweh's mouth has spoken.

59 Here – Yahweh's hand hasn't become too short to deliver,
his ear hasn't become too heavy to listen.
[2]Rather, your wayward acts have become separators
between you and your God.
Your wrongdoings have hidden his face
so as not to listen to you.
[3]Because your fists – they've become polluted with blood,
your fingers – with waywardness.
Your lips – they've spoken falsehood,
your tongue – it talks of evil.
[4]There's no one calling in faithfulness,
there's no one entering into judgement with trustworthiness.
Relying on nothingness and speaking emptiness,
conceiving trouble and giving birth to wickedness.
[5]They've broken open a serpent's eggs,
they spin a spider's webs.
Someone who eats of their eggs – he will die,
and one that is smashed – an adder breaks out.
[6]Their webs won't become a garment,
they won't cover themselves in the things they make.
The things they make are things that bring trouble;
the doing of violence is in their fists.
[7]Their feet run to what is bad,
they hurry to shed the blood of one free of guilt.
Their intentions are troublesome intentions,
destruction and breaking is on their causeways.
[8]The way of well-being they haven't acknowledged,
and there's no exercise of authority on their tracks.
They've made their paths crooked for themselves;
no one who walks on it acknowledges well-being.

That's why there's no restoration

[9]That's why the exercise of authority is far from us,

faithfulness doesn't reach us.
We look for light but there, darkness;
for brightness, whereas we walk in gloom.
[10]We grope like blind people along a wall;
like people without eyes we grope.
We've fallen over at midday as if it was dusk,
among sturdy people as if we were dead.
[11]We rumble like bears, all of us,
and murmur on like doves.
We look for the exercise of authority but there is none,
for deliverance that's far from us.

[12]Because our rebellions are many in your sight,
and our wrongdoings have testified against us.
Because our rebellions are with us,
and our wayward acts – we acknowledge them.
[13]Rebelling, breaking faith with Yahweh,
and turning back from following our God,
Speaking of fraud, conceiving defiance,
and talking words of falsehood inside us.
[14]So the exercise of authority has turned away,
faithfulness stands far off.
Because truthfulness has fallen over in the square,
and straightness can't come in.
[15]Truthfulness has gone missing;
the one who turns from dealing badly is despoiled.

Yahweh saw and it was bad in his eyes
that there was no exercise of authority.
[16]He saw that there was no one,
he was devastated that there was no one intervening.
But his arm brought deliverance for him;
his faithfulness – it sustained him.
[17]He put on faithfulness like a coat of mail,
and a deliverance helmet on his head.
He put on redress clothes as clothing,
he wrapped on passion as a coat.
[18]In accordance with their dealings,
as the One on High he will make good with fury to his adversaries,
With dealings to his enemies,
dealings to foreign shores, he will make good.
[19]They will be in awe of Yahweh's name from the west,
and of his splendour from the sunrise.
When an adversary comes like the river,
Yahweh's wind raises a banner against him.
[20]He will come to Tsiyyon as restorer,
to the people who turn from rebellion in Ya'aqob
(Yahweh's declaration).
[21]'And me – this is my pact with them (Yahweh has said). My breath that is on you, and my words that I've put in your mouth, will not move away from your mouth, from the mouth of your offspring and from the mouth of your offspring's offspring (Yahweh has said) from now and permanently.'

An invitation to imagination

60 Get up, be alight, because your light is coming,
Yahweh's splendour has shone on you.
[2]Because there – darkness covers the earth,
gloom the peoples.
But on you Yahweh will shine;
his splendour will appear over you.
[3]Nations will come to your light,
kings to your shining brightness.
[4]Lift your eyes round and look,
all of them are collecting, they're coming to you.
Your sons will come from afar,
your daughters will support themselves on the hip.
[5]Then you'll see and glow,

your mind will be in awe and will swell.
Because the sea's horde will turn to you,
the resources of nations will come to you.
[6]A mass of camels will cover you,
dromedaries from Midyan and Ephah;
all of them will come from Sheba.
They will carry gold and frankincense,
and bring news of Yahweh's great praise.
[7]All the sheep of Qedar will collect to you,
rams of Nebayot will minister to you.
They will go up with acceptance on my altar,
and I will add majesty to my majestic house.
[8]Who are these that fly like a cloud,
and like doves to their hatches?
[9]Because foreign shores will look for me,
Tarshish ships at the first,
To bring your sons from afar,
their silver and their gold with them,
For the name of Yahweh your God, for Yisra'el's sacred one,
because he has made you majestic.
[10]Foreigners will build your walls,
kings will minister to you.
Because in wrath I struck you,
but with acceptance I'm having compassion on you.
[11]Your gateways will open continuously,
day and night they will not shut,
To bring you the nations' resources,
with their kings being led along.
[12]Because the nation or kingdom that doesn't serve you –
they will perish, and the nations will become a total waste.

An invitation to hope

[13]The Lebanon's splendour will come to you,
juniper, fir and cypress together,
To add majesty to my sacred place,
so I may honour the place for my feet.
[14]They'll walk to you bending down,
the children of the people who humbled you.
They'll bow low at the soles of your feet,
all the people who despised you.
They'll call you 'Yahweh's Town,
the Tsiyyon of Yisra'el's Sacred One'.
[15]Instead of being abandoned,
treated hostilely with no one passing through,
I'll make you an object of permanent pride,
a joy generation after generation.
[16]You'll suck the nations' milk,
suck the kings' breast.
And you will acknowledge that I am Yahweh;
Ya'aqob's champion is your deliverer and your restorer.
[17]Instead of copper I'll bring gold,
instead of iron I'll bring silver,
Instead of wood, copper;
instead of stone, iron.
I'll make well-being your oversight,
faithfulness your bosses.
[18]Violence will not make itself heard any more in your country,
destruction and breaking in your borders.
You will call deliverance your walls,
praise your gateways.
[19]The sun will no longer be light for you by day,
and as brightness the moon will not be light for you.
Because Yahweh will be light for you permanently;
your God will be your majesty.
[20]Your sun will not set any more,
your moon will not withdraw.

Because Yahweh will be light for you permanently;
your mourning days will be complete.
[21]Your people, all of them, will be faithful ones,
who will possess the country permanently.
They will be the shoot that I plant,
the work of my hands, to demonstrate majesty.
[22]The smallest will become a clan,
the least a numerous nation.
I am Yahweh;
I will speed it in its time.

Blown over and anointed

61 The Lord Yahweh's breath is on me,
because Yahweh has anointed me.
He's sent me to bring news to the humble,
to bind up the people broken in mind,
To call for release for captives,
the opening of eyes for prisoners,
[2]To call for a year of Yahweh's acceptance,
our God's day of redress,
To comfort all the mourners,
[3]to provide for the people who mourn Tsiyyon –
To give them majesty instead of ash,
festive oil instead of mourning,
A praise garment
instead of a flickering spirit.
They'll be called faithful oaks,
Yahweh's planting, to demonstrate majesty.
[4]People will build up permanent ruins,
raise up the ancestors' desolations.
They'll renew ruined towns,
desolations from generation after generation.
[5]Strangers will stand and pasture your sheep,
foreigners will be your farmworkers and vinedressers.
[6]You yourselves will be called 'Yahweh's priests',
you'll be termed 'our God's ministers'.
You'll eat the nations' resources
and thrive on their splendour.
[7]Instead of your shame, double;
[instead of] disgrace, people will resound at the share you have.

Therefore in their country they'll possess double;
permanent joy will be theirs.
[8]Because I am Yahweh, one loyal to exercising authority,
hostile to robbery in evil.
I'll give them their earnings in truthfulness;
a permanent pact I'll solemnize for them.
[9]Their offspring will gain acknowledgement with the nations,
their descendants among the peoples.
All who see them will recognize them,
that they are offspring Yahweh has blessed.

People who won't let Yahweh rest

[10]I shall be ardently glad in Yahweh,
my entire being will joy in my God.
Because he's clothing me in deliverance clothes,
wrapping me in a faithfulness coat,
Like a groom who behaves priestly in majesty,
or like a bride who adorns herself in her things.
[11]Because as the earth brings out its growth
and as a garden makes its seed grow,
So the Lord Yahweh will make faithfulness and praise grow
before all the nations.

For the sake of Tsiyyon I will not be silent,

62 for Yerushalaim's sake I will not be calm,
Until its faithfulness goes out like brightness,
its deliverance like a torch that blazes.
[2]The nations will see your faithfulness,
all the kings your splendour.
You'll be called by a new name,
which Yahweh's mouth will determine.
[3]You'll be a majestic crown in Yahweh's hand,
a royal diadem in your God's palm.
[4]You'll no longer be termed 'Abandoned',
your country will no longer be termed 'Desolate'.
Rather, you'll be called 'My Delight Is in Her',
and your country 'Married'.
Because Yahweh delights in you,
and your country will be married.
[5]Because a young man marries a girl;
your sons will marry you.
With a groom's gladness over a bride,
your God will be glad over you.

[6]Upon your walls, Yerushalaim,
I'm appointing guards.
All day and all night
they will never be silent.
You who remind Yahweh,
there's no stopping for you.
[7]Don't give him stopping , until he establishes,
until he makes Yerushalaim an object of praise in the earth.

I had to do it myself

[8]Yahweh has sworn by his right hand,
by his vigorous arm:

If I give your grain again
as food for your enemies,
If foreigners drink your new wine,
for which you've laboured . . .
[9]Because the people who harvest it will eat it,
and praise Yahweh.
The people who collect it will drink it
in my sacred courtyards.

[10]Pass through, pass through the gateways,
clear the people's way!
Build up, build up the causeway,
clear it of stones!
Raise a banner over the peoples –
[11]there, Yahweh has let it be heard to the end of the earth.
Say to Miss Tsiyyon,
'There, your deliverance is coming.
There, his reward is with him,
his earnings before him.'
[12]People will call them
'The Sacred People, Ones Restored by Yahweh'.
You'll be called
'Sought Out, a Town Not Abandoned'.

63 Who's this coming from Edom,
marked in clothes from Botsrah,
This person majestic in attire,
stooping in his mighty energy?
'I'm the one speaking in faithfulness,
mighty to deliver.'
[2]Why is your attire red,
your clothes like someone treading in a wine trough?
[3]'I trod a press alone;

from the peoples there was no one with me.
I tread them in my anger,
trample them in my fury.
Their spray spatters on my clothes;
I've stained all my attire.
[4]Because a day of redress has been in my mind,
my year of restoration has arrived.
[5]But I look, and there's no helper;
I stare, and there's no support.
So my arm has effected deliverance for me;
my fury – it's supported me.
[6]I trample peoples in my anger,
make them drunk in my fury,
bring down their eminence to the earth.'

On hurting God's sacred spirit

[7]I shall recount Yahweh's acts of commitment,
Yahweh's praises,
In accordance with all that Yahweh dealt to us,
the great goodness to Yisra'el's household,
That which he dealt to them in accordance with his compassion
and the greatness of his acts of commitment.
[8]He said, 'Yes, they're my people,
children who won't be false.'
He became their deliverer;
[9]in all their trouble it became troublesome to him.
His personal envoy –
he delivered them, in his love and pity.
He was the one who restored them, lifted them up,
carried them all the days of old.
[10]But they – they rebelled
and hurt his sacred spirit.
So he turned into their enemy;
he himself battled against them.
[11]But he was mindful of the days of long ago,
of Mosheh [Moses], of his people.

Where is the one who brought them up from the sea,
the shepherds of his flock?
Where is the one who put within it
his sacred spirit,
[12]The one who made his majestic arm go
at Mosheh's right hand,
Dividing the water in front of them
to make himself a name permanently,
[13]Enabling them to go through the depths like a horse in the wilderness,
so they wouldn't collapse,
[14]Like a beast in the valley that goes down,
so that Yahweh's spirit would enable them to settle down?
In that way you drove your people,
to make a majestic name for yourself.

[15]Look out from the heavens,
see from your sacred and majestic height!
Where are your passion and your acts of strength,
the roar from inside you and your compassion?
In relation to me they have withheld themselves,
[16]when you are our Father.
When Abraham wouldn't acknowledge us,
Yisra'el wouldn't recognize us,
You Yahweh are our Father;
'Our Restorer from Forever' is your name.
[17]Why do you let us wander from your ways, Yahweh,
let our mind be tough so as not to be in awe of you?
Turn for the sake of your servants,
the clans that are your domain.

[18]As something small they dispossessed your sacred people;
our adversaries trampled your sanctuary.
[19]Permanently we have become people over whom you haven't ruled,
who haven't been called by your name.

But you're our Father

64 Oh that you'd torn apart the heavens and gone down,
that mountains had quaked before you,
[2]Like fire lighting brushwood,
so that the fire boils water,
To cause your name to be acknowledged by your adversaries,
so that the nations might tremble before you.
[3]When you did wonders that we didn't hope for,
you went down and mountains quaked before you.
[4]Never had people heard or given ear,
eye had not seen,
A God apart from you,
who acts for one who waits for him.
[5]You met with the one who was joyful and doing what was faithful,
the people who were mindful of you in your ways.
There, you yourself got furious,
and of old we did wrong in relation to them, but we were delivered.
[6]We became like something taboo, all of us,
and all our faithful deeds like menstrual clothing.
We withered like leaves, all of us,
and our wayward acts carry us off like the wind.
[7]There's no one calling on your name,
stirring himself to take hold of you.
Because you've hidden your face from us,
and made us fade away at the hand of our wayward acts.

[8]But now, Yahweh, you're our Father;
we're the clay, you're our potter –
the work of your hand, all of us.
[9]Don't be so very furious, Yahweh,
don't be mindful of waywardness.
There, please do look at your people, all of us:
[10]your sacred towns became a wilderness,
Tsiyyon became a wilderness,
Yerushalaim a devastation.
[11]Our sacred and majestic house,
where our ancestors praised you,
Became something consumed by fire,
and all that we valued became a ruin.
[12]At these things do you restrain yourself, Yahweh,
do you remain still and let us be humbled so much?

Straight-talking meets straight-talking

65 I could be enquired of people who didn't ask,
I could be found by people who didn't seek help from me.
I said, 'I'm here, I'm here',
to a nation that wasn't calling on my name.
[2]I spread my hands all day
to a defiant people,
Who walk in a way that is not good,
following their own intentions.
[3]The people are ones who provoke me,
to my face, continually,
Sacrificing in the gardens,
burning incense on the bricks,
[4]Ones who sit in tombs,
who spend the night in secret places,
Who eat swine's flesh,
with a broth of desecrating things in their bowls,

[5]Who say, ‘Keep to yourself, don’t come near me,
because I’m too sacred for you.’
These people are smoke in my nostrils,
a fire burning all day.
[6]There, it’s written before me,
I will not be still, rather I am making good,
I’ll make good into their lap [7]your waywardness
and your ancestors’ waywardness together
(Yahweh has said).
The people who burned incense on the mountains,
who reviled me on the hills:
I’m counting out their earnings
first of all into their lap.
[8]Yahweh has said this:

As the new wine can be found in the cluster,
and someone will say ‘Don’t destroy it,
because there’s a blessing in it’,
So I will act for my servants’ sake,
so as not to destroy everything.
[9]I shall bring out offspring from Ya’aqob,
and from Yehudah one who’s going to possess my mountains.
My chosen ones will possess it,
my servants will dwell there.
[10]The Sharon will become an abode for sheep,
Disaster Vale a resting place for cattle,
for my people who’ve enquired of me.
[11]But you who abandon Yahweh,
who put out of mind my sacred mountain,
Who set a table for Luck,
who fill a mixing chalice for Destiny:
[12]I shall destine you to the sword,
all of you will bend down for slaughter.
Because I called but you didn’t answer,
I spoke but you didn’t listen.
You did what was bad in my eyes,
and what I didn’t want, you chose.

The renewed Yerushalaim

[13]Therefore the Lord Yahweh has said this:

There, my servants will eat,
but you’ll be hungry.
There, my servants will drink,
but you’ll be thirsty.
There, my servants will rejoice,
but you’ll be shamed.
[14]There, my servants will resound
from happiness of heart,
But you’ll cry out from pain of heart,
from brokenness of spirit you’ll howl.
[15]You’ll leave your name
as an oath for my chosen ones,
‘So may the Lord Yahweh kill you’,
but for his servants he will call out another name,
[16]So that the person who prays for blessing in the country
will pray for blessing by the God who says ‘Amen’.
Because the earlier pressures will have been put out of mind,
and because they’ll have been hidden from my eyes.

[17]Because here I am, creating
new heavens and a new earth.
The earlier ones won’t be recollected;
they won’t come into mind.
[18]Rather, be glad and celebrate permanently
what I am creating.

Because here I am, creating Yerushalaim as reason for celebration
and its people as reason for gladness.
[19]I will celebrate Yerushalaim
and be glad in my people.
There will not make itself heard in it any more
the sound of weeping or the sound of a cry.
[20]There will no longer be from there any more
a baby of [few] days
or an old person who doesn't fulfil his days.
Because the youth will die as a person of a hundred years,
and the wrongdoer will be slighted as a person of a hundred years.
[21]They'll build houses and dwell [in them],
they'll plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
[22]They won't build and another dwell;
they won't plant and another eat.
The days of my people will be like a tree's days;
my chosen ones will use up the work of their hands.
[23]They won't toil with empty result;
they won't give birth with fearful outcome.
Because they'll be offspring blessed by Yahweh,
they and their descendants with them.
[24]Before they call, I myself will answer;
while they're still speaking, I myself will listen.
[25]The wolf and the lamb will pasture together,
the cougar, like cattle, will eat straw,
but the snake – earth will be its food.
People won't do deal badly, they won't devastate,
in all my sacred mountain (Yahweh has said).

Trembling at Yahweh's word

66 Yahweh has said this:
The heavens are my throne,
the earth is my footstool.
Wherever would be the house that you would build for me,
wherever would be the place that would be for me to settle down?
[2]All these things my hand made (Yahweh's declaration),
and to this person I look:
To the humble, to the broken in spirit,
one who trembles at my word.

[3]One who slaughters an ox is one who strikes a person down;
one who sacrifices a lamb is one who strangles a dog.
One who lifts up an offering – it's pig's blood;
one who makes a memorial of incense – he worships a bane.
They for their part have chosen their ways,
their soul delights in their abominations.
[4]I for my part will choose caprices for them,
and bring upon them what they dread.
Because I called and there was no one answering,
I spoke and they didn't listen.
They did what was bad in my eyes,
and what I didn't delight in, they chose.

[5]Listen to Yahweh's word,
you who tremble at his word.
'Your brothers have said, people who are hostile to you,
who exclude you for the sake of my name,
"May Yahweh be severe, so that we may see your celebration" –
they will be shamed.'
[6]The sound of a din from the town,
a sound from the palace,
The sound of Yahweh
making good with his dealings to his enemies.

[7]Before she labours she's given birth,
before pain comes to her she delivers a boy.

[8]Who has heard something like this,
who has seen things like these?
Can a country be brought through labour in one day,
or a nation be born in one moment?
Because Tsiyyon is labouring
and also giving birth to her children.
[9]‘Will I myself make a breach
and not bring to birth? (Yahweh says).
Or will I myself bring to birth
and close [the womb]? (your God says).’

[10]Rejoice with Yerushalaim,
be glad in her, all you who love her.
Be glad with her in joy,
all you who mourned over her,
[11]In order that you may nurse and be full
from her comforting breast,
In order that you may drink deeply and delight yourself
from her splendid bosom.

Choose your ending

[12]Because Yahweh has said this:

Here I am, stretching out to her
well-being like a river,
Like a flooding wadi
the splendour of the nations,
So you may drink of it as you’re carried on her side
and dandled on her knees.
[13]Like someone whom his mother comforts,
so I myself will comfort you.
You’ll be comforted in Yerushalaim,
[14]you’ll see, and your heart will be glad,
and your limbs will flourish like grass.

Yahweh’s hand will cause itself to be acknowledged among his servants,
and he will condemn his enemies.
[15]Because there – Yahweh will come in fire,
his chariots like a whirlwind,
To give back his anger in wrath,
his reprimand in fiery flame.
[16] Because Yahweh is going to enter into judgement with fire,
with his sword, among all flesh;
the people run through by Yahweh will be many.
[17]‘The people who make themselves sacred and purify themselves for the gardens,
following after one in the middle,
People who eat the flesh of pig, reptile and mouse
will come to an end together (Yahweh’s declaration).’
[18]But as for me, on the basis of their deeds and their intentions, the gathering of all the nations and tongues is coming. They’ll come and see my splendour. [19]I shall set a sign among them and send off from them survivors to the nations – Tarshish, Pul and Lud, the people who draw the bow, Tubal, Yavan [Greece], the distant shores, which haven’t heard report of me and haven’t seen my splendour. They will tell of my splendour among the nations.
[20]They will bring all your kin-group members from all the nations as an offering to Yahweh, by means of horses, chariotry, coaches, mules and dromedaries, to my sacred mountain, Yerushalaim (Yahweh has said), as the Yisra’elites bring the offering in a pure vessel to Yahweh’s house. [21]Also from them I will take people as priests and Levites (Yahweh has said).
[22]Because as the new heavens and the new earth that I’m going to make are going to stand before me (Yahweh’s declaration), so will your offspring and your name stand. [23]New moon by new moon, sabbath by sabbath, all flesh will come to bow low before me (Yahweh has said).
[24]But they will go out and look at the corpses of the people who rebel against me. Because their worm will not die and their fire will not go out. They will be a horror to all flesh.

Jeremiah

Jeremiah [Yirmeyahu] lived a century later than Isaiah. He was summoned to be a prophet in 626 bc and he continued prophesying until after the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians 40 years later. He thus lived through tumultuous years and changing fortunes in Judah. His summons came as King Josiah was involved in a reformation of religious life in Judah and a cleaning up of forms of worship that accepted other Middle Eastern peoples' practices (including sacrificing children) instead of Israel's own. After Josiah's death the nation reverted to those habits, which led to Yahweh's abandoning Jerusalem to the Babylonians. Jeremiah speaks positively of Josiah but spent most of his life confronting kings and people about their faithlessness to Yahweh and to one another.

That confrontation involves him in issuing repeated warnings that this continuing faithlessness will issue in disaster, which makes him a deeply unpopular figure, especially with Judah's leadership. From their perspective he is simply a troublemaker. Slightly illogically, they do not become more tolerant of Jeremiah as a result of the fact that Yahweh keeps not fulfilling his threats. One might have inferred that Jeremiah looked like a prophet who could safely be ignored. Instead they persecute him, imprison him and threaten to kill him. Naturally this has an effect on Jeremiah himself, who doesn't appreciate the fact that he has to keep issuing warnings that don't come true. He expresses his resentment frankly to Yahweh. His book includes many stories about him, presumably written by people such as Baruk who do support him. More surprisingly, his book also incorporates a number of the prayers he prayed, which have a place there not because of an assumption that his readers will be interested in the nature of his relationship with God but because (like the stories) they give readers another angle on his persecution. It is an expression of the attitude the community takes to the God whom he serves.

The book of Jeremiah is not clearly organized like Isaiah and Ezekiel, but we can say that the first half is dominated by his prophecies and by those prayers, while the second half is dominated by stories about him and then by prophecies about other nations.

Some stand-out chapters in his book are:

1. his account of his summons to be a prophet (Jer. 1), which later inspired the prophet who speaks in Isaiah 49 and later inspired Paul (Gal. 1.15) in their accounts of their summons;
2. his grief over Judah's failure of memory (Jer. 2);
3. his reminder about the fate of Shiloh (Jer. 7);
4. his ridicule of the making of images (Jer. 10);
5. his accepting a command not to marry (Jer. 16);
6. his emphasis on the way God can have a change of mind over his threats and over his promises in the light of the response they receive (Jer. 18);
7. his wrestling with the question of how to tell a false prophet from a true one (Jer. 23);
8. his declaration that the Babylonian king is Yahweh's servant (Jer. 25);
9. his declaration that the exile will last 70 years – both a warning and a promise (also Jer. 25);
10. his confrontation with the prophet Hananiah (Jer. 28);
11. his exhortation to people already exiled in 597 to settle down and not think they are coming back soon (Jer. 29);
12. his promise that after the exile God will make a new covenant with Judah (Jer. 31);
13. his willingness to invest in land at an inauspicious moment (Jer. 32);
14. the account of how he puts his prophecies into writing and enlarges the collection when the king burns his scroll (Jer. 36);
15. the account of his continuing struggle with people resisting Yahweh's expectations after the fall of Jerusalem and their forcing him to flee with them to Egypt (Jer. 39—44);
16. the closing narrative that shows how he was proved right after all (Jer. 52).

Yahweh's summons

1 The words of Yirmeyahu ben Hilqiyyahu, one of the priests of Anatot in the Binyamin [Benjamin] region, [2]to whom
Yahweh's word came in the days of Yoshiyyahu [Josiah] ben Amon king of Yehudah in the thirteenth year of his reign, [3]and
came in the days of Yehoyaqim ben Yoshiyyahu king of Yehudah, until the end of the eleventh year of Tsidqiyyahu [Zedekiah]
ben Yoshiyyahu king of Yehudah, until Yerushalaim's exile in the fifth month.

[4]Yahweh's word came to me:

[5]Before I formed you in the womb I acknowledged you,
before you went out from the womb I made you sacred.
I made you a prophet concerning the nations.

[6]I said:

Oh, Lord Yahweh –
here, I don't know how to speak,
because I'm a boy.
[7]But Yahweh said to me:

Don't say, 'I'm a boy.'

Because you're to go out to anyone to whom I send you,
and speak anything that I order you.
[8]Don't be afraid of their faces,
because I'll be with you to rescue you (Yahweh's declaration).

[9]Yahweh put out his hand and touched my mouth, and Yahweh said to me:

Here, I'm putting my words into your mouth.
[10]See, I'm appointing you this day
over the nations, over the kingdoms,
To uproot and to pull down, to obliterate and to tear down,
to build and to plant.

[11]Yahweh's word came to me:

What are you looking at, Yirmeyahu?
I said:

I'm looking at the branch of a watcher tree.
[12]Yahweh said to me:

You've done good in looking,
because I'm watching, over my word, to put it into effect.

The iron pillar

[13]Yahweh's word came to me a second time:

What are you looking at?

I said:

I'm looking at a boiling pot,
with its face facing from the north.

[14]Yahweh said to me:

From the north bad things will open out
on all the inhabitants of the country.
[15]Because here am I calling
all the kin-groups of the northern kingdoms (Yahweh's declaration).
They'll come and put each one his throne
at the opening of Yerushalaim's gateways,
Against all its walls round,
and against all Yehudah's towns.
[16]I shall speak my rulings to them,
for all their bad dealing, in that they've abandoned me.
They've burned incense to other gods,
bowed low to things their hands made.
[17]You, you're to put your belt round your hips,
and get up and speak to them
anything that I myself order you.
Don't shatter before them,
in case I shatter you before them.
[18]I – here I am, making you
into a fortified town today,
Into an iron pillar
and copper walls against the entire country,
For Yehudah's kings and its officers,
for its priests and the people of the country.
[19]They'll battle against you but they won't prevail over you,
because I'm with you (Yahweh's declaration) to rescue you.

Digging cisterns that leak

2 Yahweh's word came to me, [2]Go, call out in Yerushalaim's ears:
Yahweh has said this:

I have kept in mind for you the commitment of your youth,
your loyalty as a bride,
Your following me through the wilderness,
through a country not sown.
[3]Yisra'el was sacred to Yahweh,
the first fruits of his yield.
All the people who ate of it would incur liability;
bad fortune would come upon them (Yahweh's declaration).

[4]Listen to Yahweh's word, Ya'aqob's [Jacob's] household,
all the kin-groups of Yisra'el's household.

[5]Yahweh has said this:

What did your ancestors find that was evil in me,
that they went far away from me,
Followed something hollow and became hollow,
[6]and didn't say 'Where is Yahweh,
The one who got us up from the country of Misrayim [Egypt]
and enabled us to go through the wilderness,
Through a country of steppe and pit,
through a country of drought and deep darkness,
Through a country through which no one passed
and where no human being lived?'
[7]I enabled you to come into a country of farmland,
to eat its fruit and its good things.
But you came and defiled my country;
you made my domain something offensive.
[8]The priests didn't say 'Where is Yahweh?',
the people controlling the instruction didn't acknowledge me.
The shepherds rebelled against me,
the prophets prophesied by the Master,
and followed beings that couldn't prevail in anything.

[9]Therefore I'll argue with you more (Yahweh's declaration)
and I'll argue with your grandchildren.
[10]Because cross over to the shores of Kittim [Cyprus] and see,
send off to Qedar and consider well,
see if something like this has happened.
[11]Has a nation changed its gods,
when those are not gods?
But my people have changed my splendour
for what doesn't prevail in anything.
[12]Be devastated at this, heavens,
shudder, be utterly desolate (Yahweh's declaration).
[13]Because my people have done two bad things:
they've abandoned me, the fountain of living water,
To dig themselves cisterns, breakable cisterns,
that don't prevail over water.

'I haven't become defiled'

[14]Was Yisra'el a servant, or someone born in a household –
why has he become plunder?
[15]Lions roar over him,
they've given their voice.
They've made his country a devastation;
his towns are burned, without inhabitant.
[16]The people of Memphis and Tahpanhes
will also break your skull [Yerushalaim].
[17]It's this that does it to you, isn't it –
your abandoning of Yahweh your God
at the time when he was enabling you to go on your journey?
[18]So now what is there for you in a journey to Misrayim
to drink the Nile's [Ye'or's] water?
What is there for you in a journey to Ashshur
to drink the River's water?

[19]Your bad dealing should discipline you,
your turning back should reprove you.
Acknowledge and see how bad and bitter it is,
your abandoning Yahweh your God,
and you have no dread towards me (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh of Armies).

[20]Because of old you broke your yoke,
you tore off your straps, and said, 'I won't serve.'
Because on every high hill and under every verdant tree
you're lying down as a whore.
[21]I – I planted you as a top-class vine,
all of it trustworthy seed.
So how have you changed for me
into the turnings of a foreign vine?
[22]Because if you wash with soap
and use much detergent for yourself,
your waywardness is inscribed before me (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).

[23]How can you say, 'I haven't become defiled,
I haven't followed the Masters'?
Look at your journey into the Ravine,
acknowledge what you've done,
A swift camel twisting her journeys,
[24]a wild donkey taught about the wilderness,
Sniffing the wind in the desire of her appetite –
who can turn back her craving?
None who seek her get tired;
in her season they find her.

Why do you gad about?

[25]Hold your foot back from being shoeless
and your throat from being dry.
But you say, 'It's desperate,
because I'm loyal to strangers, I shall follow them.'
[26]Like a thief's shame when he's found out,
so Yisra'el's household was shamed.
They, their kings, their officials,
their priests, their prophets,
[27]Were saying to a piece of wood, 'You're our father',
to some stone, 'You gave me birth.'
Because they turned their back to me,
not their face.
At the time when something bad happened to them
they'd say, 'Arise, deliver us.'
[28]But where are your gods
that you made for yourself?
They should arise if they can deliver you,
at the time when something bad happens to you.
Because your gods have become
more than the number of your towns, Yehudah.
[29]Why do you argue with me
when all of you have rebelled against me? (Yahweh's declaration).

[30]With empty results I struck down your children;
they didn't accept discipline.
Your sword consumed your prophets
like a destroying lion.
[31]This generation,
look at Yahweh's word.
Did I become a wilderness to Yisra'el,
or a country of deep darkness?
Why did my people say, 'We've wandered off,
we won't come to you any more'?
[32]Can a girl put her jewellery out of mind,
a bride her adornments?
But my people have put me out of mind,

days without number.

[33]How good you've made your journey in seeking love [Yerushalaim];
therefore you've even taught bad women your journeys.
[34]Further, on your garments is found
the blood of the lives of needy people who are free of guilt
(you didn't find them breaking in).
Because despite all these things,
[35]you've said, 'I'm free of guilt,
his anger has surely turned back from me.'
Here I am, entering into judgement with you,
because of your saying 'I haven't done wrong.'

[36]Why do you go about so much,
changing your journey?
Through Misrayim you'll be shamed again,
as you were shamed through Ashshur.
[37]Through this you'll again come out
with your hands on your head.
Because Yahweh has rejected the ones you rely on,
and you won't succeed through them.

Is it possible to come back?

3 Saying: 'If someone sends off his wife, she goes from him, and she comes to belong to another man, can he come back to her again?' That country will be totally profaned, won't it. And you [Yerushalaim] have been whoring with many lovers. Would you come back to me? (Yahweh's declaration).

[2]Raise your eyes to the bare places and look –
where have you not been laid?
By the roads you sat for them,
like a Bedouin in the wilderness.
You profaned the country
with your whoring and your bad dealing.
[3]Showers held back,
there was no rain,
But you had the brazenness of a whore;
you refused to be shamed.
[4]Now you've called to me, haven't you,
'Father, you're the partner of my youth.'
[5]'Does he hold on to things permanently
or keep watch for all time?'
There – you've spoken;
you've done what was bad, and prevailed.

[6]Yahweh said to me in the days of King Yoshiyyahu, 'Have you seen what Yisra'el did, she who turned back? She was going on to every high mountain and under every verdant tree and whoring there. [7]I said, "After she's done all these things, she'll come back to me." But she didn't come back. And her faith-breaking sister Yehudah saw. [8]I saw that because of the acts of adultery that Yisra'el committed, she who turned back, I sent her off and gave her divorce document to her. But her sister Yehudah, she who broke faith, wasn't afraid. She went and acted as a whore, too. [9]It came about that because of the frivolity of her whoring she profaned the country; she committed adultery with stone and wood. [10]But even in all this, her sister, faith-breaking Yehudah, didn't come back to me with her whole mind but rather with falsehood (Yahweh's declaration).'

Breaking faith

[11]Yahweh said to me, 'Yisra'el who turned back has shown herself more faithful than Yehudah who broke faith. [12]Go and call out these words to the north. Say, "Come back, Yisra'el who turned back (Yahweh's declaration); I shall not make my face fall against you, because I am committed (Yahweh's declaration), I don't hold on to things permanently. [13]Only acknowledge your waywardness, that you've rebelled against Yahweh your God and scattered your journeys to strangers under every verdant tree, and not listened to my voice (Yahweh's declaration).
[14]Come back, children who are turning back (Yahweh's declaration), because I'm your master. I'll take you, one from a town, two from a kin-group, and bring you to Tsiyyon [Zion]. [15]I'll give you shepherds in accordance with my will and they'll shepherd you with knowledge and insight.
[16]When you increase and are fruitful in the country in those days (Yahweh's declaration), people will no longer say 'Yahweh's pact chest'. It won't come to mind, they won't be mindful of it or give attention; it won't be made again. [17]At that time they'll call Yerushalaim 'Yahweh's Throne', and all the nations will gather to it, to Yahweh's name, to Yerushalaim. People will no more

follow the bad determination of their mind.
[18]In those days Yehudah's household will go to Yisra'el's household, and they'll come together from the northern country to the country that I gave your ancestors as a domain.
[19]I myself had said, 'How gladly I'll put you among my children and give you a desirable country, the most splendid domain of the nations.' I said you'd call me 'Father', and not turn back from following me. [20]Actually, as a woman breaks faith with her lover, so you broke faith with me, Yisra'el's household (Yahweh's declaration).'"

I'll heal their turnings

[21]A sound makes itself heard on the bare places,
the Yisra'elites' crying that pleads for grace.
Because they've misdirected their way,
they've put Yahweh their God out of mind.
[22]Come back, children who are turning back;
I'll heal your turnings.
'Here we are, we're coming to you,
because you are Yahweh our God.
[23]Yes, what comes from the hills belongs to falsehood,
the uproar from the mountains.
Yes, in Yahweh our God
is the deliverance of Yisra'el.
[24]But the Shame has consumed
our ancestors' labour from our youth,
Their flock and their cattle,
their sons and their daughters.
[25]We must lie down in our shame,
our disgrace should cover us.
Because we've done wrong to Yahweh our God,
we and our ancestors from our youth until this day.
We haven't listened
to the voice of Yahweh our God.'

4 'If you come back, Yisra'el (Yahweh's declaration),
come back to me.
If you remove your abominations from before me
and don't flit,
[2]But swear "As Yahweh lives",
in truth and in the faithful exercise of authority,
Nations will pray to be blessed by him,
and will exult in him.'
[3]Because Yahweh has said this to Yehudah's people and to Yerushalaim:

Till the tillable land for yourselves,
and don't sow among thorns.
[4]Circumcise yourselves for Yahweh,
remove the foreskin from your mind,
People of Yehudah and inhabitants of Yerushalaim,
so that my wrath doesn't come out like fire,
And burn up with no one putting it out,
because of the bad nature of your practices.

[5]Tell out in Yehudah,
make it heard in Yerushalaim,
Say, 'Sound the horn in the country',
call out, fulfil it, say:
'Gather together, let's go into the fortified towns,
[6]raise a banner towards Tsiyyon, take refuge, don't stand still.'
Because I'm going to bring something bad from the north,
a great breaking.

The searing wind

[7]A lion has gone up from its thicket,
a destroyer of nations has moved on.
He's gone out from his place
to make your country a devastation.
Your towns will be wasted,

without inhabitant.
[8]On account of this, wrap on sack,
lament and howl:
'Yahweh's angry blazing
isn't turning back from us.'
[9]On that day (Yahweh's declaration)
the king's mind and the officials' mind will expire.
The priests will be devastated,
the prophets will be dumbfounded.

[10]I said, 'Oh, Lord Yahweh,
really you've totally deceived this people and Yerushalaim,
In saying "Things will be well for you",
whereas the sword has reached as far as their throat.'

[11]At that time it will be said
concerning this people and concerning Yerushalaim:
On the way to the daughter of my people
a searing wind comes,
From the bare places in the wilderness,
not to winnow, not to fan.
[12]A wind too full for these things comes on my behalf;
now I myself announce rulings against them.
[13]There, one will go up like clouds,
his chariots like a whirlwind.
His horses are swifter than eagles –
oh, alas for us, because we are destroyed.

[14]Wash your mind of what is bad, Yerushalaim,
in order that you may find deliverance.
How long will you let your intentions to bring trouble
lodge within you?
[15]Because a voice tells it from Dan,
it lets trouble be heard from Mount Ephrayim.
[16]Make mention to the nations;
there – make it heard against Yerushalaim.
Watchers are coming from a far-off country,
they'll give voice against Yehudah's towns.
[17]Like people keeping watch on the fields
they've come against it all round,
because it has rebelled against me (Yahweh's declaration).

[18]Your way and your practices
have done these things to you.
This is the bad fortune that's come to you, because it's bitter,
because it's reached your heart.

The empty void

[19]My pain, my pain, I writhe, the walls of my heart,
my heart howls within me, I can't be still.
Because you've heard, my soul,
the sound of the horn, the battle shout.
[20]Breaking meets with breaking,
because the entire country is destroyed.
Suddenly my tents have been destroyed,
in an instant my tent cloths.
[21]How long shall I see a banner,
listen to the sound of the horn?

[22]Because my people are dense,
they haven't acknowledged me.
They're idiotic children,
they're not people who understand.
They're smart at doing what's bad,
but they don't know how to do good.

[23]I looked at the earth and there – it was empty, void;
and at the heavens – there was no light in them.
[24]I looked at the mountains and there – they were quaking,
and all the hills were moving to and fro.
[25]I looked and there – no human being,
and every bird in the heavens had fled.
[26]I looked and there – the farmland was wilderness,
and all its towns were burned,
In the face of Yahweh,
in the face of his angry blazing.
[27]Because Yahweh has said this:
'The entire country will become desolation
(but I won't make an end).
[28]On account of this the earth mourns,
the heavens are dark above.
Since I have spoken, I have made a scheme;
I haven't relented, I won't turn back from it.'

[29]At the sound of cavalry and bowman
the entire town is fleeing.
They've gone into the woods,
climbed on to the rocks.
The entire town is abandoned,
there's no inhabitant in it, not one.
[30]So you who are going to be destroyed,
what do you do when you dress in scarlet,
When you adorn yourself in gold adornment,
when you broaden your eyes with mascara?
It's with empty results that you look beautiful;
your lovers have rejected you, they seek your life.
[31]Because I've heard a voice like someone in pain,
distress like someone having her first baby,
The voice of Miss Tsiyyon –
as she gasps, she stretches out the palms of her hands:
'Oh, me, please,
because my life faints before my killers.'

Can you find anyone?

5 Explore Yerushalaim's streets, please look, and get to know,
seek in its squares, if you can find anyone,
If there's someone exercising authority
seeking truthfulness, and I'll pardon it.
[2]But even when they say, 'As Yahweh lives' –
therefore they swear in falsehood.

[3]Yahweh, your eyes look for truthfulness, don't they;
you struck them down but they didn't feel sick.
When you finished them off,
they refused to accept discipline.
They made their faces stronger than a cliff;
they refused to turn back.
[4]I myself said,
'They're only the poor who act foolishly,
Because they don't acknowledge the way of Yahweh,
the authority of their God.
[5]I'll go to the big people
and speak with them,
Because those people acknowledge the way of Yahweh,
the authority of their God.'
Yet those people had altogether broken the yoke,
torn off the straps.
[6]That's why the lion from the forest has struck them down,
the wolf from the steppes destroys them.
The leopard is lying by their townships;
anyone who goes out from them will be torn to pieces.
Because their rebellions are many,

their turnings away are numerous.

[7]For what reason should I pardon you? –
your children have abandoned me and sworn by no-gods.
I filled them and they committed adultery;
they troop off to the whorehouse.
[8]They were horses in heat, lusty;
they were bellowing, each for his neighbour's wife.
[9]Shall I not attend to these things (Yahweh's declaration),
or myself not take redress
against a nation that's like this one?

[10]Go up among its vine-rows and destroy them,
but don't make an end.
Remove its branches,
because those people don't belong to Yahweh.
[11]Because Yisra'el's household and Yehudah's household
have totally broken faith with me (Yahweh's declaration).
[12]They've acted deceptively towards Yahweh,
and said 'He isn't the one.
Bad fortune won't come upon us,
we won't see sword or famine.
[13]The prophets – they'll be but wind,
the word isn't in them; so it will be done to them.'

Senseless people

[14]Therefore Yahweh, God of Armies, has said this,
since you people have spoken this thing:

Here I am, putting my words in your mouth as fire:
this people is the wood, and it will consume them.
[15]Here I am, bringing a nation from afar against you,
Yisra'el's household (Yahweh's declaration).
It's an enduring nation,
it's an age-old nation,
A nation whose tongue you don't know;
you can't listen to what it speaks.
[16]Its quiver is like an open grave;
all of them are strong men.
[17]It will consume your harvest and your bread;
it will consume your sons and your daughters.
It will consume your flock and your cattle;
it will consume your vine and your fig.
It will destroy your fortified towns,
on which you rely, with the sword.
[18]But even in those days (Yahweh's declaration) I won't make an end of you. [19]And when they say, 'On what account did Yahweh our God do all these things to us?', you're to say to them, 'As you abandoned me and served alien gods in your country, so you'll serve foreigners in a country that isn't yours.'

[20]Tell of this in Ya'aqob's household,
make it heard in Yehudah:
[21]Listen to this, please, idiotic people,
without sense,
Who have eyes but don't look,
have ears but don't listen.
[22]It's me that you should be in awe of, isn't it (Yahweh's declaration),
and before me that you should tremble,
The one who set the sand as a boundary for the sea,
a permanent limit that it shouldn't pass over.
Its waves toss but don't overcome,
they roar but don't pass over.
[23]But this people has a defiant and rebellious mind;
they've defied and gone.
[24]They haven't said to themselves,
'We must be in awe of Yahweh our God,
Who gives the rain, the early and later rain at its time,

who keeps watch for us the weeks set for harvest.'
[25]It's your wayward acts that have turned these things aside,
your wrongdoings that have withheld good things from you.

How to become sleek

[26]Because faithless people were found among my people,
like someone who watches in a bird-catchers' hide.
They've set up a means of destruction so they may capture people,
[27]like a basket full of birds.
So their houses are full of deceit;
that's how they've got big and rich.
[28]They've become fat, become sleek;
further, they've passed over words about bad dealing in giving judgement.
They haven't given judgement for the orphan, so that they might be successful;
they haven't exercised authority for the needy.
[29]Shall I not attend to these things (Yahweh's declaration),
or myself not take redress against a nation that's like this one?
[30]A devastating thing, a horrifying thing
has happened in the country.
[31]The prophets prophesy falsely,
the priests rule on the basis of their own capacity,
And my people like it so –
but what will you do at the end of it?

6 Take refuge, Binyaminites,
from inside Yerushalaim!
Sound the horn in Teqoa,
raise the signal at Bet Hakkerem!
Because something bad is looking out from the north,
a big breaking.
[2]I'm terminating Miss Tsiyyon, lovely and refined:
[3]shepherds and their flocks will come to it.
They pitch their tents against it all round,
they pasture each one his own responsibility.
[4]'Make battle sacred against it,
set to, we'll go up at noon!'
'Oh, alas for us, because the day is declining,
because the evening shadows get long.
[5]Set to, we'll go up at night
and devastate its citadels.'
[6]Because Yahweh of Armies has said this:

Cut down the trees,
heap up a ramp against Yerushalaim.
The town is appointed;
within it, all of it is fraud.
[7]Like a well flowing with its water,
so it flows with its bad dealing.
In it violence and destruction makes itself heard,
sickness and wound are before me continually.
[8]Accept discipline, Yerushalaim,
so that I myself don't withdraw from you,
So that I don't make you a devastation,
a country not inhabited.

Weary of holding in Yahweh's wrath

[9]Yahweh of Armies has said this:

Like a vine they are to glean and glean
the remainder of Yisra'el.
'Put your hand again
like a grape-picker over the branches.'
[10]To whom shall I speak,
and testify so they listen?

There, their ear is foreskinned,
they can't heed.
There, Yahweh's word has become for them
a reviling; they don't delight in it.
[11]So Yahweh's wrath – I'm full of it,
I'm weary of holding it in.
'Pour it on the child in the street
and on the group of young men, together.
Because both man and woman will be captured,
the elder with the one full of years.
[12]Their houses will pass to other people,
fields and wives together.
Because I shall stretch out my hand
against the inhabitants of the country (Yahweh's declaration).
[13]Because from their smallest to their biggest,
every one of them is greedy for loot.
Prophet and priest alike,
every one of them is acting falsely.
[14]They've healed my people's break too lightly,
saying, "Things are well, they're well",
when they're not well.
[15]They've been shameful, because they've done something offensive;
they neither manifest any shame
nor do they know how to be disgraced.
Therefore they will fall among the people who fall;
at the time when I attend to them, they will collapse
(Yahweh has said).'

The analyst

[16]Yahweh has said this:

'Stand by the roads, and look,
ask about the old paths.
Which is the road to good things? –
walk on it, and find peacefulness for yourselves.'
But they said, 'We won't walk',
[17]so I raised up lookouts for you.
'Heed the sound of the horn',
but they said, 'We won't heed.'
[18]Therefore listen, you nations,
and acknowledge, you assembly, what will be against them.
[19]Listen, earth:
here am I.
I'm going to bring something bad on this people,
the fruit of their intentions.
Because they haven't heeded my words,
and my instruction – they've rejected it.
[20]What use to me is incense that comes from Sheba,
or fine cane from a far-off country?
Your burnt offerings don't find acceptance,
your sacrifices aren't pleasing to me.
[21]Therefore Yahweh has said this:

Here am I; I'm going to set for this people
things to make them collapse, and they'll collapse because of them.
Parents and children together,
neighbour and friend – they'll perish.
[22]Yahweh has said this:

There, a people is going to come from a northern country,
a big nation will arise from earth's remotest parts.
[23]They take strong hold of bow and javelin;
it's violent – they don't have compassion.
Their sound is like the sea that roars,
they ride on horses.
It's lined up like a man for battle,

against you, Miss Tsiyyon.
[24]'We've heard report of them, our hands go slack,
pressure has taken strong hold of us, anguish like a woman giving birth.
[25]Don't go out into the fields, don't walk by the road,
because the enemy has a sword, terror is all round.
[26]My dear people, wrap on sack, roll in the dust,
make for yourself the mourning for an only child,
Bitter lament,
because suddenly the destroyer will come upon us.'

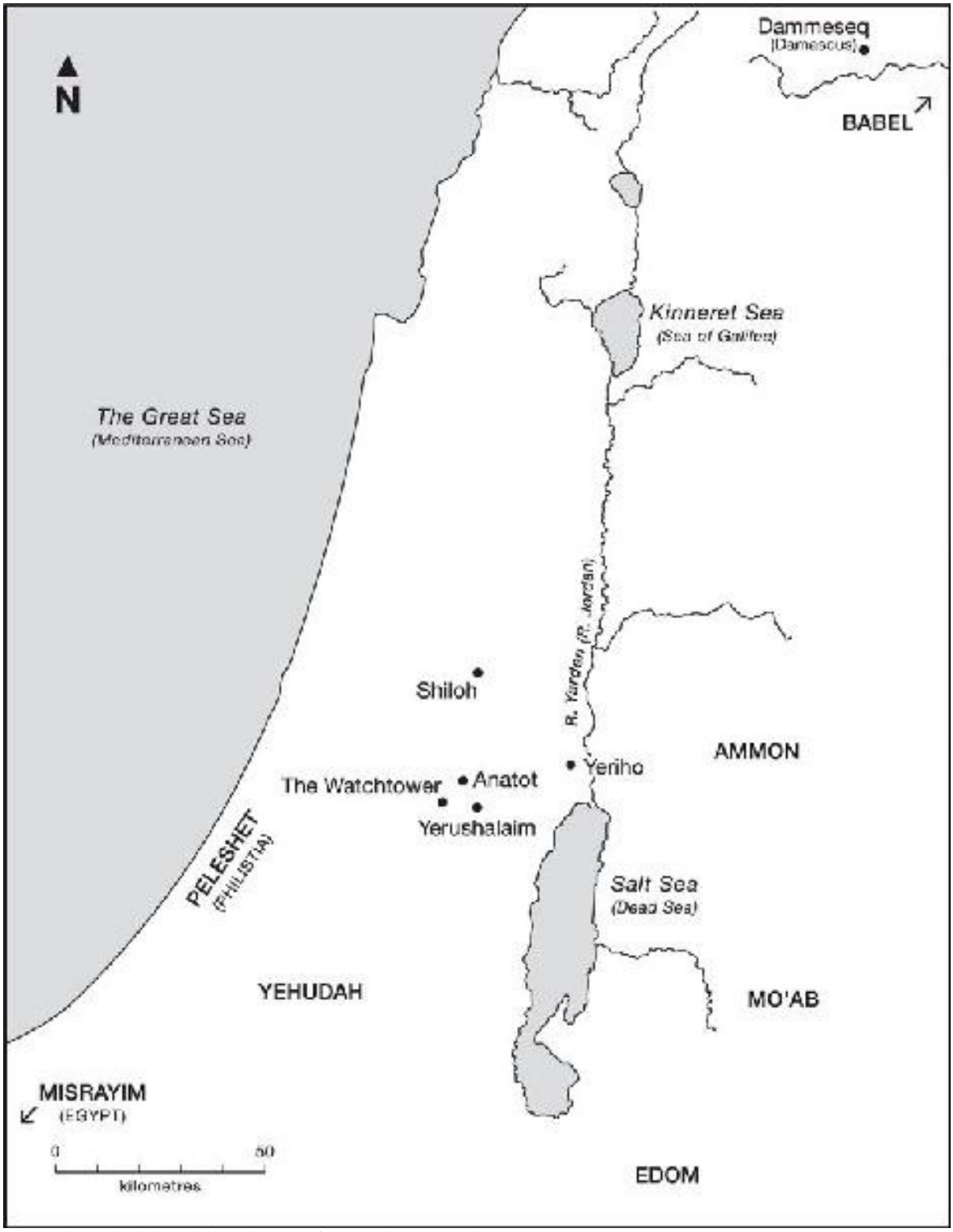
[27]I made you an analyst among my people,
a refiner, so you might know and analyse their way.
[28]All of them are the most defiant people,
people who live by slander,
Copper and iron,
all of them are people who devastate.
[29]The bellows are scorched by fire,
the lead has come to an end.
With empty results the smelter smelted,
and bad people were not separated out.
[30]Reject silver, people have called them,
because Yahweh has rejected them.

Remember Shiloh

7 The word that came to Yirmeyahu from Yahweh: [2]'Stand at the gateway of Yahweh's house and call out this word there. You're to say, "Listen to Yahweh's word, all of Yehudah who are coming through these gateways to bow low to Yahweh. [3]Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's God, has said this: 'Make your ways and your practices good, and I'll let you dwell in this place. [4]Don't rely for yourselves on words of falsehood: "These buildings are Yahweh's palace, Yahweh's palace, Yahweh's palace." [5]Rather, make your ways and your practices truly good. If you really exercise authority between an individual and his neighbour, [6]don't exploit alien, orphan and widow, don't shed the blood of someone who is free of guilt in this place, and don't follow other gods with bad results for yourselves, [7]I'll let you dwell in this place, in the country that I gave to your ancestors from of old, permanently.

[8]There, you're relying for yourselves on words of falsehood that won't prevail. [9]Is there stealing, murder, adultery, swearing falsely and burning sacrifices to the Master, and following other gods that you didn't acknowledge, [10]and you come and stand before me in this house over which my name has been called out and say "We are rescued" – in order to do all these offensive things? [11]Has it become a cave for thugs in your eyes, this house over which my name has been called out? Yes, I myself, I've been looking (Yahweh's declaration).

[12]Because you can go to my site that was at Shiloh where I let my name dwell before, and look at what I did to it in the face of my people Yisra'el's bad dealing. [13]So now because of your doing all these things (Yahweh's declaration), and I've spoken to you, starting early, but you haven't listened, and I've called you but you haven't answered, [14]I shall do to the house over which my name has been called out, on which you're relying, the site that I gave to you and your ancestors, as I did to Shiloh. [15]I'll throw you out from my presence as I threw your brothers out, Ephrayim's entire offspring.'"



Jeremiah 7: Yehudah (Judah) at the time of Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah)

The prophet forbidden to pray

16‘You, don’t plead for this people, don’t lift up a cry or plea for them, don’t intercede with me, because I’m not listening to you. 17You see what they’re doing in Yehudah’s towns and in Yerushalaim’s streets, don’t you. 18The sons are collecting wood, the fathers are lighting the fire and the women are kneading the dough, to make loaves for the Queen of Heaven and to pour libations to other gods, to provoke me. 19Is it me they’re provoking (Yahweh’s declaration)? Is it not themselves, in order to bring shame on their faces?’

20Therefore the Lord Yahweh has said this: ‘Here, my anger, my fury, is going to pour out on this place, on human beings, on

animals, on the trees in the open country and on the fruit of the earth. It will burn up and not go out.'
[21]Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's God, has said this: 'Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices, eat meat. [22]Because I didn't speak with your ancestors or order them on the day I got them out of the country of Misrayim regarding matters concerning burnt offering and sacrifice. [23]Rather I ordered them this thing: "Listen to my voice, and I'll be God for you and you'll be a people for me; walk in every way that I order you so that it may go well for you." [24]But they didn't listen, they didn't bend their ear, they walked by their own counsels, by the bad determination of their mind. They went back, not forwards, [25]from the day that I got your ancestors out from the country of Misrayim until this day. I sent them all my servants the prophets, starting early and sending daily, [26]but they didn't listen to me, they didn't bend their ear, they toughened their neck; they acted badly more than their ancestors.
[27]You're to speak to them all these things, but they won't listen to you. You're to call them but they won't answer you. [28]You're to say to them: "This is the nation that hasn't listened to the voice of Yahweh its God. They haven't accepted discipline. Truthfulness has perished, cut itself off from their mouth."'

Slaughter Ravine

[29]Shave your hair and throw it away,
take up a lament on the bare places.
Because Yahweh has rejected and deserted
the generation with which he's furious.
[30]Because the Yehudahites have done what is bad in my eyes (Yahweh's declaration). They've set up their abominations in the house over which my name has been called out, so as to defile it. [31]They've built shrines at Tophet, in the Ben-hinnom Ravine, to burn their sons and daughters in fire, which I didn't order; it didn't come into my mind. [32]Therefore, now, days are coming (Yahweh's declaration) when it will no longer be said 'Tophet and the Ben-hinnom Ravine' but rather 'Slaughter Ravine'. They'll bury in Tophet because there's no other place. [33]This people's carcases will be food for the birds of the heavens and the animals of the land, with no one making them tremble. [34]I shall silence from Yehudah's towns and from Yerushalaim's streets the joyful voice, the rejoicing voice, the voice of groom and the voice of bride. Because the country will become a waste.
8 At that time (Yahweh's declaration) people will take out the bones of Yehudah's kings, its officials, the priests, the prophets and Yerushalaim's inhabitants from their graves, [2]and expose them to the sun, the moon and all the army of the heavens that they were loyal to and that they served and that they followed and that they enquired of and that they bowed low to. They won't be gathered up and buried; they'll become manure on the face of the ground. [3]Death will be preferable to life for all the remainder that remain of this bad kin-group in all the remaining places where I'll drive them (a declaration of Yahweh of Armies).

The misleading scholars

[4]You're to say to them, Yahweh has said this:

When people fall, don't they get up –
if they turn back, don't they turn back?
[5]Why is this people turning back,
Yerushalaim, with a permanent turning back?
They've taken strong hold on deceit,
they've refused to turn back.
[6]I've heeded and listened;
they don't speak dependably.
There's no one relenting of his bad dealing,
saying 'What did I do?'
All of it has turned back, at a run,
like a horse flooding into battle.
[7]Even the stork in the heavens –
it acknowledges its set times.
The dove, the swift and the crane –
they keep the time for their coming.
But my people – it doesn't acknowledge
Yahweh's ruling.

[8]How can you say, 'We are smart,
Yahweh's instruction is with us'?
Actually, there, the false pen of the scholars
has made it into falsehood.
[9]The smart people have been shamed,
they've shattered and been captured.
There, they've rejected Yahweh's word;
what smartness do they have?

[10]Therefore I shall give their wives to other men,
their fields to dispossessors.

Because from small to big,
every one of them is greedy for loot.
Prophet and priest alike,
every one of them is acting falsely.
[11]They've healed my dear people's break too lightly,
saying, 'Things are well, they're well',
when they're not well.
[12]They've been shameful, because they've done something offensive;
they neither manifest any shame
nor do they know how to be disgraced.
Therefore they will fall among the people who fall;
at the time when I attend to them, they'll collapse (Yahweh has said).
[13]I shall totally gather them up (Yahweh's declaration):
there'll be no grapes on the vine,
no figs on the fig tree.
The leaves will wither,
and what I have given them will pass away from them.

No balm in Gil'ad?

[14]Why are we sitting? – gather up,
we'll come into the fortified towns and be still there.
Because Yahweh our God is letting us perish
and drink poisoned water,
Because we've done wrong to Yahweh,
[15]hoping for things to go well but there's nothing good,
for a time of healing but here – terror.
[16]From Dan its horses' snort has made itself heard:
at the sound of the neighing of its sturdy ones
the entire country has shaken.
They came and consumed the country and what fills it,
the town and the people who live in it.
[17]'Because here I am,
sending off snakes against you,
Vipers for which there's no charming;
they'll bite you' (Yahweh's declaration).

[18]You who cheer me in sorrow,
my mind is sick.
[19]Here is the sound of my dear people's cry for help
from the country far away:
'Isn't Yahweh in Tsiyyon,
or isn't its King in it?'
'Why did they provoke me with their images,
with hollow foreign beings?'
[20]Harvest has passed, summer is finished,
but we ourselves haven't found deliverance.
[21]Because of my dear people's breaking I'm broken,
I mourn, devastation has taken strong hold of me.
[22]Isn't there ointment in Gil'ad,
or is there no healer there?
Because why has my dear people's restoration
not developed?
9 If only my head were water,
my eye a fountain of tears.
I'd cry day and night
for those who are run through among my dear people.

[2]'If only I could have a travellers' lodge in the wilderness,
and abandon my people, go from them,
Because all of them are adulterers,
a pack of people breaking faith.
[3]They've directed their tongue, their bow has been falsehood;
it's not on behalf of truthfulness that they've been strong in the country.
Because they've gone out from something bad, to something bad,
and not acknowledged me (Yahweh's declaration).
[4]They should keep watch, each person, on his neighbour;

don't rely on any brother.
Because every brother is totally crooked,
and every neighbour goes about as a slanderer.
[5]Each one trifles with his neighbour;
they don't speak the truth.
They've taught their tongue false speech;
they've got tired being wayward.
[6]You [Yirmeyahu] have lived in the middle of deceit;
in deceit they've refused to acknowledge me (Yahweh's declaration).'

Who is the smart person who understands all this?

[7]Therefore Yahweh of Armies has said this:

Here am I; I'm going to smelt them, test them,
because how [else] can I act in the face of my dear people?
[8]Their tongue is a sharpened arrow,
it's spoken deceit.
With his mouth someone speaks with his neighbour of how things will be well,
but inside he lays an ambush for him.
[9]For these things shall I not attend to them (Yahweh's declaration),
or on a nation that's like this shall I myself not take redress?
[10]For the mountains I shall take up crying and wailing,
and for the wilderness pastures a lament.
Because they're laid waste, with no one passing through,
and people don't hear the sound of livestock.
Both the birds of the heavens and the animals,
they've fled; they've gone.
[11]I shall make Yerushalaim into heaps of rubble,
the dwelling of jackals.
Yehudah's towns I shall make into a devastation,
with no inhabitant.

[12]Who is the smart individual who understands this,
to whom has Yahweh's mouth spoken so that he can tell of it?
On what account has the country perished,
become wasted like a wilderness, with no one passing through?
[13]Yahweh said, 'Because they abandoned my instruction which I put before them. They didn't listen to my voice and they didn't walk by it. [14]They followed the determination of their mind and followed the Masters, as their ancestors taught them.'
[15]Therefore Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's God, said this: 'Here am I; I'm going to make this people eat bitter plants and make them drink poisoned water. [16]I shall scatter them among the nations that they and their ancestors haven't known. I shall send off the sword after them until I've finished them off.'

The real circumcision

[17]Yahweh of Armies has said this:

Show some discernment, and call the lamenting women so they may come,
send for the smart women so they may come.
[18]They must hurry and raise a wailing over us,
so our eyes may run with tears,
our pupils flow with water.
[19]Because the sound of wailing –
it has made itself heard from Tsiyyon:
'How we are destroyed,
we are very shamed.
Because we are abandoning our country,
because they've overthrown our dwellings.'
[20]Because listen, women, to Yahweh's word;
your ear must receive the word from his mouth.
Teach wailing to your daughters,
lamentation one woman to her neighbour.
[21]Because death is climbing through our windows,
coming into our citadels,
To cut off children from the streets,
young men from the squares.

[22]Speak like this (Yahweh's declaration):

Human corpses will fall
like manure on the face of the fields,
Like a sheaf behind the reaper
with no one gathering it up.
[23]Yahweh has said this:

'The smart person isn't to exult in his smartness,
the strong person isn't to exult in his strength,
the wealthy person isn't to exult in his wealth.
[24]Rather the person who exults is to exult in this:
showing insight and acknowledging me,
That I am Yahweh,
acting with commitment,
With authority and faithfulness in the country,
because I delight in these things (Yahweh's declaration).
[25]There, days are coming (Yahweh's declaration) when I shall attend to everyone circumcised in the foreskin, [26]with Misrayim, Yehudah, Edom, the Ammonites, Mo'ab, and all the people shaved at the forehead who live in the wilderness, because all the nations are foreskinned, and Yisra'el's entire household – foreskinned in mind.'

Facing the facts about images

10 Listen to the word that Yahweh spoke to you, Yisra'el's household. [2]Yahweh has said this:

Don't learn the nations' way;
don't shatter at signs in the heavens.
Because the nations may shatter at those,
[3]because the nations' laws are hollow.

Because someone cuts a tree from the forest,
the work of a craftsman's hands, with an axe.
[4]With silver and gold he beautifies it,
with nails and hammers he strengthens it, so it doesn't wobble.
[5]They're like a scarecrow in a melon patch;
they don't speak.
They're carried, carried, because they don't walk;
don't be in awe of them.
Because they don't do anything bad,
nor is doing good with them.
[6]There is none like you, Yahweh;
you are great and your name is great, with strength.
[7]Who would not be in awe of you, king of the nations,
because it's fitting to you.
Because among all the nations' smart people
and in all their dominion there's none like you.
[8]As one, they're stupid, dim-witted;
the correction that comes from hollow beings is wood.
[9]Beaten silver is brought from Tarshish,
gold from Uphaz,
A craftsman's work, a goldsmith's hands,
their clothing blue and purple,
the work of smart people, all of them.
[10]But Yahweh is the true God,
he's the living God, the everlasting King.
At his fury, earth shakes;
nations can't cope with his condemnation.
[11]You're to speak in this way to them:

The gods that didn't make the heavens and the earth
will perish from the earth and from under the heavens.

[12]One who made the earth by his energy,
established the world by his expertise,
by his understanding stretched out the heavens –
[13]At his giving voice there was a roar of water in the heavens,
and he made clouds go up from the end of the earth.

He made lightning for the rain,
made wind come out from his storehouses.

Discipline with judgement

[14]Every human being proves stupid, without knowledge;
every goldsmith is put to shame by the image,
Because his figure is a falsehood,
and there's no breath in them.
[15]They're hollow, a work for mockery;
at the time they're attended to, they'll perish.
[16]Not like these is Ya'aqob's share,
because he's the former of everything.
Yisra'el is the clan that is his domain;
Yahweh of Armies is his name.

[17]Gather up your baggage from the country [Yerushalaim],
you who dwell under siege.
[18]Because Yahweh has said this:

Here am I, I'm going to fling away the people who dwell in the country,
at this moment.
I shall pressure them
in order that they experience it.

[19]Oh, alas for me, on account of my break,
my wound is sickening,
Whereas myself I had said,
'This is only an sickness, and I shall bear it.'
[20]My tent is destroyed, all my tent cords have broken.
my children have gone out from me, there are none of them,
No one spreading my tent again,
hanging out my tent cloths.
[21]Because the shepherds are stupid,
they haven't enquired of Yahweh.
That's why they haven't thrived,
and all their flock has scattered.
[22]A sound, a report – there, it's coming,
a great shaking from a northern country,
To make Yehudah's towns a devastation,
the abode of jackals.
[23]I acknowledge, Yahweh,
that an individual's road doesn't belong to him.
It doesn't belong to a person walking
to set his step.
[24]Discipline me, Yahweh, only with judgement,
not in your anger, so you don't make me small.
[25]Pour your wrath on the nations that haven't acknowledged you,
on the kin-groups that haven't called out in your name.
Because they've consumed Ya'aqob,
consumed him and finished him off, and devastated his abode.

No shrugging of God's shoulders

11 The word that came to Yirmeyahu from Yahweh: [2]'You people, listen to the words in this pact.'
'So you're to speak them to Yehudah's people and against Yerushalaim's inhabitants, [3]and say to them, "Yahweh, Yisra'el's God, has said this: 'The person is cursed who doesn't listen to the words in this pact [4]that I ordered your ancestors on the day I got them out from the country of Misrayim, from the iron smelter, saying "Listen to my voice and act on them in accordance with all that I order you, and you will be a people for me and I will be God for you", [5]in order to implement the oath that he swore to your ancestors to give them a country flowing with milk and syrup this very day.'"'
I said, 'Yes, Yahweh.'
[6]Yahweh said to me, 'Call out all these words in Yehudah's towns and in Yerushalaim's streets: "Listen to the words in this pact and act on them. [7]Because I testified solemnly to your ancestors on the day I got them out from the country of Misrayim and until this day, starting early to testify, saying 'Listen to my voice.' [8]But they didn't listen or bend their ear but walked each person by the bad determination of their mind. So I brought on them all the words in this pact that I ordered them to act on but they didn't act on."'

[9]Yahweh said to me, ‘A conspiracy can be found among Yehudah’s people and among Yerushalaim’s inhabitants. [10]They’ve turned back to the wayward acts of their ancestors of old, who refused to listen to my words. As those people followed other gods, Yisra’el’s household and Yehudah’s household have contravened my pact that I solemnized with their ancestors.’

Don’t pray

[11]Therefore Yahweh has said this: ‘Here am I; I’m going to bring upon them bad fortune from which they won’t be able to get away. They’ll cry out to me but I won’t listen to them. [12]Yehudah’s towns and Yerushalaim’s inhabitants will go and cry out to the gods to whom they’ve been burning incense. But they won’t deliver them at all at the time when the bad fortune comes to them. [13]Because according to the number of your towns, Yehudah, have been your gods, and according to the number of your streets, Yerushalaim, have you set up altars to Shame, altars to burn incense to the Master.’

[14]And you, don’t plead on this town’s account,
don’t raise on its account a resounding shout or plea.
Because I won’t be listening at the time when they call to me
on account of the bad fortune that comes to them.
[15]What business does my beloved have in my house,
as she acts on her strategy?
Many will make the sacred flesh pass from you,
because you deal badly, then you exult.
[16]‘Verdant olive, beautiful with shapely fruit’,
Yahweh named you.
To a big roaring sound he’s set fire to it,
and its branches have broken.
[17]Yahweh of Armies who planted you –
he’s spoken of bad fortune for you,
On account of the bad dealing of Yisra’el’s household
and Yehudah’s household,
Which they did for themselves
to provoke me by burning incense to the Master.

[18]When Yahweh made it known to me so that I might know –
then you let me see their practices.
[19]And I myself had been like a docile lamb
that’s led to slaughter.
I didn’t know that against me
they’d thought up their intentions:
‘Let’s destroy the tree with its sap,
let’s cut him off from the land of the living,
so that his name isn’t mentioned any more.’
[20]So, Yahweh of Armies, who exercises authority with faithfulness,
who tests the inner being and the mind:
May I see your redress on them,
because I’ve laid out my argument to you.

Why do the faithless get away with it?

[21]Therefore Yahweh has said this:

‘About the people of Anatot who are seeking your life, saying “You will not prophesy in Yahweh’s name, then you won’t die by our hand.”’ [22]Therefore Yahweh of Armies has said this:

Here am I; I’m going to attend to them;
the young men will die by the sword.
Their sons and their daughters will die by famine;
[23]there will be no remainder of them.
Because I shall bring bad fortune on the people of Anatot,
the year when they’re attended to.

12 You’ll be in the right, Yahweh, when I argue with you,
yet I shall speak of your rulings with you.
Why does the way of the faithless succeed,
why are all the people who break faith at ease?
[2]You plant them, yes they root;
they go on, yes they produce fruit.
You’re near in their mouth,

but far from their inner being.
[3]But you, Yahweh, have acknowledged me and seen me,
you've tested my mind in relation to you.
Drive them off like sheep to the slaughter,
make them sacred for the killing day.

[4]How long will the country mourn,
the grass in all the fields wither?
Through the bad action of the people who live in it,
animals and birds come to an end,
Because people say,
'He won't look at our future.'

[5]When you [Yirmeyahu] have run with people on foot and they've exhausted you,
then how can you compete with horses?
If you're secure in a country where things are well,
then how will you do in the Yarden [Jordan] jungle?
[6]Because yes, your brothers and your father's household –
yes, those people have broken faith with you;
yes, those people have called after you in full voice.
Don't trust them,
when they speak good things to you.

I have abandoned my household

[7]I have abandoned my household,
I have deserted my domain.
I have given my dearly beloved
into her enemies' fist.
[8]My domain has become to me
like a lion in the forest.
She's given her voice against me;
therefore I've been hostile to her.
[9]My domain is a coloured bird of prey;
birds of prey are against her, all round.
Go, gather all the creatures of the wild,
bring them to eat.
[10]Many shepherds have devastated my vineyard,
trampled my share.
They've made my desirable share
into a devastated wilderness.
[11]Someone has made it into a devastation;
it mourns before me, devastated.

The entire country is devastated,
because there's no one taking it into their mind.
[12]Into all the bare places in the wilderness destroyers have come
because Yahweh's sword consumes.
From one end of the country to the other end of the country
there's no well-being for all flesh.
[13]They've sown wheat but reaped thorns,
they've pained themselves but they don't prevail.
So be shamed by your yield
because of Yahweh's angry blazing.

[14]Yahweh has said this: 'About all my neighbours who deal badly, who touch the domain that I gave to my people Yisra'el: here am I, I'm going to uproot them from on their land, and Yehudah's household I shall uproot from among them. [15]But after I've uprooted them I shall again show compassion to them and bring them back, each to his domain, each to his country. [16]If they really learn the ways of my people, swearing by my name "As Yahweh lives" as they taught my people to swear by the Master, they'll be built up among my people. [17]But if they don't listen, I'll uproot that nation, uproot and destroy it (Yahweh's declaration).'

A shorts story

13 Yahweh said this to me: 'Go and get yourself a linen garment and put it round your hips, but don't let it come into water.'
[2]So I got the garment in accordance with Yahweh's word and put it round my hips. [3]Yahweh's word came to me a second time: [4]'Take the garment that you got, which is round your hips, and set off for Perat. Hide it there in a crevice in the cliff.' [5]So I

went and hid it at Perat as Yahweh ordered me. [6]After many days Yahweh said to me, 'Set off for Perat and get the garment from
there that I ordered you to hide there.' [7]I went to Perat and dug, and got the garment from the place where I'd hidden it, and there,
the garment was destroyed; it wouldn't be useful for anything.
[8]Yahweh's word came to me. [9]Yahweh said this: 'In this way I shall devastate Yehudah's majesty and Yerushalaim's majesty,
which are great. [10]This people that deals badly, who refuse to listen to my words, who walk by the determination of their mind,
and who follow other gods to serve them and bow low to them, will become like this garment that isn't useful for anything.
[11]Because as a garment sticks to someone's hips, so I made Yisra'el's entire household and Yehudah's entire household stick to
me (Yahweh's declaration) to be for me a people, a name, praise and splendour. But they didn't listen.
[12]So you're to speak this word to them. Yahweh the God of Yisra'el says this: "Every bottle should be full of wine." They'll
say to you, "We know very well that every bottle should be full of wine, don't we." [13]You're to say to them, "Yahweh has said
this: 'Here am I; I'm going to fill all the inhabitants of this country, the kings who sit on David's behalf on his throne, the priests,
the prophets and all Yerushalaim's inhabitants – with drunkenness. [14]I shall smash them, one person against his brother, parents
and children together (Yahweh's declaration). I shall not pity and I shall not spare and I shall not have compassion so that I don't
devastate them.'"'

Can the people change?

[15]Listen, give ear, don't be superior,
because Yahweh has spoken.
[16]Give honour to Yahweh your God
before he brings darkness,
Before your feet stumble
on the mountains at dusk,
And you hope for light but he turns it into deep darkness,
makes it into dark gloom.
[17]If you don't listen to this, my soul will cry in hidden places
before your majesty.
My eye will cry and cry, and run with crying,
because Yahweh's flock has gone into captivity.

[18]Say to the king and to the queen mother,
'Fall down, sit.
Because your headwear is coming down,
your glorious crown.'
[19]The Negeb towns are closed,
there's no one opening them.
Yehudah is taken into exile, all of it,
taken into exile, completely.
[20]Lift up your eyes
and look at the people coming from the north.
Where are the sheep that were given you [Yerushalaim],
your glorious flock?
[21]What will you say when he appoints over you
ones whom you trained for yourself,
as allies, as your head?
Contractions will take hold of you, won't they,
like a woman giving birth.
[22]And when you say to yourself,
'Why have these things happened to me?' –
Because of the magnitude of your waywardness
your skirts have been stripped off and your body has been violated.

[23]Does the Kushite [Sudanese] change his skin,
the leopard his spots?
You people too can do good,
you who have been taught to do bad.
[24]So I shall scatter them like chaff
passing away before the wilderness wind.
[25]This will be your fate,
your lot measured out from me (Yahweh's declaration),
In that you put me out of mind
and relied on falsehood.
[26]Yes, I myself will lift up your skirts over your face,
and your slighting will become visible,
[27]Your adulteries and your bellowings,
your whorish scheming.

On the hills, in the open country,
I've seen your abominable deeds.
Oh, alas for you, Yerushalaim, you're not clean –
how much longer will it be?

The God who doesn't answer prayer

14 What came as a word from Yahweh to Yirmeyahu concerning the matter of the drought.

[2]Yehudah mourns,
its settlements languish.
People look down to the ground,
Yerushalaim's crying goes up.
[3]Their important people send their underlings for water;
they come to the cisterns, they don't find water.
They return, their vessels empty;
they're shamed, disgraced, they cover their head.
[4]On account of the fact that the ground has broken up,
because there hasn't been rain in the country,
The farmers are shamed,
they cover their head.
[5]When the hind in the open country, too, gives birth,
it abandons, because there's been no grass.
[6]As the donkeys stand on the bare places,
they gasp for air like jackals.
Their eyes fail,
because there's no vegetation.

[7]If our wayward acts avow against us, Yahweh,
act for the sake of your name.
Because our turnings away are many;
we've done wrong to you.
[8]Yisra'el's hope,
its deliverer in time of pressure,
Why should you become like an alien in the country,
like a traveller who turns aside to lodge?
[9]Why should you become like someone bewildered,
like a strong man who can't deliver?
But you're among us, Yahweh,
your name has been called out over us, don't let go of us.
[10]Yahweh has said this to this people:

Yes, they've loved straying,
they haven't restrained their feet.
Given that Yahweh doesn't accept them,
he'll now be mindful of their waywardness
and he'll attend to their wrongdoings.

The encouraging prophets

[11]Yahweh said to me, 'Don't plead for good things on behalf of this people. [12]When they fast I won't be listening, when they make a burnt sacrifice or offering, I won't be accepting them, because by sword, by famine and by epidemic I'm going to finish them off.'
[13]I said, 'Oh! Lord Yahweh! There, the prophets are saying to them, "You won't see a sword, famine won't happen to you, because I shall give you true well-being in this place."'
[14]Yahweh said to me, 'It's falsehood that the prophets have prophesied in my name; I didn't send them, I didn't order them, I didn't speak to them. A false vision, divination and nothingness, their mind's deceit, is what those people are prophesying to you. [15]Therefore Yahweh has said this to the prophets who prophesy in my name when I didn't send them and they're saying, "Sword and famine won't happen in this country": by sword and famine those prophets will come to an end. [16]And the people to whom they're prophesying will be thrown out into Yerushalaim's streets because of famine and sword. There'll be no one burying them – them, their wives, their sons and their daughters. I'll pour out on them their bad fortune.
[17]And you're to speak this word to them.

My eyes run down with crying,
night and day they won't stop.
Because with a great breaking

the dear daughter of my people has broken,
a very sickening wound.
[18]If I go out into the open country –
there, people run through by the sword.
If I come into the town –
there, sicknesses that come from famine.
Because both prophet and priest go round the country
but don't acknowledge it.'

No matter who prayed

[19]Have you totally rejected Yehudah,
have you renounced Tsiyyon with your entire being?
Why have you struck us down
and we have no one healing us? –
Hoping for things to go well, but there's nothing good,
for a time of healing, but there – terror.
[20]We acknowledge our faithlessness, Yahweh,
our ancestors' waywardness.
Because we've done wrong to you,
[21]don't spurn us, for the sake of your name.
Don't disgrace your honoured throne;
be mindful, don't contravene your pact with us.
[22]Are there any among the nations' hollow beings who make it rain,
or do the heavens give showers?
You're the one, Yahweh our God, aren't you,
so we hope in you, because you made all these things.

15 Yahweh said to me, 'If Mosheh [Moses] and Shemu'el [Samuel] were to stand before me, my soul wouldn't go out to this people. Send them away from my presence. They're to go away. [2]When they say to you, "Where shall we go?", say to them, "Yahweh has said this:

Those who are for death, to death;
those who are for the sword, to the sword;
Those who are for famine, to famine;
those who are for captivity, to captivity.
[3]I shall appoint over them four species (Yahweh's declaration):

The sword to slay
and the dogs to drag off,
The birds of the heavens and the animals of the earth
to eat and to devastate.
[4]I shall make them a horror to all earth's kingdoms on account of Menashsheh ben Yehizqiyyahu king of Yehudah, because of what he did in Yerushalaim."'

I'm tired of relenting

[5]Because who will pity you, Yerushalaim,
who will grieve for you,
Who will turn aside
to ask about your well-being?
[6]You are one who has deserted me (Yahweh's declaration);
you go backwards.
So I'm stretching out my hand against you and devastating you;
I'm tired of relenting.
[7]I'm winnowing them with a pitchfork
in the country's settlements.
I'm bereaving, I'm obliterating my people,
because of their ways from which they wouldn't turn back.
[8]Their widows will be more numerous
than the sand of the seas.
I shall bring to them (against mother, young man)
a destroyer at noon.
I shall let shock and terror
fall on them suddenly.
[9]One who has borne seven languishes,
she's breathed out her life.

Her sun has set while it's still day;
she's shamed and confounded.
Their remainder I'll give to the sword
before their enemies (Yahweh's declaration).

[10]Oh, alas for me,
my mother, that you gave birth to me,
An argumentative man and a disputatious man
for the entire country.
Although I haven't lent and they haven't lent to me,
everyone slights me.
[11]Yahweh said:

If I do not free you for good things,
if I do not get the enemy to intervene for you
in a bad time and in a time of distress . . .

[12]Can one break iron,
iron from the north or copper?
[13]Your wealth [Yerushalaim] and your treasures I shall give as plunder,
not for payment but for all your wrongdoings, yes through all your territory.

[14]I shall make your enemies [Yirmeyahu] pass on
through a country they haven't known.
Because fire is blazing in my anger;
it will blaze against you all.

You've been a deceiver

[15]You yourself acknowledge, Yahweh;
be mindful of me, attend to me.
Grant me redress from my persecutors;
don't let me be taken, because of your long-temperedness.
Acknowledge my bearing of reviling because of you;
[16]your words presented themselves and I consumed them.
Your word became joy to me,
the rejoicing of my mind.
Because your name was called out over me,
Yahweh God of Armies.
[17]I haven't sat in the company of people having fun, and exulted;
because of your hand I've sat alone,
because you'd filled me with condemnation.
[18]Why has my pain become endless,
my wound grave, refusing to heal?
You really have been to me a veritable deceiver,
water that's not trustworthy.
[19]Therefore Yahweh has said this:

If you turn back, I'll let you come back;
you can stand before me.
If you let out what is valuable rather than what is empty,
you can be my very mouth.
Those people will turn back to you,
but you yourself won't turn back to them.
[20]To this people I shall make you
a copper wall, fortified;
They'll battle against you
but not prevail over you.
Because I shall be with you
to deliver you and to rescue you (Yahweh's declaration).
[21]I will rescue you from the hand of people who deal badly,
redeem you from the fist of the violent.

Your marriage isn't your own

16 Yahweh's word came to me: [2]'You will not get yourself a wife and you will not have sons or daughters in this place.'
[3]Because Yahweh has said this about the sons and the daughters that are born in this place, and about the mothers who give

birth to them and about the fathers who father them in this country: [4]‘Sickening deaths they will die. They won’t be lamented or buried. As manure on the face of the ground they’ll be. By sword and famine they’ll come to an end. Their corpse will be food for the birds of the heavens and for the animals of the earth.’

[5]Because Yahweh has said this:

Don’t come to a house where there’s a wake,
don’t go to lament and grieve for them.
Because I have gathered up my well-being from this people
(Yahweh’s declaration), my commitment and compassion.
[6]Big people and little people in this country will die;
they won’t be buried.
People won’t lament for them,
they won’t gash themselves and they won’t shave their heads for them.
[7]They won’t break bread for them in mourning
to comfort someone over a death.
They won’t give them a cup of comfort to drink,
for his father or for his mother.
[8]And you’re not to come to a house where there’s a banquet,
to sit with them to eat and drink.

[9]Because Yahweh of Armies, Yisra’el’s God, has said this:

Here am I – I’m going to make cease from this place,
in front of your eyes and in your days,
The joyful voice and the rejoicing voice,
the voice of groom and the voice of bride.

Fishers and hunters

[10]‘When you tell this people all these things, and they say to you, “Why has Yahweh spoken against us all this great bad fortune, and what is our waywardness and our wrongdoing that we’ve committed against Yahweh our God?” [11]you’re to say to them, “Because your ancestors abandoned me (Yahweh’s declaration) and followed other gods, served them and bowed low to them. They abandoned me and didn’t keep my instruction. [12]And you’ve dealt badly more than your ancestors. There you are, following each of you the bad determination of his mind, so as not to listen to me. [13]So I shall hurl you from upon this country to a country that you haven’t known, you or your ancestors, and there you will serve other gods, day and night, in that I won’t show you grace.”

[14]Therefore, here, days are coming (Yahweh’s declaration) when it will no more be said, “As Yahweh lives, who got the Yisra’elites up from the country of Misrayim”, [15]but rather, “As Yahweh lives, who got the Yisra’elites up from the northern country and from all the countries where he’d driven them”. I shall bring them back to their country, which I gave their ancestors.’

[16]Here am I; I’m going to send for many fishers
(Yahweh’s declaration), and they’ll fish for them.
Afterwards I shall send
for many hunters and they’ll hunt for them,
From on every mountain and from on every hill
and from the clefts in the cliffs.
[17]Because my eyes have been upon all their ways;
they haven’t hidden from my presence.
Their waywardness hasn’t stayed concealed
from in front of my eyes.
[18]So I shall make good to them first,
double for their waywardness and their wrongdoing,
Because of their profaning my country
with their abominable corpses;
they filled my domain with their offensive practices.

[19]Yahweh, my vigour and my stronghold,
my escape in the day of pressure,
To you nations will come
from earth’s ends and say,
‘Our ancestors indeed had falsehood as their domain,
hollowness, and there was nothing in them that would prevail.
[20]Can a human being make himself gods? –
but they’re not gods.’

[21]Therefore here am I, I’m going to make them acknowledge it
at this moment.
I shall make them acknowledge my hand and my strength,

and they will acknowledge that my name is Yahweh.

Yahweh tests the inner being

17 Yehudah's wrongdoing is written
with an iron pen,
Engraved with a diamond point
on their mind's tablet
And at the horns of their altars
[2]in accordance with their children's being mindful of their altars and their totem poles,
By a verdant tree and by high hills,
[3]the mountains in the open country.
Your resources, all your treasures, I shall give as plunder,
the shrines for your wrongdoing, in all your territory.
[4]You'll forfeit hold (and by your own act)
of your domain that I gave you.
I shall make you serve your enemies
in a country that you haven't known.
Because you've lit a fire in my anger
that will burn permanently.

[5]Yahweh has said this:

Cursed is the man
who relies on human beings,
Makes flesh his strength,
and his mind turns aside from Yahweh.
[6]He'll be like a shrub in the steppe;
it can't see that good will come.
It dwells in parched places in the wilderness,
salty land where no one lives.
[7]Blessed is the man who relies on Yahweh,
and Yahweh is his reliance.
[8]he'll be like a tree planted by water;
it sends out its roots by a channel.
It isn't afraid that heat will come;
its foliage will be verdant.
In a year of drought it isn't anxious;
it doesn't move away from producing fruit.
[9]The mind is more crooked than anything;
it's grave – who can know it?
[10]I am Yahweh, searching the mind,
testing the inner being,
To give to an individual in accordance with his ways,
in accordance with the fruit proper to his practices.

[11]A partridge hatching when it didn't give birth –
someone who makes wealth but not by [proper] exercise of authority.
At the midpoint of his days it will abandon him,
and at his end he'll be a villain.

[12]Splendid throne, on high from of old,
our sacred place!
[13]Yisra'el's hope, Yahweh,
all who abandon you will be shamed.
People who turn aside in the country will be written down,
because they've abandoned
the fountain of living water, Yahweh.

Making the sabbath sacred

[14]Heal me, Yahweh, so I may find healing;
deliver me, so I may find deliverance,
because you're my praise.
[15]There, those people are saying to me,
'Where is Yahweh's word? – yes, it should come.'
[16]I myself haven't hurried away from being a shepherd after you;

I haven't longed for the grave day.
You yourself know what has come out from my lips;
it's been in front of your face.
[17]Don't become a terror to me;
you're my shelter on the day of bad fortune.
[18]My persecutors must be shamed;
I myself must not be shamed.
They're the ones who must shatter;
I myself must not shatter.
Bring upon them the day of bad fortune,
break them with a double breaking.

[19]Yahweh said this to me: 'Go and stand in the ordinary people's gateway by which Yehudah's kings come in and by which they go out, and in all Yerushalaim's gateways. [20]Say to them, "Listen to Yahweh's word, Yehudah's kings and all Yehudah and all Yerushalaim's inhabitants, who come in by these gateways. [21]Yahweh has said this: 'Keep watch on yourselves, and don't carry a load on the sabbath day or bring them through Yerushalaim's gateways. [22]Don't take out a load from your houses on the sabbath day or do any work. Make the sabbath day sacred, as I ordered your ancestors – [23]but they didn't listen, they didn't bend their ear, but toughened their neck so as not to listen and so as not to accept discipline.

[24]But if you really listen to me (Yahweh's declaration) so as not to bring a load through the gateways of this town on the sabbath day but make the sabbath day sacred so as not to do any work on it, [25]then there will come through this town's gateways kings and officials sitting on David's throne, riding on chariots and horses, they and their officials, Yehudah's people and Yerushalaim's inhabitants. This town will stay permanently. [26]People will come from Yehudah's towns, from Yerushalaim's environs, from Binyamin's region, from the foothills, from the mountains and from the Negeb, bringing burnt offering, sacrifice, grain offering and incense, and bringing a thank-offering to Yahweh's house.

[27]But if you don't listen to me by making the sabbath day sacred and not carrying a load, and you come through Yerushalaim's gateways on the sabbath day, I shall set fire to its gateways, and it will consume Yerushalaim's citadels and not go out.'"'

Clay in the Potter's hand

18 The word that came to Yirmeyahu from Yahweh: [2]'Set off and go down to a potter's house, and there I'll let you hear my words.' [3]So I went down to a potter's house, and there, he was doing work at the stones. [4]If the object were to spoil that he was making with clay, in the potter's hand, he'd make it again into another object, as it was right in the potter's eyes to do.

[5]Yahweh's word came to me: [6]'Like this potter I can do to you, Yisra'el's household (Yahweh's declaration), can't I. There, like clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, Yisra'el's household. [7]Momentarily I may speak concerning a nation or kingdom about uprooting, demolishing and destroying, [8]but that nation concerning which I've spoken may turn back from its bad dealing. I may then relent about the exile that I intended to do to it. [9]But momentarily I may speak concerning a nation or kingdom about building and planting, [10]and it may do what is bad in my eyes so as not to listen to my voice. I may then relent about the good that I said I'd do to it.

[11]So now, say to Yehudah's people and Yerushalaim's inhabitants, please: "Yahweh has said this: 'Here, I'm shaping bad fortune for you. I'm thinking up intentions concerning you. Turn back, please, each person from his bad way, and make your ways and your practices good.'" [12]But they'll say, "It's desperate, because we shall follow our intentions, and we shall act, each person by the bad determination of his mind."'

Don't expiate their waywardness

[13]Therefore Yahweh has said this:

Ask among the nations, please:
who has heard anything like this?
She's done something very horrible,
Miss Yisra'el.
[14]Does Lebanon snow abandon
the crags in the open country?
Or does foreign water,
cool streams, uproot?
[15]Because my people have put me out of mind,
so they may burn incense to something empty.
They've made them collapse on their ways,
the age-old paths,
By walking on [other] tracks,
a way not built up,
[16]To make their country a devastation,
something to whistle at permanently.
Anyone who passes by it will be devastated
and will shake his head.
[17]Like the east wind

I shall scatter them in front of the enemy.
At their back, not their face,
I shall look at them, on their day of disaster.
[18]People said, 'Come on, we'll think up some intentions against Yirmeyahu, because instruction won't perish from the priest, counsel from the smart person or word from the prophet. Come on, let's strike him down with the tongue, so we may not heed any of his words.'

[19]Heed me, Yahweh,
listen to the voice of the people who argue with me.
[20]Is someone to make good with bad, for good? –
because they've dug a pit for me.
Be mindful of how I stood before you
to speak good things concerning them,
to turn away your wrath from them.
[21]Therefore give their children to famine,
tip them out to the edges of the sword.
Their women should be bereaved of children and widowed,
their men should be slain by death,
their young men struck down by the sword in battle.
[22]May an outcry make itself heard from their houses,
when suddenly you bring a raiding gang on them.
Because they've dug a pit to capture me
and laid snares for my feet.
[23]Yahweh, you yourself know
their entire counsel against me, for my death.
Don't expiate their waywardness,
don't blot out their wrongdoing from before you.
They should become people caused to collapse before you;
in the time of your anger, act against them.

The pitcher that's to be pitched

19 Yahweh said this: 'Go and get a potter's earthenware pitcher, and some of the elders of the people and some of the elders of the priests, [2]and go out into the Ben-hinnom Ravine, which is at the entrance of the Potsherd Gate, and call out there the words that I shall speak to you. [3]Say, "Listen to Yahweh's word, Yehudah's kings and Yerushalaim's inhabitants. Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's God, has said this: 'Here am I; I'm going to bring bad fortune on this place such that everyone who hears of it – his ears will ring, [4]since they've abandoned me, made this place alien, burned sacrifices in it to other gods that they hadn't acknowledged, they, their ancestors and Yehudah's kings. They've filled this place with the blood of people free of guilt. [5]They've built shrines for the Master for burning their children in fire as burnt offerings to the Master, which I didn't order or speak of; it didn't come up into my mind.
[6]Therefore days are coming (Yahweh's declaration) when this place will no longer be called Tophet or Ben-hinnom Ravine but rather Slaughter Ravine. [7]I shall pitch out the counsel of Yehudah and Yerushalaim in this place. I shall make them fall by the sword before their enemies, by the hand of people who seek their lives, and give their corpse as food to the birds of the heavens and to the animals of the earth. [8]I shall make this town into a devastation and something to whistle at; anyone who passes by it will be devastated and will whistle at all its wounds. [9]I shall cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they'll each eat the flesh of his neighbour in the siege and in the straits that their enemies, the people who seek their lives, impose on them.'"

Terror-Is-All-Around

[10]And you're to break the pitcher before the eyes of the men who go with you, [11]and say to them, "Yahweh of Armies has said this: 'In this way I shall break this people and this town, as one breaks a potter's article, which cannot be mended again. In Tophet they'll bury, because there'll be no place for burying. [12]Thus I shall do to this place (Yahweh's declaration) and to its inhabitants, to make this town like Tophet. [13]Yerushalaim's houses and the kings of Yehudah's houses will become like the place Tophet, defiled – that is, all the houses on whose roofs people have burned sacrifices to the entire heavenly army and poured libations to other gods.'"'
[14]Yirmeyahu came from Tophet where Yahweh had sent him to prophesy, stood in the courtyard of Yahweh's house and said to the entire people: [15]'Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's God, has said this: "Here am I; I'm going to bring on this town and on all its towns all the bad fortune of which I've spoken concerning it, because they've toughened their neck so as not to listen to my words."'
20 Pashhur son of Immer, the priest (he was the leading appointee in Yahweh's house), heard Yirmeyahu prophesying these things. [2]Pashhur struck the prophet Yirmeyahu down and put him in the stocks at the Upper Binyamin Gate, which is in Yahweh's house.
[3]Next day Pashhur let Yirmeyahu out from the stocks. Yirmeyahu said to him, 'Yahweh has named you not Pashhur but rather Terror-Is-All-Around. [4]Because Yahweh has said this: "Here am I; I'm going to give you to terror, you and all your friends. They'll fall by the sword of their enemies, with your eyes seeing it. I shall give all Yehudah into the hand of the king of Babel and

he'll exile them to Babel and strike them down with the sword. [5]I shall give this town's entire wealth – all its profit, all its valuables and all the treasures of Yehudah's kings, I shall give into their enemies' hand. They'll plunder them, take them and carry them off to Babel. [6]You, Pashhur, and all the people who live in your house – you'll go into captivity. You'll come to Babel, and there you'll die and there you'll be buried, you and all your friends to whom you've prophesied falsely."'

Cursed be the day I was born

[7]You enticed me, Yahweh, I was enticed;
you've taken strong hold of me and prevailed.
I've become an object of fun all the time,
everyone ridicules me.
[8]Because every time I speak, I cry out,
I call out violence and destruction.
Because Yahweh's word has become for me
reviling and derision all the time.
[9]When I said, 'I won't make mention of him,
not speak in his name any more',
It became in my mind like a raging fire,
shut up in my bones.
I was weary of holding it in –
I couldn't.
[10]Because I heard the murmuring of many:
'Terror is on every side – tell of it, let's tell of it.'
Every person who was my friend –
they're watching my step:
'Perhaps he can be trapped and we can prevail over him,
and take our redress from him.'

[11]But Yahweh – he's with me as a violent strong man;
therefore my persecutors will collapse and not win.
They're being utterly shamed, because they aren't thriving,
with a disgrace for all time that won't be put out of mind.
[12]Yahweh of Armies, you who test the faithful person,
who see inner being and mind,
May I see your redress on them,
because to you I've rolled my argument.

[13]Sing for Yahweh,
praise Yahweh.
Because he's rescued the life of a needy person
from the hand of people who deal badly.

[14]Cursed be the day
on which I was born.
The day when my mother gave birth to me –
may it not be blessed.
[15]Cursed be the man
who brought the news to my father,
'A male child has been born to you';
he made him rejoice so much.
[16]That man will become like the towns
that Yahweh overthrew and didn't relent.
He'll hear an outcry in the morning
and a shout at noon time,
[17]The one who didn't kill me before birth,
so that my mother became my grave,
her womb pregnant permanently.
[18]Why then did I go out from the womb
to see oppression and sorrow
and so my days might consume themselves in shame?

The way to life and the way to death

21 The word that came to Yirmeyahu from Yahweh when King Tsidqiyyahu sent to him Pashhur ben Malkiyyah and Tsephanyah ben Ma'aseyah the priest to say, [2]'Enquire on our behalf of Yahweh, please, because Nebukadre'tstsar king of Babel is doing battle against us. Perhaps Yahweh will act with us in accordance with his wonders, so that he goes up from us.'
[3]Yirmeyahu said to them, 'You're to say this to Tsidqiyyahu: [4]"Yahweh, Yisra'el's God, has said this: 'Here am I; I'm going to

turn back the battle implements that are in your hand, with which you're doing battle with the king of Babel and the Kasdites who
are besieging you from outside the wall, and I shall gather them up into the middle of this town. [5]I myself will do battle against
you with hand bent and strong arm, with anger, with wrath and with great fury. [6]I shall strike down this town's inhabitants, human
beings and animals; they'll die in a great epidemic.
[7]After this (Yahweh's declaration) I shall give Tsidqiyyahu king of Yehudah and his servants and the people, those who remain
in this town from epidemic, sword and famine, into the hand of Nebukadre'tstsar king of Babel and into the hand of their enemies,
into the hand of the people seeking their life. He'll strike them down with the mouth of the sword. He won't have pity for them.
He won't have mercy. He won't have compassion.'"
[8]And to this people you are to say, "Yahweh has said this: 'Here am I, putting before you the way to life and the way to death.
[9]The one who lives in this town will die by sword, by famine or by epidemic. But the one who goes out and goes over to the
Kasdites who are besieging you will live. His life will be his as a trophy. [10]Because I have set my face against this town for bad
fortune and not for good fortune (Yahweh's declaration). Into the hand of the king of Babel it will be given, and he will burn it in
fire.'"

About false confidence

[11]And to the household of the king of Yehudah, listen to Yahweh's word. [12]Household of David, Yahweh has said this:

Judge with authority morning by morning,
rescue the person who's been robbed from the hand of the oppressor,
So that my wrath doesn't go out like fire,
and burn up with no one quenching it,
because of the bad nature of your practices.
[13]Here am I towards you [Yerushalaim], you who dwell in the vale,
a crag in the flatland (Yahweh's declaration).
People who say, "Who can come down against us,
who can come into our abodes?",
[14]I shall attend to you
in accordance with the fruit of your practices (Yahweh's declaration).
I shall set fire to its forest
and consume all that's round it.'

22 Yahweh said this: 'Go down to the house of the king of Yehudah and speak there this word. [2]Say, "Listen to Yahweh's
word, king of Yehudah, you who sit on David's throne and your servants and your people who come through these gateways.
[3]Yahweh has said this: 'Exercise authority with faithfulness, rescue the person who's been robbed from the hand of the oppressor,
don't wrong alien, orphan and widow, don't be violent, don't shed the blood of someone free of guilt in this place. [4]Because if
you really do act on this word, then through this house's gateways will come David's kings sitting on his throne, riding chariot
and horses, he and his servants and his people. [5]But if you don't listen to these words, I swear by myself (Yahweh's declaration)
that this house will become a waste.'""

[6]Because Yahweh has said this concerning the house of the king of Yehudah:

You are Gil'ad to me,
the top of Lebanon.
If I don't make you a wilderness,
towns that aren't inhabited . . .
[7]I shall make devastators sacred to go against you,
each with his implements.
They'll cut the choicest of your cedars
and make them fall into the fire.

How to evaluate a king

[8]Many nations will pass by this town and will say, an individual to his neighbour, 'Why did Yahweh act in this way to this great town?' [9]And they'll say, 'On account of the fact that they abandoned the pact of Yahweh their God and bowed low to other gods and served them.'

[10]Don't cry for the one who is dead,
don't lament for him.
Cry and cry for the one who is going,
because he won't come back again
and see the country of his birth.

[11]Because Yahweh has said this regarding Shallum ben Yoshiyyahu king of Yehudah, who was reigning in place of Yoshiyyahu his father, who has gone out from this place: 'He won't come back here again, [12]because in the place where they have exiled him, there he'll die. This country he won't see again.'

[13]Hey, one who builds his house without faithfulness,
his lofts without the [proper] exercise of authority!
He makes his neighbour serve for nothing;
he doesn't give him his earnings.
[14]The one who says, 'I'll build myself a vast house,
spacious lofts.'
He cuts windows for it, panelled with cedar,
painted with vermilion.
[15]Are you a king
because you're competing in cedar?
Your father – he ate and drink, didn't he,
and acted in faithful exercise of authority.
Then things were good for him,
[16]when he gave judgement for the weak and needy.
Then things were good;
this is to acknowledge me, isn't it (Yahweh's declaration).
[17]Because you have no eye or mind
except for loot,
For shedding the blood of the one free of guilt,
and for fraud and for extortion.

[18]Therefore Yahweh has said this concerning Yehoyaqim ben Yoshiyyahu king of Yehudah:

They won't mourn for him,
'Oh my brother, oh my sister'.
They won't mourn for him,
'Oh my lord, oh His Majesty'.
[19]He'll be buried with a donkey's burial,
dragged and dumped outside Yerushalaim's gateways.

The despised potsherd

[20]Climb the Lebanon and cry out [Yerushalaim],
in the Bashan lift your voice.
Cry out from Abarim,
because all your friends are broken.
[21]I spoke to you during your peaceful times;
you said, 'I won't listen.'
This was your way from your youth,
because you didn't listen to my voice.

[22]All your shepherds – the wind will shepherd them;
your friends will go into captivity.
Because then you'll be shamed and disgraced
because of all your bad dealing.
[23]You who live in the Lebanon, nesting among the cedars,
how needy of grace you'll be,
When contractions come to you,
labour like someone giving birth.

[24]'As I live (Yahweh's declaration), if Konyah ben Yehoyaqim king of Yehudah were the ring on my right hand . . . Because from there I'd tear you off. [25]I shall give you into the hand of the people who seek your life, into the hand of the people whom you yourself dread, into the hand of Nebukadre'tstsar king of Babel, into the hand of the Kasdites. [26]I'll hurl you and your mother who gave birth to you into another country where you were not born, and there you'll die. [27]The country where people will be lifting up their longing to come back: they won't come back there.'

[28]Is he a despised broken piece of pottery,
this man Konyahu,
or an implement in which there's no delight?
Why are they being hurled, he and his offspring,
thrown to a country that they don't know?
[29]Country, country, country,
listen to Yahweh's word.
[30]Yahweh has said this:
'Write down this person as childless,
A man who won't succeed in his time,
because not one of his offspring will succeed,
Sitting on David's throne
and ruling again in Yehudah.'

A wicked play on words in a king's name

23 'Hey, shepherds who led astray and scattered my flock (Yahweh's declaration)'. [2]Therefore Yahweh, Yisra'el's God, has said this about the shepherds who shepherd my people: 'You – you've let my flock scatter. You've driven them away and not attended to them. Here am I; I'm going to attend to you, to the bad nature of your practices (Yahweh's declaration). [3]And I myself will draw together the remainder of my flock from all the countries where I've driven them. I'll take them back to their abode, and they'll be fruitful and become many. [4]I'll set up shepherds over them and they'll shepherd them, and they won't be afraid any more or shatter or be missing (Yahweh's declaration).

[5]There, days are coming (Yahweh's declaration) when I shall set up for David a faithful branch. He will reign as king and show insight and exercise authority and faithfulness in the country. [6]In his days Yehudah will find deliverance and Yisra'el will dwell with confidence. This is the name by which he'll be called: "Yahweh Is Our Faithfulness" [Yahweh Tsidqenu]. [7]Therefore, here, days are coming (Yahweh's declaration) when they will no longer say "As Yahweh lives, who got the Yisra'elites up from the country of Misrayim". [8]Rather, "As Yahweh lives, who got up and brought the offspring of Yisra'el's household from the northern country" and from all the countries where I will have driven them. And they will live on their land.'

False prophets

[9]Concerning the prophets.

My mind has broken within me,
all my bones have become weak.
I've become like someone drunk,
like a man wine has overcome,
Before Yahweh and before his sacred words,
[10]because the country is full of adulterers.
Because the country mourns before a vow;
the wilderness pastures have dried up.
People's running has become something bad,
their strength not right.
[11]Because both prophet and priest are impious;
'Even in my house I've found their bad dealing' (Yahweh's declaration).
[12]Therefore their way will become for them like slippery slopes,
they'll be driven into darkness and they'll fall there.
Because I shall bring bad fortune upon them,
the year when they're attended to (Yahweh's declaration).
[13]In Shomron's [Samaria's] prophets I saw corruptness:
they prophesied by the Master and led my people astray.

[14]In Yerushalaim's prophets I saw a horror:
adultery, walking by falsehood,
And they strengthen the hands of people dealing badly,
so that no one may turn back from his bad dealing.
They've become like Sedom [Sodom] to me, all of them,
its inhabitants like Amorah [Gomorrah].

[15]Therefore Yahweh of Armies has said this concerning the prophets:

Here am I; I'm going to feed this people bitter plants
and make them drink poisoned water.
Because from Yerushalaim's prophets
impiety has gone out to the whole country.
[16]Yahweh of Armies has said this:

Don't listen to the words of the prophets
who prophesy to you.
They're giving you something hollow;
they speak a vision from their mind,
not from Yahweh's mouth.
[17]They're saying to people who disdain Yahweh's word,
'Things will go well for you.'
To everyone who's walking by the determination of his mind,
they've said, 'Bad fortune won't come upon you.'

Who has stood in Yahweh's council?

[18]Because who has stood in Yahweh's council,
and seen and listened to his word –
who has heeded his word and listened?
[19]There – Yahweh's hurricane,
wrath has gone out.
The storm is whirling,
on the head of the faithless it will whirl.
[20]Yahweh's anger won't turn back until he's acted,
until he's implemented the strategies in his mind.
At the end of the time
you'll understand it fully.
[21]I didn't send the prophets, but those people ran;
I didn't speak to them, but those people prophesied.
[22]If they'd stood in my council,
they'd have got my people to listen to my word.
They'd have turned them back from their bad way,
from the bad nature of their practices.

[23]Am I a God nearby (Yahweh's declaration),
and not a God far away?
[24]If a man hides in a hiding place,
will I not see him (Yahweh's declaration)?
I fill the heavens and the earth, don't I (Yahweh's declaration).

[25]'I've listened to what the prophets who prophesy falsehood in my name say: "I've dreamed, I've dreamed." [26]How long? Is there in the mind of the prophets who prophesy falsehood, the prophets with deceit in their mind – [27]are they intending to get my people to put my name out of mind with their dreams that they recount, each to his neighbour, as their ancestors put my name out of mind because of the Master? [28]The prophet who has a dream with him should recount a dream, and the one who has my word with him should speak my word truthfully. What does straw have compared with grain (Yahweh's declaration)? [29]My word is like fire (Yahweh's declaration) and like a hammer that shatters a cliff, isn't it.

Another wicked play on words

[30]Therefore here am I, against the prophets (Yahweh's declaration), who steal my words each from his neighbour. [31]Here am I, against the prophets (Yahweh's declaration), who take up their tongue and make a "declaration". [32]Here am I, against the prophets of false dreams (Yahweh's declaration) who recount them and lead my people astray with their falsehoods and their recklessness, when I didn't send them, didn't order them. In no way will they prevail for this people (Yahweh's declaration).
[33]When this people or the prophet or the priest asks you, "What is Yahweh's burden?" you're to say to them, "You're the burden and I shall desert you" (Yahweh's declaration). [34]As for the prophet and the priest and the people that says, "Yahweh's

burden", I shall attend to that person and his household. [35]You're to say this, each to his neighbour, each to his brother: "What has Yahweh avowed?" or "What has Yahweh spoken?" [36]But don't make mention of Yahweh's burden any more, because the burden will belong to the person with his word, and you will overturn the words of the living God, Yahweh of Armies, our God.
[37]You're to say this to the prophet: "What did Yahweh avow to you?" or "What did Yahweh speak?" [38]If you say "Yahweh's burden" – therefore Yahweh has said this: "Since you said this thing, 'Yahweh's burden', and I had sent to you saying, 'Don't say, "Yahweh's burden"', [39]therefore here am I: I shall simply forget you and desert you, you and the town that I gave you and your ancestors, from in front of my face. [40]I shall put upon you permanent reviling, permanent shame, which won't be put out of mind."'

Lucky figs and unlucky figs

24 Yahweh showed me: there, two baskets of figs placed before Yahweh's palace (after Nebukadre'tstsar king of Babel exiled Yekonyahu ben Yehoyaqim king of Yehudah, Yehudah's officials, the craftworkers and the smiths, from Yerushalaim and brought them to Babel). [2]One basket was very good figs, like early figs; one basket was very bad figs that couldn't be eaten because of being bad. [3]Yahweh said to me, 'What are you looking at, Yirmeyahu?' I said, 'Figs – the good figs very good, the bad very bad, that couldn't be eaten because of being bad.'
[4]Yahweh's word came to me. [5]Yahweh, Yisra'el's God, has said this: 'Like these good figs, so I shall mark down for good Yehudah's exile community that I've sent off from this place to the country of the Kasdites. [6]I shall set my eye on them for good and bring them back to this country. I shall build them and not overthrow. I shall plant them and not uproot. [7]I shall give them a mind to acknowledge me, that I am Yahweh. They will be a people for me and I shall be God for them, because they will turn back to me with their entire mind.
[8]But like bad figs that can't be eaten because of being bad (because Yahweh has said this), so shall I make Tsidqiyyahu king of Yehudah, his officials and the remainder of Yerushalaim who remain in this country and who are living in the country of Misrayim – [9]I shall make them a horror, something bad, to all earth's kingdoms, an insult and an example, a taunt and a slighting, in all the places where I drive them. [10]I shall send against them sword, famine and epidemic until they come to an end from on the land that I gave to them and to their ancestors.'

Twenty-three years

25 The word that came to Yirmeyahu concerning the entire people of Yehudah in the fourth year of Yehoyaqim ben Yoshiyyahu king of Yehudah (it was the first year of Nebukadre'tstsar king of Babel), [2]which Yirmeyahu the prophet spoke to all Yehudah's people and all Yerushalaim's inhabitants: [3]'From the thirteenth year of Yoshiyyahu ben Amon king of Yehudah, to this day, 23 years, Yahweh's word has come to me, and I've spoken to you, starting early and speaking, but you haven't listened. [4]Yahweh has been sending to you all his servants, sending urgently, but you haven't listened. You haven't bent your ear to listen: [5]"Please turn back each one from his bad way, from the bad nature of your acts, so you may live on the land that Yahweh gave you and your ancestors, from earliest ages to farthest ages. [6]Don't follow other gods so as to serve them and bow down to them. Don't provoke me with the things your hands have made, and I won't bring bad fortune to you. [7]But you didn't listen to me (Yahweh's declaration), so as to provoke me with the things your hands have made, to bring bad fortune to you."
[8]Therefore Yahweh of Armies has said this: "Since you haven't listened to my words, [9]here am I; I'm going to send and get all the northern kin-groups (Yahweh's declaration) and Nebukadre'tstsar king of Babel my servant, and bring them against this country and against its inhabitants, and against all these nations round about. I shall 'devote' them and make them a devastation, something to whistle at, a complete waste permanently. [10]I shall eliminate from them the sound of celebration and the sound of rejoicing, the sound of bride and the sound of groom, the sound of mill and the light of lamp. [11a]This entire country will become a waste, a desolation.

Seventy years

[11b]These nations will serve the king of Babel for 70 years, [12]but when 70 years are fulfilled, I shall attend to the king of Babel and to that nation (Yahweh's declaration) for their waywardness, to the country of the Kasdites, and make it a desolation permanently. [13]I shall bring on that country all my words that I've spoken against it, all that's written in this book that Yirmeyahu prophesied against all the nations. [14]Because they, too, will serve many nations and great kings. I shall make good to them in accordance with their action and with the work of their hands."
[15]Because Yahweh, Yisra'el's God, has said this to me: "Take this chalice of wine (wrath) from my hand and get all the nations to which I'm sending you to drink it. [16]They will drink and throw up and go mad because of the sword that I'm sending among them."'
[17]So I took the chalice from Yahweh's hand and got all the nations to which Yahweh sent me to drink: [18]Yerushalaim and all Yehudah's towns, its kings and its officials, to make them a waste, a desolation, something to whistle at, a slighting, this very day; [19]Par'oh [Pharaoh] king of Misrayim, his servants, his officials, all his people [20]and all the foreign group; all the kings of the country of Uts; all the kings of the country of the Pelishtites [Philistines], Ashqelon, Azzah [Gaza], Eqron and the remainder of Ashdod; [21]Edom, Mo'ab and Ammon; [22]all the kings of Tsor [Tyre], all the kings of Tsidon and the kings of the shore that's across the sea; [23]Dedan, Tema and Buz, and all the people shaved at the forehead; [24]all the kings of Arabia and all the kings of the foreign group who dwell in the wilderness; [25]all the kings of Zimri, all the kings of Elam and all the kings of Maday [Media]; [26]all the northern kings, near or far each to his brother; all the kingdoms of the earth that are on the face of the land; and the king of Sheshak will drink, as the last of them.

The demon drink

[27]‘You’re to say to them: “Yahweh of Armies, Yisra’el’s God, has said this: ‘Drink, get drunk, throw up, fall down and don’t get up again, because of the sword that I’m sending among you.’” [28]When they refuse to take the chalice from your hand to drink, you’re to say to them, “Yahweh of Armies has said this: ‘Drink, drink, [29]because here, in the town over which my name has been called out, I’m beginning to make bad things happen, and you, will you really be treated as free of guilt? You will not be treated as free of guilt, because I’m calling a sword against all earth’s inhabitants (a declaration of Yahweh of Armies).’”

[30]You’re to prophesy all these things to them, and say to them:

Yahweh roars from on high,
from his sacred dwelling he gives voice,
he roars and roars against his abode.
He chants a cry like grape-treaders
to all earth’s inhabitants.
[31]The din has come to the end of the earth,
because Yahweh has an argument for the nations.
He’s entering into judgement with all flesh;
the faithless – he’s giving them to the sword (Yahweh’s declaration).’

[32]Yahweh of Armies has said this:

There something bad going out, from nation to nation;
a great storm arises from earth’s remotest parts.
[33]There will be people run through by Yahweh
on that day
From the end of the earth
as far as the end of the earth.
They won’t be lamented
and they won’t be gathered up and they won’t be buried;
they’ll become manure on the face of the ground.
[34]Howl, you shepherds, cry out,
throw yourselves about, you who are eminences over the flock.
Because the days of your slaughter are fulfilled;
I shall scatter you, and you will fall like a desirable bowl.
[35]Flight will perish from the shepherds,
escape from the people who are eminences over the flock.
[36]The sound of the shepherds’ cry,
the howls of the people who are eminences over the flock!
Because Yahweh is destroying their pastures;
[37]the meadows with their well-being will be still
in the face of Yahweh’s angry burning.
[38]He’s abandoned his thicket like a lion
because his country has become a desolation,
In the face of the oppressor’s blazing,
and in the face of his angry blazing.

The threat of martyrdom

26 At the beginning of the reign of Yehoyaqim ben Yoshiyyahu king of Yehudah, this word came from Yahweh: [2]‘Yahweh has said this: “Stand in the courtyard of Yahweh’s house and speak to all Yehudah’s towns, the people coming to bow low in Yahweh’s house, all the words that I’m ordering you to speak to them. Don’t omit a thing. [3]Perhaps they’ll listen and turn back, each from his bad way, and I shall relent regarding the bad things that I’m intending to do to them because of the bad nature of their practices. [4]You’re to say to them, ‘Yahweh has said this: “If you don’t listen to me by walking according to the instruction that I’ve put before you, [5]listening to the words of my servants the prophets whom I’ve been sending to you, starting early and sending them (but you haven’t listened), [6]I shall make this house like Shiloh, and make this town a slighting to all the nations of the earth.”’”’

[7]The priests, the prophets and the entire people listened to Yirmeyahu speaking these words in Yahweh’s house, [8]and when Yirmeyahu finished speaking all that Yahweh had ordered him to speak to the entire people, the priests, the prophets and the entire people seized him, saying: ‘You are definitely to die. [9]Why have you been prophesying in Yahweh’s name, “This house will become like Shiloh, and this town will be waste, without inhabitant”?’

So the entire people congregated against Yirmeyahu in Yahweh’s house. [10]Yehudah’s officials heard these things and went up from the king’s house to Yahweh’s house and sat in the entrance of Yahweh’s New Gate. [11]The priests and the prophets said to the officials and to the entire people, ‘A sentence of death for this man, because he’s prophesied against this town, as you’ve heard with your own ears.’

Remember Mikah

[12]Yirmeyahu said to all the officials and to the entire people, ‘It was Yahweh sent me to prophesy to this house and to this town all the words that you heard. [13]So now make your ways and your practices good and listen to the voice of Yahweh your God, so Yahweh may relent of the bad thing that he’s spoken of against you. [14]And me – here am I in your hand. Do to me in accordance with what is good and right in your eyes. [15]Yet you must fully acknowledge that if you put me to death – that you’re putting on yourselves the blood of someone who’s free of guilt. Because in truth Yahweh sent me to you to speak all these things in your ears.’

[16]The officials and the entire people said to the priests and to the prophets, ‘There’s no sentence of death, because it was in the name of Yahweh our God that he spoke to us.’ [17]Some people from the country’s elders got up and said to all the congregation of the people, [18]‘Mikah the Morashtite was prophesying in the days of Hizqiyyahu king of Yehudah. He said to Yehudah’s entire people:

“Yahweh of Armies has said this:
‘Tsiyyon will be ploughed as open countryside.
Yerushalaim will become heaps of rubble,
the mountain of the house shrines in the forest.’”

[19]Did Hizqiyyahu king of Yehudah and all Yehudah put him to death at all? Was he not in awe of Yahweh and did he not seek Yahweh’s goodwill, so that Yahweh relented of the bad thing that he spoke against them? We’re going to do a great bad thing to ourselves.’

Not always the Hollywood ending

[20]There was also a man prophesying in Yahweh’s name, Uriyyahu ben Shema’yahu from Ye’arim Township. He prophesied against this town and against this people in accordance with all Yirmeyahu’s words. [21]King Yehoyaqim, all his strong men and all the officials heard his words, and the king sent to put him to death. Uriyyahu heard and was afraid and fled, and came to Misrayim. [22]But King Yehoyaqim sent men to Misrayim, Elnatan ben Akbor and men with him, to Misrayim. [23]They got Uriyyahu out of Misrayim and brought him to King Yehoyaqim, and he struck him down with the sword and threw his corpse into the common graves. [24]However, the hand of Ahiqam ben Shaphan was with Yirmeyahu so as not to give him into the people’s hand to put him to death.

27 At the beginning of the reign of Yehoyaqim ben Yoshiyyahu king of Yehudah, this word came to Yirmeyahu from Yahweh: [2]Yahweh said this to me: ‘Make yourself straps and bars and put them on your neck, [3]and send them to the king of Edom, the king of Mo’ab, the king of the Ammonites, the king of Tsor and the king of Tsidon, by the hand of the envoys who have come to Yerushalaim to Tsidqiyyahu king of Yehudah. [4]Order them regarding their lords: “Yahweh of Armies, Yisra’el’s God, has said this: ‘You’re to say this to your lords: [5]“I’m the one who made the earth, the human beings and the animals that are on the face of the earth, by my great energy and by my bent arm, and I give it to whoever is right in my eyes. [6]So now, I’m giving all these countries into the hand of Nebukadne’tstsar king of Babel my servant. Even the creatures of the wild I’m giving him to serve him. [7]All the nations will serve him, his son and his grandson, until the time comes for his country, him too. Many nations and great kings will serve him. [8]The nation or kingdom that won’t serve him (Nebukadne’tstsar king of Babel), that won’t give its neck to the yoke of the king of Babel: I’ll attend to that nation by sword, by famine and by epidemic (Yahweh’s declaration) until I have brought them to an end by his hand.

Don’t listen to your prophets

[9]So you, don’t listen to your prophets, to your augurs, to your dreams, to your mediums or to your diviners, who are saying to you, ‘Don’t serve the king of Babel.’ [10]Because they’re speaking falsehood to you, so he may take you far from your country, and I drive you out and you perish. [11]But the nation that brings its neck to the yoke of the king of Babel and serves him, I’ll allow to stay on its land (Yahweh’s declaration) and serve it and live on it.”’”’

[12]To Tsidqiyyah king of Yehudah I spoke in accordance with these words: ‘Bring your necks to the king of Babel’s yoke, serve him and his people, and live. [13]Why should you die, you and your people, by sword, by famine and by epidemic, as Yahweh has said regarding the nation that doesn’t serve the king of Babel? [14]Don’t listen to the words of the prophets who are saying to you, “Don’t serve the king of Babel”, because they’re prophesying falsehood to you. [15]Because I didn’t send them (Yahweh’s declaration) and they’re prophesying falsely in my name, so that I’ll drive you out and you’ll perish, you and the prophets who are prophesying to you.’

[16]And to the priests and to this entire people I spoke: ‘Yahweh has said this: “Don’t listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you, ‘There, the things from Yahweh’s house are going to be brought back from Babel now, very soon’, because they’re prophesying falsehood to you. [17]Don’t listen to them; serve the king of Babel and live – why should this town become a waste? [18]If they are prophets and Yahweh’s word is with them, they should please intercede with Yahweh of Armies so that the rest of the things in Yahweh’s house, in the house of the king of Yehudah and in Yerushalaim don’t come to Babel.”

Things have to get worse

[19]Because Yahweh of Armies has said this about the pillars, the Sea, the stands and the rest of the things that remain in this town, [20]which Nebukadne’tstsar king of Babel didn’t take when he exiled Yekonyah ben Yehoyaqim king of Yehudah from Yerushalaim to Babel, with all the important people from Yehudah and Yerushalaim – [21]because Yahweh of Armies, Yisra’el’s

God, has said about the things that remain in Yahweh's house, in the house of the king of Yehudah and in Yerushalaim: [22]"To Babel they will be brought, and there they will be, until the day when I attend to them (Yahweh's declaration) and take them up and bring them back to this place."'

28 That year, at the beginning of the reign of Tsidqiyyah king of Yehudah, in the fifth month of the fourth year, Hananyah ben Azzur the prophet, who was from Gib'on, said to me in Yahweh's house in the eyes of the priests and the entire people: [2]'Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's God, has said this: "I am breaking the king of Babel's yoke. [3]In yet two years' time I'm going to bring back to this place all the things from Yahweh's house that Nebukadne'tstsar king of Babel took from this place and brought to Babel. [4]And I am going to return to this place Yekonyah ben Yehoyaqim king of Yehudah and all Yehudah's exile community who came to Babel (Yahweh's declaration), because I'm breaking the king of Babel's yoke."'

Prophet confronts prophet

[5]Yirmeyahu the prophet said to Hananyah the prophet in the eyes of the priests and the entire people standing in Yahweh's house – [6]Yirmeyahu the prophet said, 'Amen, so may Yahweh do. May Yahweh act on your words, which you've prophesied, bringing back the things from Yahweh's house and the entire exile community from Babel to this place. [7]Nevertheless please listen to this word that I'm speaking in your ears and the ears of the entire people. [8]The prophets who were before me and before you, from of old, prophesied against many countries and about great kingdoms, regarding battle, famine and epidemic. [9]The prophet who prophesies of things going well – when the prophet's word comes about, he can be acknowledged as one whom Yahweh sent in truth.'

[10]Hananyah the prophet took the bar from on Yirmeyahu the prophet's neck and broke it. [11]Hananyah said in front of the entire people: 'Yahweh has said this: "In this way I shall break the yoke of Nebukadne'tstsar king of Babel, in yet two years, from on the neck of all the nations."'

Yirmeyahu the prophet went his way. [12]But Yahweh's word came to Yirmeyahu after Hananyah the prophet broke the bar from on Yirmeyahu the prophet's neck: [13]'Go and say to Hananyah, "Yahweh has said this: 'You broke bars of wood, but you're to make bars of iron.' [14]Because Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's God, has said this: 'I'm putting an iron yoke on the neck of all these nations so that they serve Nebukadne'tstsar king of Babel. They will serve him; even the creatures of the wild I am giving him.'"' [15]Yirmeyahu the prophet said to Hananyah the prophet, 'Please listen, Hananyah. Yahweh hasn't sent you, and you're one who has made this people trust in falsehood. [16]Therefore Yahweh has said this: "Here am I; I'm going to send you off from on the face of the land. This year you're going to die, because you've spoken of defiance towards Yahweh."'

[17]Hananyah the prophet died that year in the seventh month.

Settle down

29 These are the words in a document that Yirmeyahu the prophet sent from Yerushalaim to the rest of the elders of the exile community, the priests, the prophets and the entire people that Nebukadne'tstsar had exiled from Yerushalaim to Babel [2](after King Yekonyah, the queen mother, the courtiers, the officials of Yehudah and Yerushalaim, the craftworkers and the smiths left Yerushalaim), [3]by the hand of El'asah ben Shaphan and Gemaryah ben Hilqiyyah, whom Tsidqiyyah king of Yehudah sent to Babel to Nebukadne'tstsar king of Babel.

[4]'Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's God, has said this to the entire exile community that I exiled from Yerushalaim to Babel: [5]"Build houses and live, plant gardens and eat their fruit. [6]Take wives and have sons and daughters, take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so they may have sons and daughters. Become many there; don't become few. [7]Seek the well-being of the town where I've exiled you; plead on its behalf with Yahweh, because in its well-being there will be well-being for you."

[8]Because Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's God, has said this: "Your prophets who are among you and your diviners must not deceive you. You must not listen to your dreams that you're dreaming. [9]Because they're prophesying to you falsely in my name; I didn't send them (Yahweh's declaration)."

[10]Because Yahweh has said this: "At the bidding of the fulfilment for Babel of 70 years I shall attend to you, and act for you on my word about good things, bringing you back to this place. [11]Because I myself acknowledge the intentions that I'm formulating for you (Yahweh's declaration), intentions for your well-being and not for bad things, to give you a future, a hope. [12]You will call me and come and plead with me and I shall listen to you. [13]You will seek me and find me if you enquire of me with your entire mind, [14]and I'll be able to be found by you (Yahweh's declaration). I shall restore your fortunes, collect you from all the nations and from all the places where I've driven you (Yahweh's declaration), and bring you back to the place from where I've exiled you."

The fate of false prophets

[15]Because you have said, "Yahweh has set up prophets for us in Babel." [16]Rather, Yahweh has said this regarding the king who sits on David's throne and the entire people that lives in this town, your brothers who haven't gone out with you into exile – [17]Yahweh of Armies has said this: "Here am I; I'm going to send off against them sword, famine and epidemic. I shall make them like horrible figs that may not be eaten because of being bad. [18]I shall pursue them with sword, famine and epidemic and make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth, a vow, a devastation, something to whistle at and a reviling among all the nations where I drive them out, [19]on account of the fact that they haven't listened to my words (Yahweh's declaration), in that I sent them my servants the prophets, starting early and sending. But you haven't listened (Yahweh's declaration). [20]So you people, the entire exile community that I sent off from Yerushalaim to Babel, listen to Yahweh's word."

[21]Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's God, has said this regarding Ah'ab ben Qolayah and regarding Tsidqiyyahu ben Ma'aseyah who are prophesying to you in my name: "Here am I; I'm going to give them into the hand of Nebukadre'tstsar king of Babel. He will strike them down in front of your eyes. [22]A formula of slighting will be taken from them for the entire exile community of Yehudah in Babel: 'May Yahweh make you like Tsidqiyyahu and like Ah'ab, whom the king of Babel roasted in fire, [23]since they acted with villainy in Yisra'el and both committed adultery with the wives of their neighbours and spoke a word in my name that was false, which I hadn't ordered them.' I am the one who knows and who testifies (Yahweh's declaration)."

Get a grip of that madman

[24]And regarding Shemayahu the Nehelemite you're to say: [25]"Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's God, has said this: 'Since you're the one who has sent documents in your name to the entire people in Yerushalaim, to Tsephanyah ben Ma'aseyah the priest and to all the priests, saying, [26]"Yahweh has made you priest instead of Yehoyada the priest, so that there might be appointees in Yahweh's house regarding anyone who's mad and is prophesying, and you're to put him into the stocks and into the neck iron: [27]so now, why have you not reprimanded Yirmeyahu from Anatot who's prophesying to you? [28]Because on account of this he's sent to us in Babel, saying, 'It will be a long time. Build houses and live [there], plant gardens and eat their fruit.'"'"'
[29]Tsephanyah the priest read this document out in the hearing of Yirmeyahu the prophet, [30]and Yahweh's word came to Yirmeyahu: [31]'Send to the entire exile community, saying "Yahweh has said this regarding Shema'yah the Nehelemite: 'Since Shema'yah has prophesied to you and I myself hadn't sent him, and he's got you to trust in falsehood, [32]therefore Yahweh has said this: "Here am I; I'm going to attend to Shema'yah the Nehelemite and to his offspring. He won't have anyone living among this people and he won't see the good things that I'm going to do for this people (Yahweh's declaration), because he's spoken of defiance against Yahweh."'"'

30 The word that came to Yirmeyahu from Yahweh: [2]'Yahweh, Yisra'el's God, has said this: "Write down for yourself all the words that I've spoken to you in a document. [3]Because there, days are coming (Yahweh's declaration) when I shall restore the fortunes of my people Yisra'el and Yehudah", Yahweh has said.'

Is a man giving birth?

[4]So these are the words that Yahweh spoke concerning Yisra'el and Yehudah. [5]Because Yahweh had said this:

We've heard the sound of trembling,
dread, and lack of well-being.
[6]Please ask and see if a male is giving birth –
why have I seen every man
With his hands on his stomach like someone giving birth
and why have all faces turned to paleness?
[7]Hey, because that day is big,
so that there has been none like it.
It will be a time of pressure for Ya'aqob,
but from it he will find deliverance.

[8]On that day (a declaration of Yahweh of Armies):

I shall break his yoke from on your neck
and tear off your straps.
They won't serve foreigners any more with it,
[9]but they will serve Yahweh their God,
And David their king,
whom I shall set up over them.
[10]So you, don't be afraid, my servant Ya'aqob (Yahweh's declaration),
don't shatter, Yisra'el.
Because here am I; I'm going to deliver you from far away,
and your offspring from the country of their captivity.
Ya'aqob will again be calm,
at peace with no one making him tremble.
[11]Because I am with you (Yahweh's declaration) to deliver you,
because I shall make an end among all the nations
where I've scattered you,
Yet of you I won't make an end,
though I discipline you in exercising authority
and don't treat you as free of guilt.
[12]Because Yahweh has said this:

Your break is grave [Yerushalaim],
your wound sickening.
[13]There's no one giving a judgement about treatment;
there's no healing, growing back, for you.

[14]All your allies have put you out of mind,
they don't enquire of you.
Because I struck you down with an enemy's blow,
the discipline of someone violent,
On account of the magnitude of your waywardness;
your wrongdoings were numerous.
[15]Why do you cry out because of your break,
that your injury is grave?
It was on account of the magnitude of your waywardness,
your wrongdoings were numerous,
that I did these things to you.

Compassion has the last word

[16]Therefore all the people who are consuming you will be consumed,
and all your adversaries (all of them) will go into captivity.
Your despoilers will become spoil,
and all who plundered you I'll give as plunder.
[17]Because I shall make restoration grow up for you
and I shall heal you of your wounds (Yahweh's declaration).
Because they've called you 'Outcast',
'It's Tsiyyon; there's no one enquiring about it.'
[18]Yahweh has said this:

Here am I, I'm going to restore the fortunes of Ya'aqob's tents,
and on his dwellings I shall have compassion.
A town will be built on its tell;
a citadel will sit on its authorized place.
[19]Thanksgiving will go out from them,
and the sound of people having fun.
I shall make them many and they won't become few;
I shall make them honourable and they won't become small.
[20]Its children will be as of old,
its assembly will stand established before me,
and I shall attend to all its oppressors.
[21]Its august one will come from within it
and its ruler will go out from within it.
I shall draw it near and it will come up to me,
because who is the one
who would have pledged his own mind to come up to me (Yahweh's declaration)?
[22]So you will be a people for me
and I shall be God for you.

[23]There is Yahweh's hurricane,
wrath has gone out.
A storm is raging,
on the head of the faithless it whirls.
[24]Yahweh's angry blazing won't turn back until he's acted,
until he's implemented the strategies in his mind;
at the end of the time you'll understand it.

31 At that time (Yahweh's declaration):
I shall be God for all Yisra'el's kin-groups
and they'll be a people for me.

Mourning becomes celebration

[2]Yahweh said this:

The people found grace in the wilderness,
those who survived the sword.
As Yisra'el went to find its rest,
[3]'From afar Yahweh appeared to me.'
With permanent love I loved you;
therefore I've drawn you out with commitment.
[4]I shall build you up again so that you are built up,
Miss Yisra'el.

You will again deck yourself with your tambourine
and go out in the dance of people having fun.
[5]You will again plant vineyards
on Shomron's mountains;
planters will have planted and will begin to have the use of them.
[6]Because there will be a day
when lookouts call out on Ephrayim's highland,
'Set off so we may go up to Tsiyyon,
to Yahweh our God.'

[7]Because Yahweh has said this:

Resound with rejoicing for Ya'aqob,
bellow at the nations' crossroads.
Let them hear, exult and say,
'Yahweh, deliver your people,
the remainder of Yisra'el!'
[8]Here am I; I'm going to bring them
from the northern country.
I shall collect them from the farthest reaches of the earth,
among them blind and lame,
Pregnant and giving birth, together;
a great congregation will come back here.
[9]With crying they'll come,
and with prayers for grace I'll bring them along.
I shall lead them to streams of water
by a straight way on which they won't collapse.
Because I've been a father to Yisra'el,
and Ephrayim is my firstborn.

[10]Listen to Yahweh's word, you nations,
tell of it on shores far away:
The one who scattered Yisra'el will collect it,
and keep it like a shepherd his flock.
[11]Because Yahweh is redeeming Ya'aqob,
restoring it from a hand that's too strong for it.
[12]They will come and resound on Tsiyyon's height
and shine because of Yahweh's good things,
Over grain and over new wine and over fresh oil,
over newborn of flock and cattle.
Their entire being will become like a watered garden;
they won't sorrow ever again.
[13]Then a girl will rejoice with dancing,
young men and old together.
I shall turn their mourning into celebration,
comfort them and let them rejoice after their grief.
[14]I shall saturate the priests' appetite with fat,
and my people will be full of my good things (Yahweh's declaration).

Rahel (Rachel) comforted

[15]Yahweh has said this:

A voice makes itself heard in Ramah,
lamentation, bitter crying.
Rahel is crying over her children;
she's refused to find comfort over her children,
because they're not there.
[16]Yahweh has said this:

Restrain your voice from crying
and your eyes from tears.
Because there will be a reward for your work (Yahweh's declaration);
they will come back from the enemy's country.
[17]There is hope for your future (Yahweh's declaration);
your children will come back to their territory.

[18]I've heard, I've heard Ephrayim lamenting:

‘You’ve disciplined me and I’ve undergone discipline
like a calf that hadn’t been trained.
Have me back and I’ll turn back,
because you are Yahweh my God.
[19]Because after I turned back I repented;
after I came to acknowledge it I struck my thigh.
I was shamed, yes disgraced,
because I bore the insult of my youth.’
[20]Ephrayim is a dear son to me,
or a child in whom I took pleasure, isn’t he.
Because every time I speak against him,
I’m so mindful of him again.
That’s why my insides moan for him,
I have deep compassion for him (Yahweh’s declaration).

Sour grapes

[21]Set up markers for yourself,
put up signposts for yourself.
Give your mind to the causeway,
the way you went.
Come back, Miss Yisra’el,
come back to these towns of yours.
[22]How long will you waver,
daughter who’s turned back?
Because Yahweh has created something new in the country:
a woman surrounds a man.

[23]Yahweh of Armies, Yisra’el’s God, has said this:

They will again say this thing
in the country of Yehudah and in its towns,
when I restore their fortunes:
‘May Yahweh bless you,
faithful abode, sacred mountain.’
[24]Yehudah and all its towns together will dwell in it as farmers,
and people will go about with the flock.
[25]Because I’m saturating the weary person
and filling everyone who languishes.

[26]Upon this I woke up and looked,
and my sleep had been nice for me.

[27]‘There, days are coming (Yahweh’s declaration) when I shall sow Yisra’el’s house and Yehudah’s household with human seed and animal seed. [28]As I was watchful over them to uproot, to demolish, to tear down, to obliterate and to deal badly, so I’ll be watchful over them to build and to plant (Yahweh’s declaration).’
[29]In those days they will no longer say, ‘The parents ate sour grapes but the children’s teeth feel rough.’ [30]Rather, each person will die for his waywardness. Everyone who eats sours grapes, his teeth will feel rough.

The power of being forgiven

[31]‘There, days are coming (Yahweh’s declaration) when I shall solemnize with Yisra’el’s household and with Yehudah’s household a new pact, [32]not like the pact that I solemnized with your ancestors on the day I took strong hold of them by the hand to get them out of the country of Misrayim, my pact which they contravened, though I was master over them (Yahweh’s declaration). [33]Because this is the pact that I shall solemnize with Yisra’el’s household after those days (Yahweh’s declaration). I’m putting my instruction inside them and I shall write it on their mind; and I’ll be God for them and they’ll be a people for me. [34]They will no longer teach each person his neighbour and each his brother, saying “Acknowledge Yahweh”, because all of them will acknowledge me from the least of them to the biggest of them (Yahweh’s declaration), because I shall pardon their waywardness, and their wrongdoing I shall not keep in mind any more.’

[35]Yahweh has said this
(the one who gives the sun as light by day,
the laws of the moon and stars as light by night,
Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar –
Yahweh of Armies is his name):

[36]If these laws move away from before me (Yahweh’s declaration),

Yisra'el's offspring may also cease
from being a nation for all time.

[37]Yahweh has said this:

If the heavens above may be measured
and earth's foundations below be explored,
Also I may reject the entire offspring of Yisra'el
for what they've done (Yahweh's declaration).

[38]There, days are coming (Yahweh's declaration) when the town will be built up for Yahweh from the Hanan'el Tower to the Corner Gate, [39]and the measuring line will go out again straight to Gareb Hill and turn to Go'ah. [40]The entire vale (corpses and ashes) and all the open country as far as Wadi Qidron and as far as the Horses Gate on the east will be sacred for Yahweh. It won't be uprooted or torn down again ever.

On putting your money where your mouth is

32 The word that came to Yirmeyahu from Yahweh in the tenth year of Tsidqiyyahu king of Yehudah (it was the eighteenth year of Nebukadre'tstsar). [2]The king of Babel's force were then besieging Yerushalaim, while Yirmeyahu the prophet was confined in the prison courtyard at the king of Yehudah's house, [3]where Tsidqiyyahu king of Yehudah had confined him, saying 'Why are you prophesying, "Yahweh has said this: 'Here am I; I'm going to give this town into the hand of the king of Babel, and he'll capture it. [4]Tsidqiyyahu king of Yehudah won't escape from the hand of the Kasdites because he'll definitely be given into the hand of the king of Babel (his mouth will speak to his mouth, his eyes will see his eyes). [5]He'll make Tsidqiyyahu go to Babel, and he'll be there until I attend to him (Yahweh's declaration). When you do battle with the Kasdites, you won't succeed.'"'

[6]Yirmeyahu said, 'Yahweh's word came to me: [7]"Here, Hanam'el ben Shallum your uncle is going to come to you, saying, 'Acquire for yourself my field which is in Anatot, because the ruling about restoration belongs to you, so as to acquire it.'"

[8]So Hanam'el my uncle's son came to me in accordance with Yahweh's word, to the prison courtyard, and said to me, "Please acquire my field which is in Anatot in the region of Binyamin, because the ruling about possession belongs to you and the restoration belongs to you; acquire it for yourself." So I knew that it was Yahweh's word. [9]I acquired the field from Hanam'el my uncle's son, which is in Anatot, and I weighed out the silver to him, 17 sheqels of silver. [10]I wrote in a document, sealed it, got witnesses and weighed the silver on scales. [11]I took the acquisition document, the sealed one (the order and the laws) and the open one, [12]and gave the acquisition document to Baruk ben Nerayyah son of Mahseyah before the eyes of Hanam'el my cousin and of the witnesses inscribed in the acquisition document and of all the Yehudahites sitting in the prison courtyard.

Are you asking something crazy of me?

[13]I ordered Baruk before their eyes, [14]"Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's God, has said this: 'Take these documents, this acquisition document (both the sealed one and this open document) and put them in an earthen container so that they may stand for a long time.'" [15]Because Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's God, has said this: "Houses, fields and vineyards will again be acquired in this country."

[16]I pleaded with Yahweh after giving the acquisition document to Baruk ben Nerayyah: [17]"Oh, Lord Yahweh! There – you made the heavens and the earth by your great energy and your bent arm. Nothing is too extraordinary for you, [18]one who acts with commitment to thousands but makes good for the waywardness of parents into the lap of their children after them: big strong man God (Yahweh is his name), [19]big in counsel and mighty in deed, you whose eyes are open to all the ways of human beings to give to each person in accordance with his ways and in accordance with the fruit of his practices, [20]who put down signs and portents in the country of Misrayim to this day, and in Yisra'el and among humanity, and made a name for yourself this very day. [21]You got your people Yisra'el out of the country of Misrayim with signs and portents and with a strong hand and a bent arm and with great fearfulness. [22]You gave them this country that you swore to their ancestors to give them, a country flowing with milk and syrup. [23]They came and possessed it, but they didn't listen to your voice or walk by your instruction.

All that you ordered them to do, they didn't do. So you've made all this bad fortune happen to them. [24]There – ramps have come to the town to capture it, and the town is being given into the hand of the Kasdites who are doing battle against it, in the face of sword, famine and epidemic. What you said has happened. There you are, looking.

[25]And now you've said to me, Lord Yahweh, 'Acquire the field for yourself with silver and get witnesses', when this town is given into the hand of the Kasdites."'

Is anything too extraordinary for Yahweh?

[26]Yahweh's word came to Yirmeyahu: [27]'Here am I, Yahweh, the God of all flesh. Is anything too extraordinary for me?' [28]Therefore Yahweh has said this: 'Here am I; I'm going to give this town into the hand of the Kasdites and into the hand of Nebukadre'tstsar king of Babel, and he will capture it. [29]The Kasdites who are doing battle against this town will come and set this town on fire and burn it, with the houses where people burned incense on the roofs to the Master and poured drink offerings to other gods, so as to provoke me.

[30]Because the Yisra'elites and the Yehudahites have been doing only what is bad in my eyes from their youth, because the Yisra'elites have only been provoking me by the things that their hands made (Yahweh's declaration). [31]Because this town

became a cause of my anger and a cause of my wrath to me from the day that they built it until this day, so that I must remove it
from before me, [32]on account of all the bad dealing of the Yisra'elites and the Yehudahites which they dealt so as to provoke me,
they, their kings, their officials, their priests, their prophets, Yehudah's people and Yerushalaim's inhabitants. [33]They turned their
back and not their face to me; when I taught them, starting early and teaching, there were none of them listening so as to accept
discipline.
[34]They put their abominations in the house over which my name has been called out, to defile it, [35]and they built up the shrines
of the Master in the Ben-hinnom Ravine to make their sons and their daughters pass through the fire to the Shameful King, which
I didn't order them (it didn't come into my mind) to do this offensive thing, so as to cause Yehudah to do wrong.'

Land will be acquired again

[36]But now therefore Yahweh, Yisra'el's God, says this concerning this town of which you're saying, 'It's given into the hand of
the king of Babel by sword, by famine and by epidemic': [37]'Here am I; I'm going to collect them from all the countries where I've
driven them in my anger and wrath and great fury, and bring them back to this place and let them live with confidence. [38]They'll
be a people for me and I'll be God for them. [39]I'll give them a single mind and a single way, to live in awe of me all the days, so
that things will be good for them and for their children after them.
[40]I shall solemnize for them a permanent pact that I won't turn back from them, and I shall do good to them. I shall put awe for
me in their mind so that they don't turn away from me. [41]I shall have delight towards them, in doing good to them. I shall plant
them in this country in truth, with all my mind and soul.'
[42]Because Yahweh has said this: 'As I have brought to this people all this great bad fortune, so I'm going to bring on them all
the good things that I'm speaking about. [43]A field will be acquired in this country of which you're saying, "It's a desolation,
without human being or animal; it's given into the hand of the Kasdites." [44]People will acquire fields for silver and write it in a
document and seal it and get witnesses, in Binyamin's region, in Yerushalaim's environs, in Yehudah's towns, in the towns in the
highland, in the towns in the foothills and in the towns in the Negeb. Because I shall restore their fortunes (Yahweh's
declaration).'

Call me and I shall answer

33 Yahweh's word came to Yirmeyahu a second time, while he was still detained in the prison courtyard: [2]'Yahweh has said
this (Yahweh is going to do it, he's going to form it, he is going to make sure of it – Yahweh is his name): [3]"Call to me and I
shall answer, and tell you great things, secret things that you haven't known."
[4]Because Yahweh, Yisra'el's God, has said this about the houses in this town and about the houses of Yehudah's kings that
were torn down in connection with the ramps and the sword: [5]"People are coming to do battle with the Kasdites – and to fill them
with the corpses of the people that I will have struck down in my anger and my wrath, in that I've hidden my face from this town
because of all their bad dealing.
[6]Here am I, I'm going to make recovery and healing grow up for it. I shall heal and reveal to them abundance of well-being and
truth. [7]I shall restore Yehudah's fortunes and Yisra'el's fortunes and build them up as before. [8]I shall purify them from all their
waywardness with which they did wrong to me, and I shall pardon all their wayward acts with which they did wrong to me and
rebelled against me. [9]For me it will mean a name to celebrate, and praise and splendour, for all the nations of the earth that hear of
all the good things that I'm going to do with them, and they will be in awe and will shiver because of all the good things and all
the well-being that I'm going to do for it."'
[10]Yahweh has said this: 'A voice will make itself heard in this place of which you're saying, "It's desolate, without human
being, without animal, in Yehudah's towns and in Yerushalaim's devastated courtyards, without human being, without animal",
[11]the voice of joy and of celebration, the voice of groom and of bride, the voice of people saying, "Confess Yahweh of Armies,
because Yahweh is good, because his commitment lasts permanently", bringing a thank-offering to Yahweh's house, because I
shall restore the country's fortunes as before (Yahweh has said).'

Expect great things

[12]Yahweh of Armies has said this: 'In this place, desolate, without human being or animal, and in all its towns, there will again
be an abode for shepherds resting a flock. [13]In the mountain towns, in the lowland towns, in the Negeb towns, in Binyamin's
country, in Yerushalaim's environs and in Yehudah's towns, sheep will again pass under the hands of the one counting (Yahweh
has said). [14]There, days are coming (Yahweh's declaration) when I shall act on the good word that I spoke concerning Yisra'el's
household and Yehudah's household.
[15]In those days and at that time I shall grow for David a faithful branch, and he will implement authority and faithfulness in the
country. [16]In those days Yehudah will find deliverance, and Yerushalaim will dwell with confidence, and this is what it will be
called: "Yahweh Is Our Faithfulness".' [17]Because Yahweh has said this: 'There will not be cut off from David someone sitting on
the throne of Yisra'el's household. [18]And from the priests, the Levites, there will not be cut off someone before me offering up the
whole offering and burning the grain offering and performing the sacrifice, for all time.'
[19]Yahweh's word came to Yirmeyahu: [20]'Yahweh has said this: "If you people can contravene my pact about the day and my
pact about the night so that there's no day and night at their time, [21]also my pact with David my servant may be contravened so
that there's no son for him reigning on his throne, and with the Levites, the priests, ministering to me. [22]As the heavens' army
cannot be counted and the sea's sand cannot be measured, so I shall multiply the offspring of David my servant and the Levites
who minister to me."'

[23]Yahweh's word came to Yirmeyahu: [24]'You've seen what this people have spoken, haven't you: "The two kin-groups that Yahweh chose – he's rejected them." They've despised my people so that they are no longer a nation before them.' [25]Yahweh has said this: 'If I haven't laid down my pact about day and night, the laws about the heavens and the earth, [26]also the offspring of Ya'aqob and the offspring of David my servant may be rejected so as not to take from its offspring rulers for the offspring of Abraham, Yitshaq [Isaac] and Ya'aqob. Because I shall restore their fortunes and have compassion on them.'

A covenant for freedom

34 The word that came to Yirmeyahu from Yahweh, when Nebukadre'tstsar king of Babel, and his entire force, and all the kingdoms of the earth ruled by his hand and all the peoples, were battling against Yerushalaim and against all its towns:
[2]'Yahweh, Yisra'el's God, has said this: "Go and say to Tsidqiyyahu king of Yehudah: 'Yahweh has said this: "Here am I, I'm going to give this town into the hand of the king of Babel, and he will burn it in fire. [3]You yourself won't escape from his hand, because you'll definitely be seized and be given into his hand. Your eyes will see the eyes of the king of Babel. His mouth will speak to your mouth. You will come to Babel." [4]Yet listen to Yahweh's word, Tsidqiyyahu king of Yehudah. Yahweh has said this about you: "You will not die by the sword. [5]You will die with things being well. In accordance with the burning [of incense] for your ancestors, the earlier kings who were before you, so people will burn it for you. 'Oh, lord', they will lament for you, because I myself have spoken the word (Yahweh's declaration)."""' [6]Yirmeyahu the prophet spoke all these words in Yerushalaim to Tsidqiyyahu king of Yehudah [7]while the king of Babel's force were battling against Yerushalaim and against all Yehudah's towns that were left, with Lakish and Azeqah, because these remained among Yehudah's towns as fortified towns.
[8]The word that came to Yirmeyahu from Yahweh after King Tsidqiyyahu solemnized a pact with the entire people that was in Yerushalaim to call to them for a release, [9]for each one to send off his servant and each one his maidservant, the Hebrew man and the Hebrew woman, as free persons, so that they wouldn't serve them, an individual Yehudahite his brother. [10a]All the officials and the entire people that came into the pact obeyed by each one sending off his servant and each one his maidservant as free persons, so that they wouldn't serve them any more.

The people who had prayed a dangerous prayer

[10b]So they obeyed and sent them off, [11]but afterwards they turned back and got back the servants and the maidservants whom they had sent off as free persons, and subjugated them as servants and maidservants.
[12]Yahweh's word came to Yirmeyahu from Yahweh: [13]'Yahweh, Yisra'el's God, has said this: "I myself solemnized a pact with your ancestors on the day I got them out of the country of Misrayim, out of a household of servants, saying, [14]'At the end of seven years you're to send off, each one, his Hebrew brother who has sold himself to you and served you for six years; you're to send him off as a free man from being with you.' Your ancestors didn't listen to me; they didn't bend their ear. [15]Just now you yourselves turned back and did what was right in my eyes by calling for a release, each one to his neighbour, and you solemnized a pact before me in the house over which my name has been called out. [16]But you've turned back and profaned my name; you've got back each one his servant and each one his maidservant whom you sent off as free persons to live their life, and you've subjugated them as servants and as maidservants to you."
[17]Therefore Yahweh has said this: "You haven't listened to me by calling for a release, each one to his brother, each to his neighbour. Here am I, I'm going to call for a release to you (Yahweh's declaration) – to sword, to epidemic and to famine. I'm going to make you a horror to all earth's kingdoms. [18]I'm going to make the people who are transgressing my pact, who haven't acted on the words in the pact that they solemnized before me, into the calf that they cut into two and passed between its parts: [19]Yehudah's officials and Yerushalaim's officials, the courtiers, the priests and the entire people of the country who passed between the parts of the calf.

The tempting

[20]So I shall give them into the hand of their enemies, into the hand of those who seek their life. Their corpse will be food for the birds of the heavens and for the animals of the earth. [21]Tsidqiyyahu king of Yehudah and his officials I shall give into the hand of their enemies, into the hand of those who seek their life, into the hand of the king of Babel's force who are pulling up from you. [22]Here am I, I'm going to give an order (Yahweh's declaration) and I shall bring them back to this town. They will do battle against it and capture it and burn it with fire, and Yehudah's towns I shall make a desolation without inhabitant."'
35 The word that came to Yirmeyahu from Yahweh in the days of Yehoyaqim ben Yoshiyyahu king of Yehudah: [2]'Go to the Rekabites' house and speak with them, and bring them to Yahweh's house to one of the halls and get them to drink wine.'
[3]So I got Ya'azanyah ben Yirmeyahu son of Habatstsinyah, his brothers, all his sons and the entire household of the Rekabites [4]and brought them to Yahweh's house to the hall of the sons of Hanan ben Yigdalyahu, the supernatural man, which was near the officials' hall, which was above the hall of Ma'aseyahu ben Shallum, the guard of the threshold. [5]I put in front of the members of the Rekabites' household bowls full of wine and cups, and said to them, 'Drink wine.' [6]They said, 'We won't drink wine, because Yonadab ben Rekab our ancestor ordered us, "You're not to drink wine, you or your descendants permanently. [7]You're not to build a house, you're not to sow seed, you're not to plant a vineyard. They won't be for you. Rather, you're to live in tents all your days, so you may live for many days on the face of the land where you're residing."

Witnessing by your obedience to your special vocation

[8]We've obeyed the voice of Yehonadab ben Rekab our ancestor regarding all he ordered us, not to drink wine all our days, we,

our wives, our sons and our daughters, [9]and not to build houses for us to live in; and we don't have vineyard or field or seed.
[10]We've lived in tents and obeyed, and acted in accordance with all that Yonadab our ancestor ordered us. [11]But when
Nebukadre'tstsar king of Babel went up against the country we said, "Come on, we'll come into Yerushalaim in the face of the
Kasdite force and in the face of the Aramite force." So we've lived in Yerushalaim.'
[12]Yahweh's word came to Yirmeyahu: [13]'Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's God, has said this: "Go and say to Yehudah's people
and to Yerushalaim's inhabitants: 'Won't you accept discipline by listening to my words (Yahweh's declaration)? [14]It has been
implemented, the words of Yehonadab ben Rekab which he ordered his descendants, not to drink wine. They haven't drunk up
until this day because they've obeyed their ancestor's order. But I myself have spoken to you, starting early and speaking, but you
haven't obeyed me. [15]I've sent to you all my servants the prophets, starting early and sending them, saying "Will you turn back,
each one, from his bad way and make your deeds good, and not follow other gods so as to serve them, and you will live on the
land that I gave to you and to your ancestors", but you haven't bent your ear, you haven't obeyed me. [16]Because the descendants
of Yehonadab ben Rekab have implemented the order of their ancestor which he gave them, but this people – they haven't obeyed
me.""'
[17]Therefore Yahweh, God of Armies, Yisra'el's God, has said this: 'Here am I, I'm going to bring to Yehudah and to all
Yerushalaim's inhabitants all the bad fortune of which I spoke against them, since I spoke to them and they haven't listened, I
called to them and they haven't answered.' [18]But to the household of the Rekabites Yirmeyahu said, 'Yahweh of Armies,
Yisra'el's God, has said this: "Since you obeyed the order of Yehonadab your ancestor and kept all his orders and acted in
accordance with all that he ordered you, [19]therefore Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's God, has said this: 'There shall not be cut off
for Yonadab ben Rekab someone standing before me for all time.""'

The scroll

36 In the fourth year of Yehoyaqim ben Yoshiyyahu king of Yehudah, this word came to Yirmeyahu from Yahweh: [2]'Get
yourself a document scroll and write in it all the words that I've spoken to you about Yisra'el, about Yehudah and about all
the nations from the day I spoke to you (from the days of Yoshiyyahu) until this day. [3]Perhaps Yehudah's household will listen to
all the bad things that I'm intending to do to them, so they may turn back each one from his bad way and I may pardon their
waywardness and their wrongdoing.'
[4]So Yirmeyahu called Baruk ben Neriyyah, and Baruk wrote from Yirmeyahu's mouth all Yahweh's words that he'd spoken to
him, on a document scroll. [5]Yirmeyahu ordered Baruk, 'I'm under constraint; I can't come to Yahweh's house. [6]You're to come
and read out, in the scroll that you've written from my mouth, the words from Yahweh, in the ears of the people at Yahweh's
house on a fast day, and you're also to read them in the ears of all Yehudah who come from their towns. [7]Perhaps their prayer for
grace will fall before Yahweh and they'll turn back each one from his bad way, because Yahweh's anger and wrath are great, of
which he's spoken concerning this people.'
[8]Baruk ben Neriyyah acted in accordance with all that Yirmeyahu the prophet ordered him, by reading out in the scroll
Yahweh's words at Yahweh's house. [9]In the fifth year of Yehoyaqim ben Yoshiyyahu king of Yehudah, in the ninth month, they
called for a fast before Yahweh, the entire people in Yerushalaim and the entire people coming from Yehudah's towns into
Yerushalaim. [10]Baruk read in the scroll Yirmeyahu's words at Yahweh's house in the hall of Gemaryahu ben Shaphan the
secretary, in the upper courtyard at the entrance of the new gateway of Yahweh's house, in the ears of the entire people.

The bold miscalculation

[11]Mikayehu ben Gemaryahu son of Shaphan listened to all Yahweh's words from the scroll, [12]and went down to the king's
house to the secretary's hall. There, all the officials were sitting there: Elishama the secretary, Delayahu ben Shema'yahu, Elnatan
ben Akbor, Gemaryahu ben Shaphan, Tsidqiyyahu ben Hananyahu and all the officials. [13]Mikayehu told them all the words that
he'd heard when Baruk read out in the document in the people's ears.
[14]All the officials sent Yehudi ben Netanyahu son of Shelemyahu son of Kushi to Baruk, saying, 'The scroll in which you read
out in the people's ears – will you get it in your hand and get going.' So Baruk ben Nirayyahu got the scroll in his hand and came
to them. [15]They said to him, 'Sit down, please, and read it out in our ears.' Baruk read it out in their ears. [16]When they heard all
the words, they were fearful, each towards his neighbour. They said to Baruk, 'We must definitely tell the king all these words.'
[17]They asked Baruk, 'Please tell us how you wrote all these words from his mouth.' [18]Baruk said to them, 'From his mouth he
called out to me all these words and I was writing them in the document in ink.' [19]The officials said to Baruk, 'Go hide, you and
Yirmeyahu. No one is to know where you are.' [20]They came to the king in the courtyard; the scroll they deposited in Elishama the
secretary's hall, but they told in the king's ears all the words.
[21]The king sent Yehudi to get the scroll, and he got it from Elishama the secretary's hall. Yehudi read it out in the king's ears
and in the ears of all the officials standing in attendance on the king. [22]The king was sitting in the winter house (in the ninth
month) with the firepot before him, burning. [23]As Yehudi read out three or four columns, he would cut it with a secretary's knife
and throw it into the fire that was in the firepot until the entire scroll was finished in the fire that was in the firepot.

Yet more words

[24]So they weren't fearful and they didn't tear their clothes, the king and all his servants who heard all these words, [25]even
though Elnatan, Delayyahu and Gemaryahu entreated the king not to burn the scroll; he didn't listen to them. [26]The king ordered
Yerahme'el the king's son, Serayahu ben Azri'el and Shelemyahu ben Abde'el to get Baruk the secretary and Yirmeyahu the
prophet, but Yahweh hid them.

[27]Yahweh's word came to Yirmeyahu after the king burned the scroll with the words that Baruk wrote from Yirmeyahu's mouth: [28]'Get yourself yet another scroll, and write on it all the earlier words that were on the earlier scroll that Yehoyaqim king of Yehudah burned. [29]About Yehoyaqim king of Yehudah you're to say, "Yahweh has said this: 'You – you burned this scroll, saying, "Why have you written on it, 'The king of Babel will definitely come and devastate this country and eliminate from it human beings and animals'?" [30]Therefore Yahweh has said this about Yehoyaqim king of Yehudah: 'He will not have someone sitting on David's throne, and his corpse will be thrown out to the heat by day and to the cold by night. [31]I shall attend to their waywardness for him, for his offspring and for his servants, and bring on them, on Yerushalaim's inhabitants and on Yehudah's people all the bad fortune of which I spoke in connection with them, but they didn't listen.'"'
[32]So Yirmeyahu got another scroll and gave it to Baruk ben Neriyyahu the secretary, and he wrote on it from the mouth of Yirmeyahu all the words on the document that Yehoyaqim king of Yehudah burned in the fire. There were also added to them many words like them.

The king who vacillates

37 King Tsidqiyyahu ben Yoshiyyahu became king in place of Konyahu ben Yehoyaqim; Nebukadre'tstsar king of Babel made him king in the country of Yehudah. [2]He didn't listen, he or his servants or the people of the country, to Yahweh's words which he spoke by means of Yirmeyahu the prophet.
[3]But King Tsidqiyyahu sent Yehukal ben Shelemyah and Tsephanyahu ben Ma'aseyah the priest to Yirmeyahu the prophet to say, 'Will you plead on our behalf with Yahweh our God?' ([4]when Yirmeyahu was coming in and going out among the people and they hadn't put him into a place of confinement, [5]and when Par'oh's force had come out from Misrayim, and the Kasdites who were besieging Yerushalaim had heard the report about them and had pulled up from Yerushalaim).
[6]Yahweh's word came to Yirmeyahu the prophet: [7]'Yahweh, Yisra'el's God, has said this: "This is what you people should say to the king of Yehudah who's sending you to me to enquire of me: 'There, Par'oh's force that are coming out to you to help you will go back to their country, to Misrayim. [8]The Kasdites will come back and will do battle against this town, capture it and burn it in fire.'"
[9]Yahweh has said this: "Don't deceive yourselves by saying, 'The Kasdites will certainly go from against us', because they won't go. [10]If you struck down the entire force of the Kasdites who are doing battle with you, and people who were thrust through remained among them, each in his tent, they'd get up and burn this town in fire."'

Until the bread runs out

[11]When the Kasdite force pulled up from Yerushalaim in the face of Par'oh's force, [12]Yirmeyahu went out from Yerushalaim to go to the region of Binyamin to divide a share there among the people. [13]When he was at the Binyamin Gate, a master over the appointment was there; his name was Yir'iyyah ben Shelemyah son of Hananyah. He seized Yirmeyahu the prophet, saying, 'You're going over to the Kasdites.' [14]Yirmeyahu said, 'It's a falsehood. I'm not going over to the Kasdites', but he didn't listen to him. Yir'iyyah seized Yirmeyahu and brought him to the officials. [15]The officials were furious at Yirmeyahu, struck him down and put him in the prison house, the house of Yehonatan the secretary, because they had made it into the jail.
[16]When Yirmeyahu had come to the cistern house and to the cells, and Yirmeyahu had lived there for many days, [17]King Tsidqiyyahu sent and got him, and the king asked him in his house in secret, 'Is there a word from Yahweh?' Yirmeyahu said, 'There is', and said, 'You'll be given into the hand of the king of Babel.'
[18]And Yirmeyahu said to King Tsidqiyyahu, 'What have I done wrong to you, to your servants and to this people, that you've put me into the jail? [19]And where are your prophets who prophesied to you, "The king of Babel won't come against you or against this country"? [20]So now listen please, my lord king; may my plea for grace please fall to you. Don't send me back to the house of Yehonatan the secretary, so I don't die there.' [21]King Tsidqiyyahu gave an order and they placed Yirmeyahu in the prison courtyard, and gave him a loaf of bread per day from the bakers' street until all the bread came to an end from the town. So Yirmeyahu lived in the prison courtyard.

The king can't prevail

38 Shephatyah ben Mattan, Gedalyahu ben Pashhur, Yukal ben Shelemyahu and Pashhur ben Malkiyyah heard the words that Yirmeyahu was speaking to the entire people: [2]'Yahweh has said this: "The person who lives in this town will die by sword, by famine or by epidemic, but the one who goes out to the Kasdites will live. His life will be his as a trophy. He'll live." [3]Yahweh has said this: "This town will certainly be given into the hand of the king of Babel's force and he'll capture it."'
[4]The officials said to the king, 'This man should please be put to death, because by this means he's slackening the hands of the men of battle who remain in this town, and the hands of the entire people, by speaking to them in accordance with these words, because this man isn't seeking the well-being of this people, but something bad.' [5]King Tsidqiyyahu said, 'There, he's in your hand, because the king can't prevail against you in a thing.' [6]So they got Yirmeyahu and threw him into the cistern of Malkiyyahu the king's son, which was in the prison courtyard. They put Yirmeyahu in with ropes. There was no water in the cistern, but only mud. So Yirmeyahu sank into the mud.
[7]Ebed-melek the Kushite, a courtier who was in the king's household, heard that they'd put Yirmeyahu in the cistern. The king was sitting at the Binyamin Gate, [8]so Ebed-melek went out from the king's house and spoke to the king: [9]'My lord king, these men have dealt badly in all they've done to Yirmeyahu the prophet, whom they've thrown into the pit. He's dead in this place from hunger, because there's no more bread in the town.' [10]So the king ordered Ebed-melek the Kushite, 'Get 30 people from here with you and pull Yirmeyahu the prophet up from the cistern before he dies.'

The rescue

[11]Ebed-melek got the men with him and came to the king's house to below the treasury. He got from there old rags and old clothes and sent them to Yirmeyahu in the pit by the ropes. [12]Ebed-melek the Kushite said to Yirmeyahu, 'Put the old rags and clothes under your armpits, please, under the ropes.' Yirmeyahu did so. [13]They drew Yirmeyahu up by the ropes and got him up from the cistern. So Yirmeyahu lived in the prison courtyard.
[14]King Tsidqiyyahu sent and got Yirmeyahu the prophet to him at the third entrance in Yahweh's house. The king said to Yirmeyahu, 'I'm going to ask you something; don't hide anything from me.' [15]Yirmeyahu said to Tsidqiyyahu, 'When I tell you, won't you definitely put me to death? And when I counsel you, you won't listen to me.' [16]King Tsidqiyyahu swore to Yirmeyahu in secret, 'As Yahweh lives, who made this life for us, if I put you to death or if I give you into the hand of these people who are seeking your life . . .'
[17]So Yirmeyahu said to Tsidqiyyahu, 'Yahweh, God of Armies, Yisra'el's God, has said this: "If you do go out to the king of Babel's officers, you yourself will live, and this town won't be burned with fire. You and your household will live. [18]But if you don't go out to the king of Babel's officers, this town will be given into the hand of the Kasdites. They will burn it with fire and you won't escape from their hand."' [19]King Tsidqiyyahu said to Yirmeyahu, 'I'm afraid of the Yehudahites who've submitted to the Kasdites, in case they give me over into their hand and they deal abusively with me.'

Don't tell anyone

[20]Yirmeyahu said, 'They won't give you over. Please listen to Yahweh's voice, to what I'm speaking to you, so he may do good things for you and you yourself may live. [21]But if you refuse to go out, this is the word that Yahweh has shown me. [22]There – all the women who remain in the king of Yehudah's household are going to be taken out to the officers of the king of Babel, and there, they're going to say,

The people who were your friends
    have incited you and prevailed over you.
Your feet are stuck in the mire;
    they've turned away back.

[23]They're going to take out all your women and children to the Kasdites, and you won't escape from their hand, because you'll be seized by the king of Babel's hand, and you will burn this town in fire.'
[24]Tsidqiyyahu said to Yirmeyahu, 'No one is to know of these words, and you won't die. [25]But when the officials hear that I've spoken with you and they come to you and say to you, "Tell us, please, what you spoke to the king. Don't hide it from us and we won't put you to death. And what did the king speak to you?", [26]you're to say to them, "I was letting my plea for grace fall before the king, not to send me back to the house of Yehonatan to die there."'
[27]All the officials came to Yirmeyahu and asked him, and he told them in accordance with all these words that the king had ordered him. So they left off from speaking with him, because the thing hadn't been audible.
[28a]Yirmeyahu lived in the prison courtyard until the day when Yerushalaim was captured.

The grimmest scene in the Old Testament?

[28b]When Yerushalaim was captured.
39 In the ninth year of Tsidqiyyahu king of Yehudah, in the tenth month, Nebukadre'tstsar king of Babel and his entire force came to Yerushalaim and besieged it. [2]In the eleventh year of Tsidqiyyahu, in the fourth month, on the ninth of the month, the town was broken open. [3]All the officers of the king of Babel came and sat in the Middle Gate – Nergal Sar-etser, Samgar-nebu, Sar-sekim the head courtier, Nergal Sar-etser the head official and all the remainder of the king of Babel's officers.
[4]When Tsidqiyyahu king of Yehudah and all the men of battle saw them, they fled. They went out by night from the town by the king's garden road, through the gateway between the double wall. He went out on the steppe road. [5]The Kasdite force pursued after them and overtook Tsidqiyyahu in the Yeriho [Jericho] steppes. They captured him and took him up to Nebukadre'tstsar king of Babel at Riblah in the country of Hamat, and he announced rulings with him. [6]The king of Babel slaughtered Tsidqiyyahu's sons at Riblah before his eyes, and the king of Babel slaughtered all the important people in Yehudah. [7]He blinded Tsidqiyyahu's eyes and shackled him in copper chains to bring him to Babel.
[8]The king's house and the people's housing the Kasdites burned in fire, and Yerushalaim's walls they demolished. [9]The rest of the people who remained in the town and the people who had submitted to him and the rest of the people who remained, Nebuzar'adan the head of the guards took into exile to Babel. [10]Some of the people who were poor, who had nothing, Nebuzar'adan the head of the guards left remaining in the country of Yehudah, and gave them vineyards and fields on that day.

What will happen to Ebed-melek?

[11]Nebukadre'tstsar king of Babel gave order regarding Yirmeyahu by means of Nebuzar'adan the head of the guards: [12]'Get him and keep your eyes on him and don't do anything bad to him. Rather, as he speaks to you, so do with him.' [13]Then sent Nebuzar'adan the head of the guards, Nebushazban the head courtier, Nergal Sar-etser the head officer and all the heads of the king of Babel – [14]they sent and got Yirmeyahu from the prison courtyard and gave him over to Gedalyahu ben Ahiqam son of Shaphan to let him go out to a house. So he lived among the people.

[15]A word from Yahweh had come to Yirmeyahu while he was confined in the prison courtyard: [16]‘Go and say to Ebed-melek the Kushite: “Yahweh of Armies, Yisra’el’s God, has said this: ‘Here am I, I’m going to bring about my words regarding this town for bad fortune and not for good. They will come about before you on that day. [17]But I shall rescue you on that day (Yahweh’s declaration) and you will not be given into the hand of the people that you’re afraid of. [18]Because I shall definitely save you. You will not fall by the sword. Your life will be yours as a trophy, because you’ve relied on me (Yahweh’s declaration).’”’

40 The word that came to Yirmeyahu from Yahweh after Nebuzar’adan the head of the guards sent him off from The Height, where he’d taken him (he was shackled in chains) among the exile community from Yerushalaim and Yehudah, who were being exiled to Babel. [2]The head of the guards took Yirmeyahu and said to him, ‘It was Yahweh your God who spoke of this bad fortune for this place, [3]and he’s brought it about. Yahweh has done as he spoke, because you people did wrong to Yahweh and didn’t listen to his voice. So this thing has happened to you.

What will happen to Yirmeyahu?

[4]But now, here: I’m releasing you yourself today from the chains that are on your hand. If it’s good in your eyes to come with me to Babel, come, and I’ll have my eye on you. But if it’s bad in your eyes to come with me to Babel, leave off. Look, all the country is before you. Regarding what is good and what is right in your eyes to go, go there.’ [5]Still he wouldn’t go back. ‘Or go back to Gedalyah ben Ahiqam son of Shaphan whom the king of Babel has appointed over Yehudah’s towns and live with him among the people. Or go anywhere that’s right in your eyes to go.’ The head of the guards gave him provisions and goods and sent him off. [6]So Yirmeyahu came to Gedalyah ben Ahiqam at The Watchtower and lived with him among the people who remained in the country.

[7]All the officers in the forces that were in the open country, they and their men, heard that the king of Babel had appointed Gedalyahu ben Ahiqam over the country and that he’d appointed with him the men, the women, the children and those of the poor people of the country who hadn’t been exiled to Babel. [8]They came to Gedalyah at The Watchtower – Yishma’e’l ben Netanyahu, Yohanan and Yonatan the sons of Qareah, Serayah ben Tanhumet, the sons of Ephay the Netophatite, and Yezanyahu the son of the Ma’akatite, they and their men. [9]Gedalyahu ben Ahiqam son of Shaphan let it be heard by them and by their men, ‘Don’t be afraid of serving the Kasdites. Go back into the country and serve the king of Babel and things will be good for you. [10]I, here am I, I’m going to live in The Watchtower to serve before the Kasdites who come to us. You, gather up wine, summer fruit and oil, put them in your containers and live in the towns that you’ll have seized.’

The fugitives return

[11]All the Yehudahites who were in Mo’ab, among the Ammonites, in Edom, and those who were in all the countries also heard that the king of Babel had granted a remainder group to Yehudah and that he’d appointed over them Gedalyahu ben Ahiqam son of Shaphan, [12]and all the Yehudahites came back from all the places where they had been driven. They came to the country of Yehudah to Gedalyahu at The Watchtower and gathered up wine and summer fruit, very much.

[13]Yohanan ben Qareah and all the officers in the forces that were in the open country came to Gedalyahu at The Watchtower [14]and said to him, ‘Do you actually know that Ba’alis king of the Ammonites has sent Yishma’e’l ben Netanyah to strike down your life?’ But Gedalyahu ben Ahiqam didn’t believe them. [15]Yohanan ben Qareah said to Gedalyahu in secret at The Watchtower, ‘I shall go, please, and strike down Yishma’e’l ben Netanyah, and no one will know. Why should he strike down your life and scatter all Yehudah who’ve collected to you, and the remainder of Yehudah perish?’ [16]But Gedalyahu ben Ahiqam said to Yohanan ben Qareah, ‘Don’t do this thing, because you’re speaking falsehood about Yishma’e’l.’

41 But in the seventh month Yishma’e’l ben Netanyah son of Elishama, of the royal line, and the king’s commanders and ten men with him, came to Gedalyahu ben Ahiqam at The Watchtower. They ate bread there together at The Watchtower, [2]and Yishma’e’l ben Netanyah and the ten men who were with him got up and struck down Gedalyahu ben Ahiqam son of Shaphan with the sword and put him to death, the man whom the king of Babel had appointed over the country. [3]And all the Yehudahites who were with him (with Gedalyahu at The Watchtower) and the Kasdites who were present there, the men of battle, Yishma’e’l struck down.

The luckless penitents

[4]On the second day after they put Gedalyahu to death, when no one knew, [5]some people came from Shekem, Shiloh and Shomron, 80 people, shaved bare, clothes torn, bodies gashed, grain offering and incense in their hand to bring to Yahweh’s house. [6]Yishma’e’l ben Netanyah went out from The Watchtower to meet them, crying as he went. When he reached them, he said to them, ‘Come to Gedalyahu ben Ahiqam.’

[7]When they came inside the town Yishma’e’l ben Netanyah slaughtered them, into a cistern, he and the men who were with him. [8]But ten people were present among them who said to Yishma’e’l, ‘Don’t put us to death, because we have stores in the open country, grain, barley, oil and syrup.’ So he held back and didn’t put them to death among their brothers.

[9]The cistern where Yishma’e’l threw all the corpses of the people whom he struck down by the side of Gedalyahu, it was the one that King Asa had made on account of Ba’asha king of Yisra’el; Yishma’e’l ben Netanyah filled it with people who had been run through.

[10]Yishma’e’l took captive all the remainder of the company that was at The Watchtower, the king’s daughters and all the people who had remained at The Watchtower over whom Nebuzar’adan the head of the guards had appointed Gedalyahu ben Ahiqam. Yishma’e’l ben Netanyah took them captive and went to cross over to the Ammonites. [11]But Yohanan ben Qareah and

all the officers in the forces that were with him heard all the bad things that Yishma'e'l ben Netanyah had done, [12]and they got all the people and went to do battle with Yishma'e'l ben Netanyah. They found him by the great pool that's at Gib'on.
[13]When all the company that was with Yishma'e'l saw Yohanan ben Qareah and all the officers in the forces that were with him, they rejoiced. [14]All the company that Yishma'e'l had taken captive from The Watchtower turned round and went back and went to Yohanan ben Qareah.

Turning to God?

[15]But Yishma'e'l ben Netanyah, with eight men, escaped from Yohanan and went to the Ammonites. [16]Yohanan ben Qareah and all the officers in the forces that were with him took all the remainder of the company that he brought back from being with Yishma'e'l ben Netanyah from The Watchtower, after he struck down Gedalyah ben Ahiqam (men, men of battle, women, children and courtiers, whom he had brought back from Gib'on). [17]They went and lived at Kimham Khan which is near Bet Lehem, going so as to come to Misrayim [18]on account of the Kasdites, because they were afraid of them because Yishma'e'l ben Netanyah had struck down Gedalyahu ben Ahiqam whom the king of Babel had appointed over the country.
42 All the officers in the forces, Yohanan ben Qareah, Yezanyah ben Hosha'yah and the entire company, big and small, came up [2]and said to Yirmeyahu the prophet, 'May our prayer for grace please fall before you; plead on our behalf with Yahweh your God on behalf of all this remainder, because we remain a few out of many, as your eyes see us. [3]May Yahweh your God tell us the way by which we should go and what we should do.'
[4]Yirmeyahu the prophet said to them, 'I've listened. Here am I, I'm going to plead with Yahweh your God in accordance with your words. Everything that Yahweh will answer you, I shall tell you. I won't withhold anything from you.' [5]They themselves said to Yirmeyahu, 'May Yahweh be a true and truthful witness against us, if we don't act in accordance with everything that Yahweh your God sends you for us. [6]Whether good or bad, we'll listen to the voice of Yahweh our God to whom we're sending you, for the sake of what will be good for us when we listen to the voice of Yahweh our God.'

Stay, don't go

[7]At the end of ten days Yahweh's word came to Yirmeyahu. [8]He called to Yohanan ben Qareah, to all the officers in the forces that were with him and to the entire company, to big and small, [9]and said to them: 'Yahweh, Yisra'el's God, to whom you sent me to let your prayer for grace fall before him, has said this: [10]"If you again live in this country, I will build you up and not tear you down, I will plant you and not uproot, because I regret the bad things that I did to you. [11]Don't be afraid of the king of Babel, of whom you are afraid; don't be afraid of him (Yahweh's declaration) because I am with you to deliver you and to rescue you from his hand. [12]I shall give you compassion, and he will have compassion towards you and take you back to your land."
[13]But if you're going to say, "We won't live in this country" (so as not to listen to Yahweh your God's voice), [14]saying, "No, rather we'll come to the country of Misrayim, where we won't see battle or hear the sound of the horn or be hungry for bread, and live there": [15]now therefore listen to Yahweh's word, you remainder of Yehudah. Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's God, has said this: "If you do set your faces to come to Misrayim, and you come to reside there, [16]the sword that you're afraid of will overtake you there in the country of Misrayim and the famine that you fear will stick close to you there in Misrayim, and you'll die there. [17]All the people who set their faces to come to Misrayim to reside there will die by sword, by famine or by epidemic. There won't be anyone surviving or escaping in the face of the bad fate that I'm going to bring upon you."

An ambassador in chains

[18]Because Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's God, has said this: "As my anger and my wrath poured out on Yerushalaim's inhabitants, so my wrath will pour out on you when you come to Misrayim. You'll become a vow, a devastation, a slight and a reviling, and you won't again see this place." [19]Yahweh has spoken against you, remainder of Yehudah. Don't come to Misrayim. Acknowledge clearly that I've testified against you this day. [20]Because you were deceitful in your entire beings when you yourselves sent me to Yahweh your God, saying "Plead on our behalf to Yahweh our God, and in accordance with all that Yahweh our God says, so tell us and we will act." [21]I've told you this day, but you haven't listened to the voice of Yahweh your God, even regarding anything with which he sent me to you. [22]So now you must really acknowledge that you'll die by sword, by famine or by epidemic in the place where you want to come to reside.'
43 When Yirmeyahu finished speaking to the entire people all the words of Yahweh their God with which Yahweh their God had sent him to them, all these words, [2]Azaryah ben Hosha'yah, Yohanan ben Qareah and all the assertive people were saying to Yirmeyahu, 'You're speaking falsehood. Yahweh our God hasn't sent you to say, "You're not to come to Misrayim to reside there." [3]Because Baruk ben Neriyyah is inciting you against us in order to give us into the hand of the Kasdites to put us to death or take us into exile in Babel.'
[4]So Yohanan ben Qareah, all the officers in the forces and the entire people didn't listen to Yahweh's voice so as to stay in the country of Yehudah. [5]Yohanan ben Qareah and all the officers in the forces took the entire remainder of Yehudah that had come back to reside in the country of Yehudah from all the nations where they had been driven – [6]men, women, children, the king's daughters and every person whom Nebuzar'adan the head of the guards had set down with Gedalyahu ben Ahiqam son of Shaphan, and Yirmeyahu the prophet and Baruk ben Neriyyahu. [7a]They came to Misrayim because they didn't listen to Yahweh's voice.

No escape from Nebukadre'tstsar

[7b]They came as far as Tahpanhes, [8]and Yahweh's word came to Yirmeyahu at Tahpanhes: [9]'Take some big stones in your hand and bury them in clay on the pavement that's at the entrance to Par'oh's house at Tahpanhes, before the eyes of the Yehudahites. [10]You're to say to them, "Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's God, has said this: 'Here am I, I'm going to send and get Nebukadre'tstsar king of Babel my servant, and I shall set his throne above these stones (that I've buried) and he will spread his canopy over them. [11]He will come and strike down the country of Misrayim: the people destined for death, to death, the people destined for captivity, to captivity, the people destined for the sword, to the sword. [12]I shall set fire to the houses of the gods of Misrayim and he will burn them and take them captive. He'll delouse the country of Misrayim as a shepherd delouses his coat, and he'll go out from there with things being well. [13]He'll break up the columns in Sun House which is in the country of Misrayim, and he'll burn the houses of Misrayim's gods with fire.'"'

44 The word that came to Yirmeyahu regarding all the Yehudahites who were living in the country of Misrayim, living in Migdol, in Tahpanhes, in Memphis and in the country of Patros. [2]'Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's God, has said this: "You've seen all the bad fortune that I've brought on Yerushalaim and on all Yehudah's towns. There they are, a waste this day, with no one living in them, [3]in the face of the bad dealing that they did, so as to provoke me by going to burn incense to serve other gods that they hadn't acknowledged – they or you or your ancestors. [4]I sent to you all my servants the prophets, starting early and sending them, to say, 'Please don't do this offensive thing, to which I am hostile.' [5]But they didn't listen, they didn't bend their ear, so as to turn back from their bad dealing, so as not to burn incense to other gods. [6]So my wrath and my anger poured out and burned against Yehudah's towns and against Yerushalaim's streets, and they've become a waste, a desolation, this very day."

Things can't get worse, can they?

[7]So now, Yahweh, God of Armies, Yisra'el's God, has said this: "Why are you going to do something that's so bad for yourselves, by cutting off for you man and woman, child and infant, from within Yehudah, so as not to leave a remainder for you, [8]so as to provoke me by the practices of your hands, by burning incense to other gods in the country of Misrayim to which you're coming to reside there, in order to cut them off for you and in order to become a slighting and a reviling among all the nations on earth? [9]Have you put out of mind the bad dealings of your ancestors, the bad dealings of Yehudah's kings, the bad dealings of its wives, your own bad dealings and the bad dealings of your wives, which they did in the country of Yehudah and in Yerushalaim's streets? [10]They were not crushed until this day, they didn't live in awe, they didn't walk by my instruction and by my laws that I put before you and before your ancestors."

[11]Therefore Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's God, has said this. "Here am I, I'm going to set my face against you for bad fortune and to cut off all Yehudah. [12]I shall take the remainder of Yehudah who have set their face to come to the country of Misrayim to reside there, and they will all come to an end in the country of Misrayim. They will fall by the sword and come to an end by famine. Big and small, by sword and by famine they will die. They will become a vow, a devastation, a slighting and a reviling. [13]I shall attend to the people living in the country of Misrayim as I attended to Yerushalaim, by sword, by famine and by epidemic. [14]There will be no escapee or survivor of the remainder of Yehudah who are coming to reside there in the country of Misrayim, or to go back to the country of Yehudah when they are lifting up their longing to go back to live there, because they won't go back (except escapees)."'

No, no turning to God

[15]All the men who knew that their wives burned incense to other gods, and all the wives standing by, a big congregation, and the entire company who were living in the country of Misrayim at Patros, answered Yirmeyahu, [16]'The word that you've spoken to us in Yahweh's name – we aren't listening to you. [17]Rather, we'll definitely act on every word that's gone out of our mouth, burning incense to the Queen of Heaven and pouring libations to her, as we and our ancestors, our kings and our officials, did in Yehudah's towns and in Yerushalaim's streets, and had our fill of bread and were finding things good, and saw no bad fortune. [18]But from when we left off burning incense to the Queen of Heaven and pouring libations to her, we've lacked everything and we've come to an end by sword and by famine. [19]And when we were burning incense to the Queen of Heaven and pouring libations to her, was it without our husbands that we made cakes to image her and poured libations to her?'

[20]Yirmeyahu said to the entire company, to the men, to the women and to the entire company who were giving him an answer: [21]'The incense you burned in Yehudah's towns and in Yerushalaim's streets, you and your ancestors, your kings, your officials and the people of the country – hasn't Yahweh been mindful of them and brought them to mind? [22]Yahweh could no longer bear it, in the face of the bad nature of your practices, in the face of the offensive acts that you committed, so that the country became a waste and a devastation and a slighting, so that there's no inhabitant, this very day. [23]In the face of the way you burned incense and in that you did wrong to Yahweh and didn't listen to Yahweh's voice and didn't walk by his instruction, his laws and his affirmations, that's why this bad fate has happened to you this very day.'

[24]Yirmeyahu said to the entire company and to all the women, 'Listen to Yahweh's word, all of Yehudah in the country of Misrayim. [25a]Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's God, has said this: "You and your wives – you've spoken by your mouth and with your hands you've fulfilled it, saying 'We'll definitely act on our vows that we made, to burn incense to the Queen of Heaven and pour libations to her.'

A promise for Baruk

[25b]You may indeed implement your pledges. You may indeed act upon your pledges." [26]Therefore listen to Yahweh's word, all Yehudah who live in the country of Misrayim. "Here am I: I am swearing by my great name (Yahweh has said), if my name will any more be called out in the mouth of anyone from Yehudah, saying 'As the Lord Yahweh lives', in all the country of Misrayim.

[27]Here am I: I'm going to watch over them for bad things, not for good things. They will come to an end, every individual from Yehudah who's in the country of Misrayim, by sword and by famine, until they're finished off. [28]The people who escape the sword will go back from the country of Misrayim to the country of Yehudah few in number, and all the remainder of Yehudah who are coming to the country of Misrayim to reside there will acknowledge whose word will be implemented, mine or theirs.
[29]This will be the sign for you (Yahweh's declaration) that I'm going to attend to you in this place, so that you may acknowledge that my words against you for bad fortune will indeed be implemented. [30]Yahweh has said this: 'Here am I; I'm going to give Par'oh Hophra king of Misrayim into the hand of his enemies and into the hand of the people who are seeking his life, as I gave Tsidqiyyahu king of Yehudah into the hand of Nebukadre'tstsar king of Babel his enemy and one seeking his life.'"'

45 The word that Yirmeyahu the prophet spoke to Baruk ben Neriyyah when he wrote these words in a document from Yirmeyahu's mouth in the fourth year of Yehoyaqim ben Yoshiyyahu king of Yehudah: [2]'Yahweh, Yisra'el's God, has said this to you, Baruk: [3]"You said, 'Oh, me, please, because Yahweh has added sorrow to my pain. I'm weary with my groaning. I haven't found a settled place.'" [4]You're to say to him, "Yahweh has said this: 'Here, what I built, I'm tearing down; what I planted, I'm uprooting (i.e. the entire country). [5]You, do you seek big things for yourself? Don't seek them, because here am I, I'm going to bring bad fortune on all flesh (Yahweh's declaration), but I shall give you your life as a trophy in all the places where you go.'"'

Par'oh full of talk

46 Things that came as Yahweh's word to Yirmeyahu the prophet about the nations.

[2]Regarding Misrayim.

About the force of Par'oh Neko king of Misrayim, which was at the River Euphrates at Karkemish, which Nebukadre'tstsar king of Babel struck down in the fourth year of Yehoyaqim ben Yoshiyyahu king of Yehudah:

[3]Get ready hand-shield and body-shield;
go up to battle!
[4]Harness the horses;
get up, cavalry!
Take your position with your helmets,
polish lances, put on armour!
[5]Why have I seen – they're shattered,
they're turning back!
Their strong men are struck down, they've fled, fled,
they haven't turned round, terror is all round (Yahweh's declaration).
[6]The swift is not to flee,
the strong man is not to escape.
To the north, by the side of the River Euphrates,
they've collapsed and fallen.

[7]Who is this rises like the Ye'or,
like streams whose water surges?
[8]It's Misrayim that rises like the Ye'or
and like streams whose water surges.
It said, 'I'll rise, I'll cover the earth,
I'll obliterate a town and the people who live in it.'
[9]Rise, horses, rage, chariotry,
strong men are to go out,
Seba and Put seizing shields,
Ludites seizing and directing bows.

[10]That day belongs to the Lord Yahweh of Armies,
a day of redress, for taking redress from his adversaries.
The sword will consume, be full,
will soak in their bloodshed.
Because the Lord Yahweh of Armies has a sacrifice
in the northern country by the River Euphrates.
[11]Go up to Gil'ad and get balm,
young Miss Misrayim.
To empty results you're multiplying healings –
there's no growing back for you.
[12]Nations have heard your slighting;
the earth is full of your scream.
Because strong man has collapsed on strong man;
the two of them have fallen down together.

Par'oh helpless

[13]The word that Yahweh spoke to Yirmeyahu the prophet regarding the coming of Nebukadre'tstsar king of Babel to strike down the country of Misrayim:

[14]Tell it in Misrayim, make it heard in Migdal,
make it heard in Memphis and in Tahpanhes.
Say, 'Take your position, prepare yourself,
because the sword is consuming all round you.'
[15]Why has your champion been swept away?
—he didn't stand, because Yahweh thrust him down.
[16]He's made many people collapse,
yes, each one has fallen into his neighbour.
They said, 'Set to,
let's turn back to our people,
To the country of our birth,
from before the oppressor's sword.'
[17]There they called Par'oh king of Misrayim,
'A din who has let the appointed time pass'.
[18]As I live (a declaration of the King,
Yahweh of Armies is his name):
Like Tabor among the mountains,
and like Carmel at the sea, one will come.
[19]Make for yourself things for exile,
you who sit as Miss Misrayim.
Because Memphis will become a desolation,
burned, without inhabitant.
[20]Misrayim is a beautiful, beautiful heifer;
a wasp from the north is coming, coming.
[21]Her mercenaries within her, too,
are like well-fed bullocks.
Yet they're turning round, too,
they're fleeing together, they're not taking a stand.
Because their day of disaster has come upon them,
the time when they're attended to.
[22]Her sound will be like a snake when it goes,
with a force they will go.
With axes they're coming to her,
like fellers of trees.
[23]They're cutting down her forest (Yahweh's declaration)
when it cannot be explored,
Because they're more than locusts;
there's no numbering of them.
[24]Miss Misrayim is being shamed,
given into the hand of the northern people.

But of you I won't make an end

[25]Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's God, has said:

Here am I, attending to Amon of Thebes and to Par'oh, to Misrayim, to its gods, to its kings – to Par'oh and to the people who rely on him. [26]I shall give them into the hand of the people who seek their life, into the hand of Nebukadre'tstsar king of Babel and into the hand of his servants. But afterwards it will dwell as in former days (Yahweh's declaration).

[27]But you, don't be afraid, my servant Ya'aqob;
don't shatter, Yisra'el.
Because here am I, I'm going to deliver you from far away,
and your offspring from the country of their captivity.
Ya'aqob will again be calm,
at peace with no one making him tremble.
[28]So you, don't be afraid, my servant Ya'aqob (Yahweh's declaration),
because I'm with you.
Because I shall make an end among all the nations
where I've driven you,
But of you I won't make an end,
though I discipline you in exercising authority,
and don't treat you as free of guilt.

47 Something that came as Yahweh's word to Yirmeyahu the prophet regarding the Pelishtites, before Par'oh struck down Azzah.

[2]Yahweh has said this:

There, water is rising from the north,
and it will become an overwhelming wadi.
They'll overwhelm the country and what fills it,
the town and the people who live in it.
People will cry out,
all the country's inhabitants will howl,
[3]At the sound of the pounding of his sturdy steeds' hooves,
at the noise of his chariotry, the clatter of its wheels.
Fathers are not turning their faces to children
because of the slackening of their hands,
[4]Because of the day that's coming
for the destroying of all the Pelishtites,
For cutting off every helper who survives
for Tsor and Tsidon.
Because Yahweh is going to destroy the Pelishtites,
the remainder of Kaphtor's shore.
[5]The shaved head is coming to Azzah,
Ashqelon is being terminated.
You remainder of their vale,
how long will you gash yourself?
[6]Hey, sword of Yahweh,
for how long will you not be calm? –
Gather up into your sheath,
rest, be still.
[7]How can you be calm
when Yahweh is ordering it?
For Ashqelon and for the seacoast
he has set its appointment.

Mo'ab broken

48 Regarding Mo'ab.
Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's God, has said this:

Hey for Nebo, that it's destroyed,
Qiryatayim is shamed, captured.
The stronghold is shamed and it has shattered.
[2]Mo'ab's praise is no more.
In Heshbon they intended something bad against her:
'Come, let's cut her down from being a nation.'
Madmenah, you'll be still, too;
the sword will follow you.
[3]The sound of an outcry from Horonayim,
destruction and great breaking.
[4]Mo'ab is broken,
its little ones have let the outcry be heard.
[5]Because the ascent to Luhit –
with crying one ascends, with crying.
Because on the Horonayim descent
people have heard the crying distresses about the breaking.
[6]Flee, save your life,
be like Aro'er in the wilderness!
[7]Because on account of your reliance on what you've made,
and on your treasures, you too will be captured.
Kemosh will go out into exile,
his priests and his officials together.
[8]The destroyer will come to every town,
no town will escape.
The vale will perish,
the flatland will be desolate, because Yahweh has said.
[9]Give wings to Mo'ab,
because it's to fly, go out.

Its towns will be for desolation,
with no inhabitant in them.
[10]Cursed is the one who does Yahweh's work deceitfully;
cursed is the one who holds back his sword from blood.
[11]Mo'ab has been at peace from its youth;
it's been still on its lees.
It hasn't been poured from bowl to bowl;
it hasn't gone into exile.
Therefore its taste has stayed in it,
its bouquet hasn't changed.
[12]Therefore there – days are coming (Yahweh's declaration)
when I'll send off decanters to it.
They'll decant it and empty its bowls
and smash its jugs.
[13]Mo'ab will be shamed because of Kemosh
as Yisra'el's household was shamed
because of Bet El, the object of their reliance.
[14]How can you say, 'We are strong men,
forceful men for the battle'?
[15]Mo'ab is destroyed, people have gone up to its towns,
the choicest of its young men have gone down to the slaughter
(The declaration of the King,
Yahweh of Armies is his name).

A long quiet disturbed

[16]Mo'ab's disaster is near to coming,
its bad fate is hurrying quickly.
[17]Condole with it, all you who are round it,
all you who acknowledge its name.
Say, 'How has the vigorous club broken,
the splendid mace.'
[18]Come down from honour, sit on the thirsty ground,
you who sit as Miss Dibon.
Because Mo'ab's destroyer has come up against you;
he's devastated your fortifications.
[19]Stand by the road and look out,
you who live in Aro'er.
Ask the man who flees and the woman who escapes,
say 'What's happened?'
[20]Mo'ab is shamed, because it has shattered –
howl and cry out;
Tell at the Arnon
that Mo'ab is destroyed.

[21]A ruling has come for the flatland region,
for Holon, for Yahtsah,
On Mepha'at, [22]on Dibon, on Nebo,
on Bet Diblatayim, [23]on Qiryatayim,
On Bet Gamul, on Bet Me'on,
[24]on Qeriyyot, on Botsrah,
On all the towns in the country of Mo'ab,
far and near.

[25]Mo'ab's horn is cut off,
its arm broken (Yahweh's declaration).
[26]Get it drunk, because it's made itself big against Yahweh;
Mo'ab will wallow in its vomit.
It will be an object of fun, too:
[27]wasn't Yisra'el an object of fun to you?
Was it found among robbers,
that when you speak of it you shake your head?

[28]Abandon the towns, dwell in the cliff,
inhabitants of Mo'ab,
Be like a pigeon that nests

in the sides of the mouth of a chasm.
[29]We've heard of Mo'ab's majesty
(it's very majestic),
Its height and its majesty and its exaltation,
and the loftiness of its mind.
[30]I myself know (Yahweh's declaration) its fury;
its empty talk is not upright, they haven't acted uprightly.

[31]Therefore I will howl for Mo'ab,
I will cry out regarding Mo'ab, all of it,
concerning the people of Qir-heres I will murmur.
[32]With more crying than for Ya'zer I'll cry for you,
vine of Sibmah.
Your tendrils crossed the sea,
to the sea of Ya'zer they reached.
On your summer fruit and on your grapes
a destroyer has fallen.
[33]Rejoicing and celebration gather up from the farmland
and from the country of Mo'ab.
I've made wine cease from the presses;
no one treads with a shout;
the shout is no shout.

My heart moans for Mo'ab

[34]From the outcry of Heshbon as far as Ele'aleh,
as far as Yahats, they're giving their voice,
From Tso'ar as far as Horonayim, Eglat Shelishiyyah,
because the water of Nimrim, too, will become a great desolation.
[35]I shall stop for Mo'ab (Yahweh's declaration) anyone ascending to the shrine,
anyone burning incense to its gods.
[36]Therefore my heart for Mo'ab
moans like a flute.
My heart for the people of Qir-heres
moans like a flute.
Therefore the profit it made –
they've perished, [37]because every head is shaved,
every beard cut off.
On all hands there are gashes,
on hips there's sack.
[38]On Mo'ab's roofs and in its squares,
all of it, is lamentation,
Because I've broken Mo'ab
like a jar no one wants (Yahweh's declaration).
[39]How it has shattered – wail;
how Mo'ab has turned its back in shame.
Mo'ab will be an object of fun,
something to shatter all the people round it.
[40]Because Yahweh has said this:

There, one swoops like an eagle
and spreads his wings towards Mo'ab.
[41]Qeriyyot has been captured,
the strongholds have been seized.
The mind of Mo'ab's strong men will be
like the mind of a woman in labour on that day.
[42]Mo'ab has been destroyed from being a people
because it made itself big against Yahweh.
[43]A terror and a pit and a trap
are against you who live in Mo'ab (Yahweh's declaration).
[44]The one who flees from the face of the terror
will fall into the pit.
The one who climbs out of the pit
will be captured by the trap.
Because I'll bring to it, to Mo'ab,
the year of my attending to it (Yahweh's declaration).
[45]In Heshbon's shade

people who are fleeing stop, being out of energy.
Because fire has gone out from Heshbon,
a flame from within Sihon.
Consumed Mo'ab's forehead,
the skull of Sha'on's people.
[46]Oh, alas for you, Mo'ab,
the people of Kemosh have perished.
Because your sons have been taken into captivity,
your daughters into captivity.

[47]But I shall restore Mo'ab's fortunes
at the end of the time (Yahweh's declaration).
As far as here is the ruling about Mo'ab.

The wisdom that fails

49 Regarding the Ammonites.
Yahweh has said this:

Does Yisra'el have no sons,
or no one entering into possession?
Why has Malkam dispossessed Gad
and its people lived in its towns?
[2]Therefore – there, days are coming (Yahweh's declaration)
when I shall make the battle alarm heard
for Rabbah of the Ammonites.
It will become a desolate tell;
its daughter-townships will be set on fire.
Yisra'el will dispossess
the people who dispossessed it (Yahweh has said).

[3]Howl, Heshbon,
because Ai is destroyed!
Cry out, daughter-townships of Rabbah,
wrap on sack, lament.
Run to and fro in the enclosures,
because Malkam is to go into exile,
his priests and his officials together with him.
[4]Why do you boast of your vales? –
your vale is flowing away,
Miss-who-turns-back, you who rely on your treasures,
'Who will come against me?'
[5]Here am I, I'm going to bring a terror against you
(a declaration of the Lord Yahweh of Armies) from all those round you.
You'll be driven off, each one straight ahead;
there'll be no one collecting the fugitive.

[6]But afterwards I shall restore
the fortunes of the Ammonites (Yahweh's declaration).
[7]Regarding Edom.
Yahweh of Armies has said this:

Is there no longer smartness in Teman,
has counsel perished from the discerning,
has their smartness gone stale?
[8]Flee, turn round, lie low,
inhabitants of Dedan.
Because I'm going to bring Esaw's disaster upon him,
the time when I attend to him.
[9]If grape-pickers came to you,
would they not let gleanings remain?
If robbers [came] by night
they'd devastate what they needed.
[10]But it's I who've stripped Esaw,
bared his hiding place.
He can't conceal himself; his offspring is destroyed,
his brothers and his neighbours, and there is no one.
[11]Abandon your orphans, I'll keep them alive;

your widows may rely on me.

Strong men emasculated

[12]Because Yahweh has said this: 'The people for whom there has been no ruling that they should drink the glass: if they'll
certainly drink it, are you one to go totally free of guilt? You won't go free of guilt, because you will certainly drink it. [13]Because
by myself I have sworn (Yahweh's declaration) that Botsrah will be for desolation, for reviling, for wasting, for slighting, and all
its towns will be for total waste permanently.'

[14]I have heard a report from Yahweh,
and an envoy is sent among the nations.
Collect together and come to it,
set to for battle!
[15]Because there – I'm going to make you small among the nations,
despised among people.
[16]Your dreadfulness has deceived you,
the assertiveness of your mind.
You who dwell in the clefts of the cliff,
you who seize the height of the hill,
If you make your nest high like an eagle,
I will get you down from there (Yahweh's declaration).

[17]Edom will become a desolation,
everyone who passes by it will be desolate
And will whistle at all its wounds,
[18]as at the overthrow of Sedom and Amorah and their neighbours (Yahweh has said).
No one will live there,
no human being will reside there.

[19]There, it will be as when a lion comes up
from the Yarden jungle into an enduring abode,
Because in a moment I shall run him out of it,
and whoever is chosen for it I shall appoint.
Because who is like me, who can make me testify,
who is the shepherd who can stand before me?
[20]Therefore listen to Yahweh's counsel
which he's devised for Edom,
His intentions which he's formulated
for the inhabitants of Teman.
If the flock's boys don't drag them away,
if the abode isn't desolate at them . . .

[21]At the sound of their fall the earth shakes,
the outcry makes its sound heard at the Sea of Reeds.
[22]There, like an eagle he goes up and swoops,
spreads his wings against Botsrah.
The mind of Edom's strong men will be
like the mind of a woman in labour on that day.

The promise of a future

[23]Regarding Dammeseq [Damascus].

Hamat and Arpah are shamed,
because they've heard a report of something bad.
They toss like the sea with anxiety;
it cannot be calm.
[24]Dammeseq is weak,
she's turned her face to flee.
Panic has taken strong hold of her,
pressure and contractions have grasped her like a woman giving birth.
[25]How has the praiseworthy town not been abandoned,
the town I celebrated?
[26]Therefore its young men will fall in its squares
and all its men of battle will become still on that day (a declaration of Yahweh of Armies).
[27]I shall set fire to the wall of Dammeseq;
it will consume the citadels of Ben-hadad.

[28]Regarding Qedar and the kingdoms of Hatsor, which Nebukadre'tstsar king of Babel struck down.

Yahweh has said this:

Set to, go up to Qedar,
destroy the Qedemites!
[29]They will take their tents and their flocks,
their tent cloths and all their things.
They'll carry off their camels for themselves;
they'll call out against them, 'Terror is all round.'
[30]Flit, go way away, lie low,
inhabitants of Hatsor (Yahweh's declaration).
Because Nebukadre'tstsar king of Babel
has devised counsel against you,
has formulated an intention against you.

[31]Set to, go up, to a nation at peace,
living in confidence (Yahweh's declaration).
It has no gateways and no bars;
they dwell alone.
[32]Their camels will become plunder,
their horde of livestock, spoil.
I shall scatter to every wind the people shaved at the forehead,
from all sides I shall bring about their disaster (Yahweh's declaration).
[33]Hatsor will become an abode for jackals,
a desolation permanently.
No one will live there;
no human being will reside there.

An unexpected vulnerability

[34]What came as Yahweh's word to Yirmeyahu the prophet regarding Elam at the beginning of the reign of Tsidqiyyah king of Yehudah.

[35]Yahweh of Armies has said this:

Here am I, I'm about to break Elam's bow,
the first principle of their strength.
[36]I shall bring to Elam four winds
from the four corners of the heavens.
I shall scatter them to these four winds;
the nation won't exist
where Elam's fugitives don't come.
[37]I shall shatter Elam before its enemies,
and before the people who seek their life.
I shall bring bad fortune on them,
my angry blazing (Yahweh's declaration).
I shall send the sword off after them
until I've finished them off.
[38]I shall put my throne in Elam
and obliterate king and officials from there (Yahweh's declaration).

[39]But at the end of the time
I shall restore Elam's fortunes (Yahweh's declaration).'

50 The word that Yahweh spoke regarding Babel, regarding the country of the Kasdites, by means of Yirmeyahu the prophet:

[2]Tell among the nations, make it heard;
lift a banner, make it heard.
Don't hide it, say, 'Babel is captured,
Bel is shamed, Merodak has shattered.'
Its idols are shamed,
its fetishes have shattered.
[3]Because a northern nation has gone up against it,
it will make its country a desolation.
There will be no one living in it;
both human being and animal – they have flitted, gone.

[4]In those days and at that time (Yahweh's declaration):

The Yisra'elites will come,
    they and the Yehudahites together.
They'll go, and cry as they go,
    and seek Yahweh their God.
[5]They'll ask the way to Tsiyyon,
    and their faces will be towards there.
'Come, join yourselves to Yahweh
    by a permanent pact that won't be put out of mind.'
[6]My people were a flock that were lost;
    their shepherds had led them astray.
On the mountains they turned them back,
    from mountain to hill they went.
They put their resting-place out of mind;
    [7]all the people who found them consumed them.
Their adversaries said, 'We won't incur liability,
    on account of the fact that they did wrong to Yahweh,
    the faithful abode, their ancestors' hope, Yahweh.'

Flit from within Babel

[8]Flit from within Babel,
    get out of the country of the Kasdites,
    be like the he-goats before the flock.
[9]Because here, I'm going to arouse,
    and get to go up, against Babel
A congregation of great nations
    from a northern country.
When they line up against it,
    from there it will be captured.
Its arrows like those of an insightful strong man
    won't turn back empty.
[10]The Kasdites will become spoil;
    all its despoilers will be full (Yahweh's declaration),
[11]Because you rejoice, because you exult,
    plunderers of my domain,
Because you jump like a heifer with grain;
    you bellow like sturdy ones.
[12]Your mother is very shamed,
    the one who gave birth to you is confounded.
There is the end of the nations:
    wilderness, dry land and steppe.
[13]Because of Yahweh's fury it won't be inhabited,
    it will become a desolation, all of it.
Everyone who passes by Babel will be desolate
    and will whistle at all its wounds.

[14]Line up against Babel round about,
    all you who direct a bow.
Shoot at it, don't hold back with an arrow,
    because it's done wrong to Yahweh.
[15]Shout against it round about, it's giving its hand,
    its towers are falling,
Its walls are being torn down,
    because that is Yahweh's redress.
Take redress upon it;
    as it has done, do to it.
[16]Cut off sower from Babel,
    and seizer of sickle at harvest time.
Before the oppressor's sword
    they'll turn, each one, to his people,
    they'll flee, each one to his country.

The superpower that thought it was safe

[17]Yisra'el is scattered sheep

that lions have driven away.
As first the king of Ashshur consumed him,
then as last Nebukadre'tstsar king of Babel crushed his bones.

[18]Therefore Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's God, has said this:

Here am I, I'm going to attend
to the king of Babel and to his country
as I attended to the king of Ashshur.
[19]And I shall take Yisra'el back to its abode,
and it will pasture in the Carmel and the Bashan.
In the highland of Ephrayim and Gil'ad
its appetite will eat its fill.
[20]In those days and at that time (Yahweh's declaration):

Yisra'el's waywardness will be looked for, and there'll be none;
Yehudah's wrongdoings – and they won't be found,
because I shall pardon the people I let remain.

[21]Against the country of Double Rebellion,
go up against her, and to the inhabitants of Attention.
Put to the sword and devote the last of them (Yahweh's declaration),
do in accordance with all that I've ordered you.
[22]The sound of battle in the country,
a great breaking.
[23]How the hammer of the entire earth
has severed and broken!
How Babel has become
a desolation among the nations!
[24]I trapped you and yes, you were captured, Babel,
and you didn't know it.
You were found and also caught,
because you challenged Yahweh.
[25]Yahweh opened his storehouse
and got out the instruments of his condemnation,
Because that's the work
of the Lord Yahweh of Armies
in the country of the Kasdites.

[26]Come to it from afar, open its granaries,
pile it up like heaps,
devote it, there must be no remainder of it.
[27]Put to the sword all its bullocks,
they must go down for slaughter.
Oh, alas for them, because their day is coming,
the time when they're attended to.
[28]The sound of fugitives and escapees
from the country of Babel,
To tell in Tsiyyon
of the redress of Yahweh our God,
redress for his palace.

Death and life interweave

[29]Make it heard to the archers against Babel,
all those who direct a bow!
Camp against it round about,
there must not be people who escape.
Make good to it for its action,
do to it in accordance with all that it did,
Because it asserted itself against Yahweh,
Yisra'el's sacred one.
[30]Therefore its young men will fall in the squares,
and all its men of battle will become still
on that day (Yahweh's declaration).

[31]Here am I regarding you, assertive one (a declaration of the Lord, Yahweh of Armies).
because your day is coming,

the time when I attend to you.
[32]The assertive one will collapse and fall,
and there will be no one raising him up.
I shall set fire to his towns
and it will consume all round him.
[33]Yahweh of Armies has said this:

The Yisra'elites and the Yehudahites
are oppressed together.
All their captors have taken strong hold of them
and refused to send them off.
[34]Their restorer is strong,
Yahweh of Armies is his name.
He will argue their case strongly
in order that he may quieten the country
and shake up Babel's inhabitants.

[35]A sword against the Kasdites (Yahweh's declaration),
for Babel's inhabitants, its officials and its experts!
[36]A sword for the diviners so they become fools,
a sword for its strong men so they shatter!
[37]A sword to its horses and for its chariotry,
and for all the foreign group that's within it,
so they become women!
A sword to its storehouses, so they're plundered,
[38]a drought to its water, so it dries up!
Because it's a country of images,
and through their dreadful objects they'll go mad.
[39]Therefore wildcats will live with jackals,
and ostriches will live in it.
It won't be lived in again permanently,
it won't dwell for generation after generation.
[40]Like God's overthrow
of Sedom, Amorah and their neighbours (Yahweh's declaration),
No one will live there,
no human being will reside in it.

Hands go limp

[41]There, a people is coming from the north;
a big nation and many kings
are aroused from earth's farthest reaches.
[42]They take strong hold of bow and spear;
they're violent and they don't show compassion.
Their sound is like the sea that rumbles;
they ride on horses,
As someone lined up for battle,
against you, Miss Babel.
[43]The king of Babel has heard the report of them,
his hands have become slack.
Pressure has taken strong hold of him,
labour like a woman giving birth.
[44]There, it will be as when a lion goes up
from the Yarden jungle into an enduring abode,
Because in a moment I shall run him out of it,
and whoever is chosen for it I shall appoint.
Because who is like me, who can make me testify,
who is the shepherd who can stand before me?
[45]Therefore listen to Yahweh's plan
which he's devised for Babel,
His intentions which he's formulated
for the country of the Kasdites.
If the flock's boys don't drag them away,
if the abode isn't desolate at them . . .
[46]At the sound of the seizing of Babel the earth shakes,
the outcry makes itself heard among the nations.

51 Yahweh has said this:
Here am I, I'm rousing against Babel
and for the inhabitants of The-Mind-of-One-Who-Rises-Against-Me a devastating wind.
2 I shall send strangers off to Babel
so they'll winnow it and strip its country,
Because they're against it all round,
on the day of bad fortune.
3 The one who directs his bow isn't to direct it
and isn't to stand in his armour.
Don't spare its young men;
'devote' its entire army.
4 People are to fall run through in the country of the Kasdites,
thrust through in its streets.

Don't get caught

5 Because Yisra'el and Yehudah were not widowed
by its God, Yahweh of Armies.
Rather their country was full of liability
because of Yisra'el's sacred one.
6 Flee from inside Babel;
each of you, save his life.
Don't be still because of its waywardness,
because this is the time of redress for Yahweh;
he's making good with his dealings to it.
7 Babel was a gold chalice in Yahweh's hand,
making the entire earth drunk.
From its wine nations drank;
therefore nations go mad.
8 Suddenly Babel has fallen and broken;
howl over it.
Get balm for its injuries,
perhaps it may heal.
9 'We're healing Babel but it hasn't healed;
abandon it, let's go each to his country.'
Because the ruling for it has reached to the heavens,
lifted to the skies.
10 Yahweh has brought out faithfulness for us;
come, let's recount in Tsiyyon
the action of Yahweh our God.

11 Polish the arrows, fill the quivers,
Yahweh has aroused the spirit of Maday's [Media's] kings.
Because his strategy against Babel
is to devastate it.
Because it's Yahweh's redress,
redress for his palace.
12 To Babel's walls lift up a banner, make a strong watch,
set up watchmen, prepare ambushes.
Because Yahweh is both scheming and acting on
what he spoke regarding Babel's inhabitants.
13 You who dwell by much water, abundant in storehouses,
your end has come, the time for your cutting off.
14 Yahweh of Armies has sworn by his life:

I'm filling you with people like a locust swarm;
they'll chant a shout over you.
15 One who made the earth by his energy,
established the world by his smartness,
by his understanding stretched out the heavens:
16 At his giving voice
there was a rumble of the water in the heavens.
He brought up clouds from the end of the earth;
made lightning for the rain,
brought out wind from his storehouses.

17 Every human being proves dense, without knowledge;

every goldsmith is put to shame by the image,
Because his figure is a falsehood,
and there's no breath in them.
[18]They're hollow, a work for mockery;
at the time when they're attended to, they'll perish.
[19]Not like these is Ya'aqob's share,
because he's the one who formed everything.
And it is the clan that is his domain;
Yahweh of Armies is his name.

You were my club

[20]You were my club,
my battle instruments.
I clubbed nations with you,
I devastated kingdoms with you.
[21]I clubbed horse and its rider with you,
I clubbed chariot and its rider with you.
[22]I clubbed man and woman with you,
I clubbed elder and youth with you.
I clubbed young man and girl with you,
[23]I clubbed shepherd and his flock with you.
I clubbed ploughman and his pair with you,
I clubbed governors and overseers with you.
[24]But I shall make good to Babel
and to all Kasdim's inhabitants
For all their bad dealing,
which they did in Tsiyyon before your eyes (Yahweh's declaration).

[25]Here am I in relation to you,
mountain of the devastator (Yahweh's declaration),
Destroyer of the entire earth;
I'm stretching out my hand against you.
I shall roll you from the cliffs
and make you a burnt mountain.
[26]They won't get from you
a cornerstone or foundation stone,
because you'll be a total desolation permanently (Yahweh's declaration).

[27]Lift up a banner in the earth,
sound a horn among the nations.
Make nations sacred against it,
make it heard to kingdoms against it,
Ararat, Minni, Ashkenaz.
Appoint a marshal against it,
bring up horses like swarming locust.
[28]Make nations sacred against it,
the kings of Maday,
Its governors, all its overseers,
every country it rules.

[29]The earth is shaking and writhing
because Yahweh's intentions are implemented against Babel
To make the country of Babel
a desolation without inhabitant.
[30]Babel's strong men are holding back from doing battle;
they're sitting in the fortresses.
Their strength has failed,
they've turned into women.
People have set fire to its dwellings,
its gateway bars have broken.
[31]Runner runs to meet runner,
messenger to meet messenger,
To tell the king of Babel
that his town has been captured at one end.
[32]The fords have been seized,
people have set the marshes on fire,

the men of battle are fearful.

Yahweh takes on Bel

[33]Because Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's God, has said this:

Miss Babel is like a threshing-floor at the time of its treading:
yet a little while
and the time of its harvest will come.
[34]'He consumed me, crushed me,
did Nebukadre'tstsar king of Babel,
put me down an empty dish.
He swallowed me like a dragon,
filled his belly with my tasty things, threw me up.
[35]The violence done to me and my body be on Babel'
says the inhabitant of Tsiyyon.
'My blood be on Kasdim's inhabitants'
says Yerushalaim.

[36]Therefore Yahweh says this:

Here am I, arguing your case.
I'll exact redress for you.
I'll wither its sea and dry up its spring.
[37]Babel will become heaps of rubble,
The abode of jackals, a desolation,
something to whistle at, with no inhabitant.
[38]Together, like cougars they roar,
they've growled like the whelps of lions.
[39]When they've been made hot I'll set out their drink banquet,
and get them drunk in order that they may exult,
And sleep an everlasting sleep
and not wake up (Yahweh's declaration).
[40]I'll take them down like lambs to slaughter,
like rams along with goats.
[41]How Sheshak has been captured,
the praise of the entire earth has been seized.
How Babel has become
a desolation among the nations.
[42]The sea has gone up over Babel;
it's covered by the rumble of its waves.
[43]Its towns have become a desolation,
its country desert and steppe,
A country where no one lives in them,
where a human being doesn't pass through them.
[44]I shall attend to Bel in Babel
and make what he's swallowed come out of his mouth.
Nations will no more flood to him;
even Babel's wall is falling.

An everlasting sleep

[45]Get out from inside it, my people;
each of you save his life
from Yahweh's angry blaze.
[46]Beware that your mind doesn't become soft or you become afraid
at the report that makes itself heard in the country.
A report will come during the year
and afterwards a report may come during the next year,
Violence in the country,
ruler against ruler.
[47]Therefore, now, days are coming
when I shall attend to Babel's images.
Its entire country will be shamed;
all its people who are run through will fall within it.
[48]The heavens and the earth and all that's in them
will resound over Babel,

because from the north the destroyers will come to it (Yahweh's declaration).

[49]Yes, Babel, for the falling of those of Yisra'el who have been run through;
yes, for Babel all in the earth who have been run through have fallen.
[50]Survivors of the sword, go,
don't stand there.
Be mindful of Yahweh from afar;
Yerushalaim is to come up into your mind.
[51]'We were shamed, because we heard reviling,
disgrace covered our faces.
Because strangers came
into the sacred places in Yahweh's house.'

[52]Therefore, there, days are coming (Yahweh's declaration)
when I shall attend to its images
and in the entire country the person who has been run through will groan.
[53]When Babel goes up to the heavens,
when it fortifies its strong height,
destroyers will come to it from me (Yahweh's declaration).

[54]The sound of a cry from Babel,
a great breaking from the country of the Kasdites.
[55]Because Yahweh is destroying Babel,
eliminating the loud voice from it.
Their waves are rumbling like much water;
the din of their voice gives out.
[56]Because there is coming against it
a destroyer, against Babel.
Its strong men will be captured;
their bows will shatter.
Because Yahweh is a God of dealings;
he really makes good.
[57]I shall make its officials and its experts drunk,
its governors and overseers and strong men.
They will sleep an everlasting sleep
and not wake up (a declaration of the King, whose name is Yahweh of Armies).

In the interests of the living

[58]Yahweh of Armies has said this:

Babel's wall, broad, will be totally levelled,
its high gateways burned with fire.
Peoples will have toiled for emptiness,
nations will have got weary for fire.
[59]The word that Yirmeyahu the prophet ordered to Serayah ben Neriyyah son of Mahseyah when he went with Tsidqiyyahu king of Yehudah to Babel in the fourth year of his reign; Serayah was accommodation officer. [60]Yirmeyahu wrote down all the bad fortune that would come to Babel on a document, all these words that are written concerning Babel.
[61]Yirmeyahu said to Serayah, 'When you come to Babel, you're to see that you read out all these words. [62]And you're to say, "Yahweh, you yourself have spoken concerning this place that you'll cut it off, so that there won't be anyone living in it, human being or animal, because it's to be a great desolation permanently."
[63]When you've finished reading out this document, you're to tie a stone to it and throw it into the middle of the Euphrates.
[64]You're to say, "In this way Babel will sink and not rise up because of the bad fortune that I'm going to bring on it. They'll have got weary."'
As far as here it is the words of Yirmeyahu.

The horrifying coda

52 Tsidqiyyahu was 21 years of age when he began to reign and he reigned 11 years in Yerushalaim. His mother's name was Hamutal bat Yirmeyahu, from Libnah. [2]He did what was bad in Yahweh's eyes in accordance with all that Yehoyaqim had done, [3]because of the fact that Yahweh's anger was against Yerushalaim and against Yehudah until he threw them out of his presence.
Tsidqiyyahu rebelled against the king of Babel, [4]and in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth of the month, Nebukadne'tstsar king of Babel came against Yerushalaim, he and his entire force. They camped against it and built blockades all round. [5]The town came under siege until the eleventh year of King Tsidqiyyahu. [6]In the fourth month, on the ninth of the month, the famine had become overwhelming in the town and there was no bread for the people of the country. [7]The town broke open,

and all the men of battle fled; they got out of the town in the night by way of the gateway between the double wall which was by the king's garden, while the Kasdites were all round the town.

They went by the steppe road, [8]but the Kasdite force pursued after the king. They overtook Tsidqiyyahu in the Yeriho steppes when his entire force had scattered from him. [9]They captured the king and took him up to the king of Babel at Riblah in the region of Hamat, and he announced rulings with him. [10]The king of Babel slaughtered Tsidqiyyahu's sons before his eyes, and also slaughtered all the Yehudahite officials at Riblah. [11]Tsidqiyyahu's eyes he gouged out, and he bound him with copper chains. The king of Babel brought him to Babel and put him in the guard house until the day of his death.

Yirmeyahu horribly vindicated

[12]In the fifth month, on the tenth of the month (i.e. the nineteenth year of King Nebukadne'tstsar king of Babel), Nebuzar'adan the chief of the guards stood before the king of Babel in Yerushalaim [13]and burned Yahweh's house, the king's house and all the houses in Yerushalaim. Every house of a big person he burned in fire. [14]All the walls round Yerushalaim, the entire Kasdite force that was with the chief of the guards demolished. [15]Some of the poorest elements of the people, and the rest of the people who remained in the town, and the people who had submitted (who had submitted to the king of Babel), and the rest of the horde, Nebuzar'adan the chief of the guards took into exile, [16]but some of the poorest elements in the country the chief of the guards let remain as vinedressers and farmworkers.

[17]The copper pillars that belonged to Yahweh's house, and the stands and the copper sea that was in Yahweh's house, the Kasdites broke up. They carried all their copper to Babel. [18]The buckets, the shovels, the snuffers, the ladles, the sprinklers and all the copper articles with which they ministered, they took. [19]The basins, the pans, the sprinklers, the pots, the candelabra, the ladles, the bowls, whatever was of gold and whatever was of silver, the chief of the guards took. [20]The two pillars, the one sea and the 12 copper cattle that were under the stands, which Shelomoh [Solomon] made for Yahweh's house – there was no weighing the copper in all these articles. [21]The pillars: the height of one pillar was nine metres; a line of six metres would go round it, and its thickness was four fingers, hollow, [22]with a copper capital on it; the height of the capital was one and a half metres, with a net with pomegranates on the capital all round, all of it copper; like these was the second pillar with pomegranates. [23]There were 96 pomegranates towards the wind: all the pomegranates were a hundred above the net all round.

Is it the end or is there hope?

[24]The chief of the guards took Serayah the head priest, Tsephanyah the number two priest and the three keepers of the threshold, [25]and from the town he took a courtier who was appointee over the men of battle, and seven people from the heads who were before the king, who were found in the town, the secretary of the army officer who mustered the people of the country, and 60 individuals from the people of the country who were found inside the town. [26]Nebuzar'adan the chief of the guards took them and made them go to the king of Babel at Riblah. [27]The king of Babel struck them down and put them to death at Riblah, in the region of Hamat.

So Yehudah went into exile from upon its land.

[28]This is the company that Nebukadre'tstsar exiled in the seventh year: 3,023 Yehudahites;

[29]in Nebukadre'tstsar's eighteenth year: 832 people from Yerushalaim;

[30]in Nebukadre'tstsar's twenty-third year, Nebuzar'adan the head of the guards exiled 745 Yehudahites.

All the people were 4,600.

[31]But in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Yehoyakin king of Yehudah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-fifth of the month, Ewil Merodak king of Babel, in the year he began to reign, lifted up the head of Yehoyakin king of Yehudah and got him out of the prison. [32]He spoke of good things with him, gave him his seat above the seat of the kings who were with him in Babel [33]and changed his prison clothes. He ate a meal before him regularly for all the days of his life, [34]and his provision was given him as a regular provision from the king of Babel, a day's allocation on its day, until the day of his death, for all the days of his life.

Lamentations

These five prayer-poems grieve over a great disaster that has happened to Yerushalaim. The poems presumably relate to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 bc, though the book doesn't make any concrete references that make that link explicit. But if that disaster is the one Lamentations refers to, it is appropriate that the book thus follows the account of this event in Jeremiah. Tradition identifies Jeremiah as the author, though the poems themselves are anonymous.

Each poem comprises 22 verses (except the middle one, with 66), which is the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet, and the first four poems are alphabetical – that is, the verses begin with the successive letters of the alphabet. They express grief, protest and prayer from A to Z.

The Hebrew Bible has the books of the Bible in a different order from that in the English Bible (which follows the order in the Greek translation of the Bible). The Hebrew Bible groups Lamentations with some other shorter books (Song of Songs, Ruth, Ecclesiastes and Esther) that are used once a year in Jewish communities. Lamentations is used on the sixth day of the month Ab, which overlaps with July–August, to mark the anniversary of the fall of Jerusalem in 587 and in AD 70.

The town bereft

1 Oh! – the town sits alone
that abounded with a people.
She became like a widow,
she who was great among the nations.
She who was a queen among the provinces
became a slave.
2 She cries and cries in the night;
there are tears on her cheeks.
She has no comforter
from all her allies.
All her friends broke faith with her;
they became enemies to her.
3 Yehudah went into exile after humbling
and a great amount of servitude.
When she went to live among the nations
she didn't find a settled place.
All her pursuers caught up with her
amid her pressures.
4 The roads to Tsiyyon [Zion] are mourning,
because of the lack of people coming for the set times.
All her gateways are desolate,
her priests are groaning.
Her girls are suffering,
and her – it's hard for her.
5 Her adversaries became her head,
her enemies are at peace.
Because Yahweh made her suffer
on account of the great number of her rebellions.
Her infants went into captivity
before the adversary.
6 From Miss Tsiyyon
all her glory went away.
Her officials became like deer
that had found no pasture.
They walked without energy
before the pursuer.
7 Yerushalaim has been mindful,
in her days of humbling and wandering,
Of all the desirable things she had,
which there were from days before.
When her people fell into the hand of the adversary
and there was no one helping her,
The adversaries saw her,
made fun of her coming to an end.
8 Yerushalaim did wrong and did wrong;
therefore she became taboo.
All the people who had honoured her treated her as wretched
because they saw her exposure.
Yes, she groaned

and turned backwards.
[9]Though her uncleanness was in her skirts,
she hadn't been mindful of her future.
She went down in extraordinary ways;
she had no comforter.
'Yahweh, look at my humbling,
because the enemy has got big.'
[10]The adversary laid his hand
on all her desirable things.
Because she saw nations
that came into her sanctuary,
Who you ordered should not come
into your congregation.
[11]All her people are groaning,
looking for bread.
They have given their desirable things
for food to bring life back.
'Look, Yahweh, heed,
because I've become wretched.'

It's nothing to you who pass by, is it?

[12]Though it's nothing to you, all you who pass along the road,
heed and look.
Is there any pain like my pain,
which was dealt out to me,
When Yahweh made me suffer
on the day of his angry blazing?
[13]From on high he sent fire,
into my bones, and it held sway over them.
He spread a net for my feet;
he turned me backwards.
He made me a desolation,
faint all day long.
[14]The yoke of my rebellions was bound on,
they interweave by his hand.
They came up on to my neck;
he made my energy collapse.
The Lord gave me
into the hands of people before whom I cannot stand.
[15]The Lord within me threw aside
all my sturdy men.
He called for a set time against me
to break my young men.
The Lord trod in a press
young Miss Yehudah.
[16]'On account of these things I'm crying;
both my eyes are going down with water.
Because a comforter is far from me,
someone bringing my life back.
My children have become desolate,
because an enemy was strong.'
[17]Tsiyyon spread out her hands;
she has no comforter.
Yahweh ordered to Ya'aqob [Jacob]
the people round him as his adversaries.
Yerushalaim became
something taboo among them.
[18]'Yahweh is in the right,
because I rebelled against his bidding.
Listen, please, all you peoples,
see my pain.
My girls and my young men
went into captivity.
[19]I called to my friends;
those people beguiled me.
My priests and my elders

perished in the town,
When they looked for food for themselves
so they might bring their life back.
[20]See, Yahweh, how there was pressure on me;
my insides churned.
My heart turned over within me,
because I had rebelled and rebelled.
Outside, the sword bereaved;
at home, very death.
[21]People heard that I was groaning;
I had no comforter.
When all my enemies heard of my bad fortune, they were glad
that you yourself had acted.
You brought about the day you called for –
they should be like me.
[22]All their bad action should come before you –
deal with them,
As you dealt with me
on account of all my rebellions.
Because my groans are many,
and my heart is faint.'

Anger

2 Oh! – with his anger the Lord clouds over
Miss Tsiyyon.
He threw down Yisra'el's glory
from the heavens to the earth.
He was not mindful of his footstool
on his day of anger.
[2]The Lord swallowed up all Ya'aqob's pastures
and didn't spare.
In his fury he tore down
Miss Yehudah's fortifications.
He brought right to the earth, made ordinary,
the kingdom and its officials.
[3]He cut off every horn of Yisra'el
in his angry blazing.
He turned backwards his right hand
from before the enemy.
He burned up against Ya'aqob like a flaming fire
consuming all round.
[4]He directed his bow as an enemy,
took his stand with his right hand as an adversary.
He killed everyone
who was desirable to the eye.
In Miss Tsiyyon's tent
he poured out his wrath like fire.
[5]The Lord became like an enemy;
he swallowed up Yisra'el.
He swallowed up all her citadels,
devastated her fortifications.
He made great in Miss Yehudah
mourning and moaning.
[6]He violated his shelter like a garden,
destroyed his set place.
Yahweh caused set time and sabbath
to be put out of mind in Tsiyyon.
In his angry condemnation he spurned
king and priest.
[7]The Lord rejected his altar,
abandoned his sanctuary.
He gave over the walls of her citadels
into the enemy's hand.
They gave voice in Yahweh's house
as on the day when it was a set occasion.
[8]Yahweh intended to devastate

Miss Tsiyyon's wall.
He stretched out a line,
he didn't turn back his hand from swallowing up.
He made rampart and wall mourn;
together they languished.
[9]Her gateways sank into the earth;
he obliterated and broke up her bars.
Her king and her officials are among the nations;
there is no instruction.
Her prophets, too, found
no vision from Yahweh.
[10]Miss Tsiyyon's elders
sit on the earth, they're silent.
They've taken up earth on their head,
they've wrapped on sack.
Yerushalaim's girls
have lowered their head to the ground.
[11]My eyes are spent with tears,
my insides churn.
My heart has poured out to the earth
on account of the breaking of my dear people,
While infant and suckling faint
in the township's squares.
[12]To their mothers they say,
'Where are grain and wine?',
As they faint like someone run through
in the town's squares,
As their life pours out
in their mothers' arms.

Is this the town called 'The Joy of All the Earth'?

[13]What can I avow, what can I liken to you,
Miss Yerushalaim?
What can I compare with you so I may comfort you,
fair Miss Tsiyyon?
Because your breaking is as big as the sea;
who can heal you?
[14]Your prophets beheld for you
things that were empty and arid.
They didn't reveal your waywardness
so as to restore your fortunes.
They beheld for you
empty prophecies and seductions.
[15]All the people who pass your way
have clapped the palms of their hands at you.
They've whistled and shaken their head
at Miss Yerushalaim:
'Is this the town of which they used to say,
"Complete in beauty, a joy to the entire earth"?'
[16]Against you all your enemies
have opened their mouth wide.
They've whistled and ground their teeth,
they've said, 'We've swallowed her up.
Indeed this is the day that we hoped for;
we've found it, we've seen it.'
[17]Yahweh did what he schemed,
he accomplished his word,
Which he ordered long ago;
he tore down and didn't spare.
He let an enemy rejoice over you,
exalted the horn of your adversaries.
[18]Their heart cried out to the Lord;
Miss Tsiyyon's wall,
Make tears go down like a wadi,
day and night.
Don't give yourself respite;

your dear eye must not stop.
[19]Get up, resound at night,
at the beginning of the watches.
Pour out your heart like water
in front of the presence of the Lord.
Lift up the palms of your hands to him
for the life of your infants,
Who faint with hunger
at the top of all the streets.
[20]Look, Yahweh, heed
the one with whom you've dealt like this.
Do women eat their fruit,
the babies they dandle?
Are priest and prophet killed
in the Lord's sanctuary?
[21]Young person and old
lay on the ground in the streets.
My girls and my young men
fell by the sword.
You killed them on your day of anger,
you slaughtered them, you didn't spare.
[22]You call (as on the day of a set occasion) –
for terrors for me from all round.
On Yahweh's day of anger
there was no one escaping or surviving.
Those whom I dandled and raised –
my enemy finished them off.

The man who saw humbling

3 I am the man who saw humbling,
by his furious club.
[2]He drove me and made me go
in darkness and not light.
[3]Yes, against me
repeatedly he'd turn his hand all day long.
[4]He wore away my flesh and my skin,
he broke my bones.
[5]He built up against me and surrounded me
with poison and weariness.
[6]He made me live in darkness,
like those long dead.
[7]He walled me in and I couldn't get out,
he made my chains heavy.
[8]Even when I'd cry out and call for help,
he shut out my plea.
[9]He walled in my ways with stonework,
twisted my paths.
[10]He was a lurking bear to me,
a lion in hiding.
[11]He diverted my ways and mangled me,
made me desolate.
[12]He directed his bow and set me up
as the target for his arrow.
[13]He made the shafts from his quiver
come into my inner being.
[14]I became an object of fun to all my people,
their song all day long.
[15]He filled me with bitter herbs,
saturated me with vinegar.
[16]He broke my teeth on the gravel,
bent me down in the ashes.
[17]My soul gave up on well-being,
I forgot good things.
[18]I said, 'My distinction has perished,
and my waiting for something from Yahweh.'

[19]To be mindful of my humbling and my wandering
was vinegar and poison.
[20]My spirit is mindful, so mindful,
and it bows down within me.

They are new every morning

[21]This I bring back to my mind,
therefore I shall wait:
[22]Yahweh's acts of commitment, that we're not finished,
that his compassion isn't ended.
[23]They're new each morning;
his truthfulness is great.
[24]'Yahweh is my share', my entire being said;
therefore I shall wait for him.
[25]Yahweh is good to people who hope in him,
to the person who enquires of him.
[26]It's good that one waits and keeps still
for Yahweh's deliverance.
[27]It's good for a man
that he carries a yoke in his youth.
[28]He should sit alone and be still
when he's put it on him.
[29]He should put his mouth in the dirt;
perhaps there's hope.
[30]He should give his jaw to the one who strikes him down,
become full of reviling.
[31]Because the Lord
doesn't reject permanently.
[32]Rather he brings suffering, but has compassion,
in the greatness of his acts of commitment.
[33]Because it's not from his heart that he humbles
and brings suffering to human beings,
[34]Crushing under his feet
all earth's prisoners,
[35]Turning aside the exercise of authority for a man
in front of the presence of the One on High,
[36]Putting someone in the wrong in his argument
when the Lord didn't look.

[37]Who is it who said and it happened,
when the Lord didn't order?
[38]From the mouth of the One on High
do not the bad things and the good things issue?
[39]Of what should a living person complain,
a man in connection with his wrongdoings?
[40]Let's search out and examine our ways
and turn back to Yahweh.
[41]Let's lift up our mind with the palms of our hands
to God in the heavens.
[42]When we ourselves rebelled and defied,
you yourself didn't pardon.
[43]You wrapped yourself in anger and pursued us,
you killed and didn't spare.
[44]You wrapped yourself in your cloud
so that a plea didn't pass through.

Yahweh's shadow side

[45]You make us trash and refuse
among the peoples.
[46]Against us all our enemies
have opened their mouth wide.
[47]Terror and trap have become ours,
ruin and breaking.

[48]My eye flows with streams of water
because of the breaking of my fair people.
[49]My eye has poured and won't stop,
without respite,
[50]Until Yahweh looks down
and sees from the heavens.
[51]My eye has dealt hard to my entire being
because of all the girls in my town.
[52]My enemies hunted me relentlessly
like a bird for no reason.
[53]They put an end to my life in a pit
and threw stones at me.
[54]Water flowed over my head;
I said, 'I'm lost.'
[55]I called on your name, Yahweh,
from the deepest pit.
[56]You listened to my voice, 'Don't close your ear
concerning my relief, to my cry for help.'
[57]You came near on the day when I would call on you;
you said, 'Don't be afraid.'
[58]You pressed the arguments for me, Lord,
you restored my life.
[59]You've seen the wrong done to me, Yahweh:
exercise authority with a ruling for me.
[60]You've seen all their redress,
all their intentions for me,
[61]You've listened to their reviling, Yahweh,
all their intentions against me,
[62]The lips of the people who rise up against me
and their murmuring against me all day long.
[63]Look at them sitting and rising;
I'm their song.
[64]Give back their dealings to them, Yahweh,
in accordance with the action of their hands.
[65]May you give them a covering over their mind,
your vow for them.
[66]May you pursue them in anger and annihilate them
from under Yahweh's heavens.

What happened to loving mothers

4 Oh! – gold tarnishes,
fine gold changes.
Sacred stones pour out
at the top of every street.
[2]Tsiyyon's precious children,
worth their weight in pure gold –
Oh, they're thought of like clay vessels,
a potter's handiwork.
[3]Even jackals offer the breast,
nurse their young.
My dear people has become cruel,
like ostriches in the wilderness.
[4]The suckling's tongue sticks
to the roof of its mouth, for thirst.
Infants ask for bread;
there's no one offering it to them.
[5]People who ate gourmet food
are desolate in the streets.
People brought up in purple
cling to rubbish heaps.
[6]The waywardness of my dear people had become bigger
than the wrongdoing of Sedom [Sodom],
Which was overturned in a moment,
though hands didn't whirl at it.

[7]Her consecrated people were purer than snow,
    whiter than milk.
Their frame was redder than coral,
    their body was sapphire.
[8]Their appearance became blacker than soot;
    they weren't recognized in the streets.
Their skin shrivelled on their frame;
    it became dry like wood.
[9]The people run through by the sword were better off
    than the people run through by famine,
Those who slip away, thrust through,
    for lack of the produce of the field.
[10]The hands of compassionate women
    cooked their children.
They became food for them
    through the breaking of my dear people.
[11]Yahweh finished up his wrath,
    poured out his angry blazing.
He kindled a fire in Tsiyyon;
    it consumed its foundations.

Yahweh's anointed captured

[12]The kings of the earth didn't believe,
    or all the world's inhabitants,
That adversary or enemy would come
    through Yerushalaim's gates.
[13]Because of her prophets' wrongdoings,
    her priests' wayward acts,
People who shed within her
    the blood of the faithful,
[14]They wandered blind through the streets,
    they were defiled with blood,
Without people being able
    to touch their clothes.
[15]'Go away, polluted', they called to them,
    'Go away, go away, don't touch.'
When they fled and wandered, people said among the nations,
    'They must be resident no longer.'
[16]Yahweh's presence divided them up,
    he no longer looks to them.
They didn't honour the face of priests,
    they didn't show favour to elders.
[17]Our eyes still spend themselves
    looking for help for ourselves, in vain.
On our watchtowers we watched
    for a nation that wouldn't deliver.
[18]People hounded our steps
    so that we didn't walk in our squares.
Our end was near, our days were full,
    because our end had come.
[19]Our pursuers became swifter
    than the eagles in the heavens.
They chased us on the mountains,
    they lay in wait for us in the wilderness.
[20]The breath of our lungs, Yahweh's anointed,
    was captured in their traps,
The one of whom we had said, 'In his shade
    we will live among the nations.'
[21]Celebrate and rejoice, Miss Edom,
    you who live in the country of Uts.
To you, too, the chalice will pass;
    you'll get drunk and you'll strip naked.
[22]Your waywardness is complete, Miss Tsiyyon;
    he will no longer exile you.
He's attending to your waywardness, Miss Edom;

he’s exposing your wrongdoings.

Have you totally rejected us?

5 Be mindful, Yahweh, of what happened to us;
look, and see our reviling.
2 Our domain was turned over to strangers,
our homes to foreigners.
3 We became orphans with no father,
our mothers actual widows.
4 We drank our water for money;
our wood comes for payment.
5 We were pursued, at our neck;
we were weary, but there was no settling down for us.
6 We’ve put out our hand to Misrayim [Egypt],
to Ashshur to get a fill of bread.
7 Our parents did wrong and are no more,
and we were the ones who carried their wayward acts.
8 Servants have ruled over us;
there’s no one freeing us from their hand.
9 It’s at the risk of our lives that we bring our bread,
because of the sword in the wilderness.
10 Our skin was as hot as an oven,
because of the fever of famine.
11 They humbled women in Tsiyyon,
girls in Yehudah’s towns.
12 Officials were hung up by their hand;
elders weren’t respected.
13 Young men carried a millstone,
boys collapsed with wood.
14 Elders turned back from the gate,
young men from their music.
15 The joy of our heart ceased;
our dancing was turned to mourning.
16 The crown on our head fell;
oh, alas for us, because we did wrong.
17 Because of this, our heart became sick,
because of these things, our eyes become dark,
18 Because of Mount Tsiyyon, which is desolate;
jackals have walked about on it.
19 You, Yahweh, sit permanently,
your throne endures through the generations.
20 Why do you put us out of mind permanently,
abandon us for length of days?
21 Bring us back to yourself, Yahweh, so we may come back;
make our days new, as before.
22 But you have totally rejected us,
you have been utterly furious with us.

Ezekiel

Ezekiel [Yehezqe'l] was a member of the priestly clan in Israel, but before he was old enough to be a priest he was taken off into exile in Babylon with other priestly families in 597 bc. In Babylon he was given a vision of Yahweh and was summoned to be a prophet there to the exiles. The beginning of his prophetic work thus coincided with the last years of Jeremiah's prophetic work. Like Jeremiah, his messages brought much critique of the Jerusalem community and many warnings about disaster coming to it, but also brought promises of a more positive future the other side of the trouble. But whereas Jeremiah delivered the warning and the promises in Jerusalem itself, Ezekiel delivered his warnings and promises in Babylon. The reason was that the future of Jerusalem was of decisive importance to people who had been taken off from there into exile. They were inclined to think that they would soon be going back home. Yahweh needs to get them to see that they will not soon be going home, because the conduct of priests, prophets, other leaders and ordinary people back home is such (perhaps worse than that of the people in exile) that Yahweh has to bring more chastisement upon them. On the other hand, when the axe has fallen, it will be possible for restoration to happen.

The book of Ezekiel divides neatly in accordance with this profile.

- In chapters 1—3 Ezekiel gives us an account of the vision Yahweh gave him that commissioned him as a lookout-prophet. It is a great vision of Yahweh himself, whose appearing in Babylon indicated that he had not abandoned the people who had been taken off into exile.
- In chapters 4—24 Ezekiel relates a series of visions of what is going on in Jerusalem. He portrays the goings on in Jerusalem as vividly as if he were actually there. No doubt his envisioning was facilitated by the knowledge of things in Jerusalem that he would have gained before he was taken into exile. He portrays the pagan practices that characterized the worship in the Jerusalem temple and the oppressive practices that characterized the life of the city, and he acts out the fall of the city and the exile of its inhabitants. His rhetoric and his acting out are exotic, picturesque, horrifying and not for the squeamish. Everything is subordinate to breaking through the consciousness of his audience.
- In chapters 25—32 Ezekiel begins the transition to the hopeful half of the book. Chapter 24 has referred to the beginning of the city's final siege, whose success (from the Babylonians' perspective) will open up the way to a more hopeful message. The transition lies in prophecies about Judah's neighbours who were often its adversaries (Ammon, Moab, Edom and Philistia), about the great regional trading nation Tyre, and about the nation that Judah often relied on as an ally, Egypt.
- Chapters 33—48 constitute Yahweh's direct promises about Judah's future. They begin with a renewed summons to Ezekiel to act as a watchman-prophet and with the arrival in Babylon of the news that Jerusalem has fallen. Yahweh now commissions Ezekiel to promise Israel's renewal. The promises constitute a series of declarations that Yahweh will take up and be faithful to his long-standing commitments. The people will be properly shepherded, by Yahweh and by a new David. Incursions from a people such as Edom will be stopped and the land that such peoples occupied will be Israel's again. The exiles will be brought back, cleansed and given a new spirit. The nation that feels reduced to dry bones will be brought back to life. The divided people will become one. Renewed threats from strange northern peoples will lead to their elimination. A remarkable new temple will be built and Yahweh will once again dwell there. The country itself will be physically transformed and reallocated. A river will flow from the temple to bring fruitfulness to hostile parts of the country. The city will be renamed 'Yahweh-Is-There'. This last section of the book makes clear that we should not be literalistic in interpreting Ezekiel, and this consideration undermines any suggestion that Ezekiel is referring to Middle Eastern events in our own time or that he is indicating that we should expect or plan for the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple. But neither should we underestimate the wonder of what Yahweh promises.

God appears in Babel

1 In the thirtieth year, in the fourth, on the fifth of the month, when I was among the exile community by the River Kebar, the heavens opened and I saw a great appearance of God. [2]On the fifth of the month (it was the fifth year of King Yoyakin's exile), [3]Yahweh's word came to Yehezqe'l ben Buzi, the priest, in the country of the Kasdites by the River Kebar. Yahweh's hand came on him there.

[4]'I saw: there, a hurricane wind came from the north, a great cloud, with fire consuming itself, with its brightness all round, with a very gleam of electrum from inside it, from inside the fire, [5]and from inside it the form of four creatures. This was their appearance. They had human form, [6]but they had four faces each and four wings each. [7]Their feet: a straight foot, but the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot, and they were sparkling like the gleam of burnished copper. [8]Human hands were under their wings on their four quarters.

Their faces and their wings belonging to the four of them: [9]their wings touched each other. They wouldn't turn as they went; they'd go, each in the direction of its face. [10]The form of their faces: a human face, but the four of them had a lion's face on the right, and the four of them had an ox's face on the left, and the four of them had an eagle's face. [11]So their faces. Their wings were stretching upwards, two belonging to each touching each, and two covering its body. [12]They'd go each in the direction of its face; to wherever the wind was to go, they'd go. They wouldn't turn as they went.

[13]So the form of the creatures. Their appearance was very coals of fire burning, the very appearance of torches. It was going about between the creatures. The fire had a brightness, and from the fire lightning was coming out. [14]The creatures were running and coming back, the very appearance of lightning-flashes.

The creatures powering the chariot

[15]I looked at the creatures. There, one wheel on the earth beside the creatures with its four faces. [16]The wheels' appearance and their construction: the very gleam of topaz. The form of each of the four of them: their appearance and their construction were like a wheel inside a wheel. [17]When they went, they'd go in the direction of their four quarters; they wouldn't turn as they went. [18]Their rims were high and awe-inspiring. Their rims were full of eyes all round, belonging to the four of them. [19]When the creatures went, the wheels would go, beside them. When the creatures lifted above the earth, the wheels lifted. [20]Wherever the wind was to go, they'd go there, with the wind going. The wheels would lift alongside them, because the creature's spirit was in the wheels. [21]When they went, they'd go; when they stopped, they'd stop; when they lifted from on the earth, the wheels would lift alongside them, because the creature's spirit was in the wheels.

[22]A form was above the creature's heads, a platform, the very gleam of crystal, awe-inspiring, spread out over their heads, above. [23]Under the platform their wings were straight towards each other. Each had two covering their bodies on one side, and each had two covering on the other side. [24]I heard the sound of their wings, the very sound of much water, the very sound of Shadday, when they went, the sound of a tumult, the very sound of an army. When they stopped, they'd relax their wings.

[25]There was a sound above the platform that was over their head (when they stopped, they'd relax their wings). [26]Above the platform that was over their head was the very appearance of sapphire, the form of a throne, and above the form of the throne a form that was a very human appearance on it, above.

A rebellious household

[27]I saw the very gleam of electrum, the very appearance of fire within it all round, from the appearance of his hips upwards and from the appearance of his hips downwards I saw the very appearance of fire. His brightness was all round. [28]The very appearance of the bow that comes in the cloud on a rainy day, such was the appearance of the brightness all round. That was the appearance of the form of Yahweh's splendour.

I saw it and fell on my face, and I heard a voice speaking.

2 He said to me, 'Young man, stand on your feet, so I may speak with you.' [2]A wind came into me as he spoke to me. It stood me on my feet and I listened to him speaking to me.

[3]He said to me, 'Young man, I'm sending you to the Yisra'elites, nations that rebel, who've rebelled against me. They and their ancestors have defied me right up to this day. [4]The descendants are tough-faced and strong-minded. I'm sending you to them, and you're to say to them, 'The Lord Yahweh has said this.'

[5]Whether they listen or refuse (because they're a rebellious household), they will acknowledge that a prophet's been among them. [6]So you, young man, don't be afraid of them and don't be afraid of their words, when thistles and thorns are with you and you're living with scorpions. Don't be afraid of their words, don't shatter because of them, because they're a rebellious household. [7]You're to speak my words to them whether they listen, or whether they refuse because they're rebellious. [8]You, young man, listen to what I'm speaking to you. Don't become rebellious like the rebellious household. Open your mouth and eat what I'm going to give you.'

[9]I saw: there, a hand put out to me, and there, in it a document scroll. [10]He spread it out before me. It was written on front and back. Laments, muttering and groaning were written on it.

Strong-headed and tough-minded

3 He said to me, 'Young man, eat what you find. Eat this scroll, and go speak to Yisra'el's household.' [2]I opened my mouth and he got me to eat this scroll. [3]He said to me, 'Young man, get your stomach to eat, fill your insides with this scroll that I'm giving you.' I ate, and in my mouth it became like syrup for sweetness.

[4]He said to me, 'Young man, go, come to Yisra'el's household and speak with my words to them. [5]Because not to a people unfathomable of speech and difficult of language – you're sent to Yisra'el's household, [6]not to many peoples unfathomable of speech and difficult of language whose words you can't listen to. If I didn't send you to them . . .

Those people would listen to you. [7]But Yisra'el's household won't be willing to listen to you, because they're not willing to listen to me, because Yisra'el's entire household are strong-headed and tough-minded. [8]There, I'm making your face strong over against their face and your head tough over against their head. [9]Like a mineral harder than flint I'm making your head. You will not be afraid of them, you will not shatter before them, because they're a rebellious household.'

[10]Then he said to me, 'Young man, receive into your mind all my words that I speak to you. Listen with your ears [11]and go, come to the exile community, to the members of your people, and speak to them. Say to them, "The Lord Yahweh has said this", whether they listen or refuse.'

[12]Then a wind lifted me, and I heard behind me a great quaking sound: 'Yahweh's splendour be blessed from his place', [13]and the sound of the creatures' wings beating against each other and the sound of the wheels alongside them: a great quaking sound. [14]When a wind lifted me and took me, I went, bitter and in wrath of my spirit, with Yahweh's hand strong on me.

I shall look for his blood from your hand

[15]I came to the exile community at Tel Abib living by the River Kebar. I lived where they were living, lived there desolate for seven days, [16]and at the end of the seven days Yahweh's word came to me: [17]'Young man, I'm making you a lookout for Yisra'el's household. You're to listen to the word from my mouth and warn them from me.

[18]When I say about the faithless person, "You will definitely die", and you don't warn him and don't speak to warn the faithless person from his faithless way, to keep him alive: he, the faithless person, will die for his waywardness, but I shall look for his blood from your hand. [19]But you – when you warn the faithless person and he doesn't turn back from his faithlessness, from his

faithless way: he will die for his waywardness, but you will have saved your life.
[20]And when a faithful person turns back from his faithfulness and does what is evil and I put an obstacle before him, he will
die, because you didn't warn him. For his wrongdoing he will die, and his faithful acts that he has done won't be borne in mind,
but I shall look for his blood from your hand. [21]But you, when you warn him (the faithful person) that the faithful person
shouldn't do wrong, and he doesn't do wrong, he will definitely live because he let himself be warned, and you yourself will have
saved your life.'
[22]Yahweh's hand came on me there and he said to me, 'Set off, go out to the valley, and I shall speak with you there.' [23]So I set
off and went out to the valley, and there – Yahweh's splendour was standing there, like the splendour that I saw at the River
Kebar. I fell on my face, [24a]but a wind came into me and stood me up on my feet.

Acting out a siege

[24b]He spoke with me and said to me, 'Come, shut yourself inside your house. [25]You, young man, there – they're putting ropes
on you and tying you up with them. You're not to go out among them. [26]I shall make your tongue stick to your palate and you'll
be dumb. To them, you won't be someone who reproves, because they're a rebellious household. [27]But when I speak with you, I
shall open your mouth and you will say to them, "The Lord Yahweh has said this." The one who listens may listen and the one
who refuses may refuse, because they're a rebellious household.
4 You, young man, get yourself a brick, put it before you, and engrave a town on it: Yerushalaim. [2]Prepare a siege against it.
Build a tower against it. Heap up a ramp against it. Make a camp against it. Set up battering rams against it all round. [3]And
you, get yourself an iron plate and place it as an iron wall between you and the town, and set your face towards it. It will be under
siege; you're to lay siege against it. It will be a sign for Yisra'el's household.
[4]You yourself, lie on your left side and on it put the waywardness of Yisra'el's household. The number of the days that you lie
on it, you will carry their waywardness. [5]I myself am giving you the years of their waywardness, in number 390 days; you will
carry the waywardness of Yisra'el's household. [6]You will finish these, then lie on your right side, a second time, and carry the
waywardness of Yehudah's household. Forty days, a day for each year, I'm giving you.

Defiled bread

[7]And towards Yerushalaim's siege you're to set your face and your bared arm, and prophesy against it. [8]There, I'm putting
ropes on you, and you aren't to turn from side to side until you've finished your days of siege. [9]You're to get yourself wheat,
barley, beans, lentils, millet and spelt, put them into a jar and make them into bread for yourself. For the number of days that
you're lying on your side, 390 days, you're to eat it.
[10]The food that you eat, by weight, 20 sheqels a day, you're to eat at the regular times, [11]and water by measure you're to drink,
a sixth of a gallon you're to drink at the regular times. [12]You're to eat it as a barley cake. Cook it on human excrement in their
sight.' [13]Yahweh said, 'In this way the Yisra'elites will eat their bread, defiled, among the nations where I'm driving them.'
[14]I said, 'Oh, Lord Yahweh, here, my person hasn't been defiled. I haven't eaten anything found dead or torn by an animal,
from my youth until now. Impure meat hasn't come into my mouth.' [15]So he said to me, 'See, I'm going to give you cattle dung
instead of human excrement. You can make your bread on that.' [16]But he said to me, 'Young man, here am I, I'm going to break
the bread supply in Yerushalaim. They will eat bread by weight in anxiety, and drink water by measure in desolation, [17]so that
they run out of bread and water and are desolate in relation to one another, and waste away because of their waywardness.'

Among the nations

5 'You, young man, get yourself a sharp sword. You're to get it for yourself as a barber's razor and pass it over your head and
over your beard. Get yourself weighing scales and divide them [the hairs]. [2]You're to burn a third in fire inside the town
when the days of the siege are fulfilled. Take a third and strike down all round it with the sword. And scatter a third to the wind; I
shall draw a sword after them. [3]But you're to get from there a few and bind them into the folds of your clothes. [4]Get some of them
again and throw them into the middle of the fire. Burn them in the fire. From this a fire will go out against the entire household of
Yisra'el.'
[5]The Lord Yahweh said this: 'This Yerushalaim I put among the nations, with countries round it. [6]But it rebelled against my
rulings with more faithlessness than the nations, and against my laws more than the countries round it. Because people rejected
my rulings, and my laws – they didn't walk by them.'
[7]Therefore the Lord Yahweh said this: 'Since you've been more turbulent than the nations that are round you – you haven't
walked by my laws, you haven't acted on my rulings and you haven't acted in accordance with the rulings of the nations that are
round you'; [8]therefore the Lord Yahweh said this: 'Here am I over against you, yes, I myself. I shall act on rulings among you
before the eyes of the nations. [9]I shall do in you what I haven't done and the like of which I won't do again, on account of all your
offensive practices.
[10]Therefore within you parents will eat children and children will eat their parents. I shall execute acts of authority against you
and scatter your remainder to every wind. [11]Therefore as I live (the Lord Yahweh's declaration) if I don't, because you defiled my
sanctuary with all your abominations and all your offensive practices – yes, I myself will shave you, my eye won't spare you, and
I myself won't pity you. [12]A third of you will die in an epidemic or be finished off through famine within you. A third will fall by
the sword all round you. And a third I shall scatter to every wind, and draw a sword after them.

About intolerance

[13]So my anger will finish itself up and I shall set down my wrath on them. I shall find relief, and they will acknowledge that I, Yahweh, have spoken in my passion, when I've finished up my wrath against them. [14]I shall make you a waste and an object of reviling among the nations that are round you, in the sight of everyone passing by. [15]It will be a basis for reviling and ridicule, for discipline and desolation, to the nations that are round you, when I execute acts of authority against you in anger, in wrath and in wrathful reproofs. I, Yahweh, have spoken.

[16]When I send off the bad arrows of famine on the people who were due for devastating, which I shall send off to devastate you, I shall add to the famine upon you and break the bread supply for you. [17]I shall send off against you famine and bad creatures, and they will bereave you; epidemic and bloodshed will pass through you, and I shall bring the sword against you. I, Yahweh, have spoken.'

6 Yahweh's word came to me: [2]'Young man, set your face towards Yisra'el's mountains and prophesy towards them. [3]You're to say, "Yisra'el's mountains, listen to the Lord Yahweh's word. The Lord Yahweh said this to the mountains and to the hills, to the canyons and to the ravines: 'Here am I, I'm going to bring a sword against you, and I shall obliterate your shrines. [4]Your altars will become desolate, your incense stands broken. I shall make those of you who are run through fall before their lumps. [5]I shall put the Yisra'elites' corpses before their lumps and scatter your bones round your altars [6]in all your settlements. The towns will be laid waste and the shrines desolate, in order that your altars may be laid waste and may make restitution, your lumps break and cease, your incense stands be cut down and what you've made be wiped out, [7]and the person who is run through may fall among you. And you will acknowledge that I am Yahweh.

I shall let some be left

[8]But I shall let some be left. When you have people who have escaped the sword among the nations, when you're scattered among the countries, [9]those of you who escape will be mindful of me among the nations where they've been taken captive, that I've been broken with their whorish mind that turned away from me and with their eyes whoring after their lumps. They'll feel a loathing towards their own selves concerning the bad things that they've done, regarding all their offensive practices. [10]And they will acknowledge that I am Yahweh. Not for nothing did I speak about bringing all this bad fortune to them.'

[11]The Lord Yahweh said this: 'Clap with the palm of your hand, stamp with your foot. Say, "Aagh" about all the offensive bad practices of Yisra'el's household, who will fall by sword, by famine and by epidemic. [12]The person who's far away will die by the epidemic, the one who's near will fall by the sword, and the one who remains and is preserved will die by the famine. I shall finish up my wrath on them. [13]And you will acknowledge that I am Yahweh when those of them who are run through are among their lumps round their altars towards every high hill, on all the tops of the mountains, under every verdant tree and under every leafy oak, the site where they presented a pleasing fragrance to all their lumps. [14]I shall stretch out my hand against them and make the country desolation and devastation, from the wilderness to Diblah, in all their settlements. And they will acknowledge that I am Yahweh.'

The club has blossomed

7 Yahweh's word came to me: [2]'You, young man – the Lord Yahweh has said this to Yisra'el's land: "An end! The end is coming upon the four corners of the country. [3]The end is now upon you. I shall send off my anger against you, and I shall exercise authority over you in accordance with your ways. I shall put all your offensive practices upon you. [4]My eye won't spare you, I shall not have pity, because I shall put upon you your ways and your offensive practices that are within you. And you will acknowledge that I am Yahweh."'

[5]The Lord Yahweh said this: 'A singular bad event, a bad event – there, it's coming. [6]An end is coming, it's coming. The end is rousing itself against you, there, it's coming. [7]The doom is coming upon you, you who inhabit the country. The time is coming. The day is near, tumult not cheering on the mountains. [8]Now it's near.

I shall pour out my wrath on you and finish up my anger against you. I shall exercise authority over you in accordance with your ways, and put all your offensive practices upon you. [9]My eye will not spare, I shall not have pity. When in accordance with your ways I put them upon you, your offensive practices that are within you, you will acknowledge that I am Yahweh, the one who strikes down.

[10]There, the day, there, it's coming. The doom is coming out. The club has blossomed, assertiveness has flourished, [11]violence has arisen with a faithless club. Nothing comes from them, not from their horde, not from anything of theirs; there's no distinction in them. [12]The time is coming, the day is coming close. The buyer shouldn't rejoice, the seller shouldn't mourn, because wrath is upon its entire horde. [13]Because the seller won't turn back to what he sold, even though their life is still among the living, because the vision about the entire horde won't turn back. Each in his waywardness – they won't keep strong hold on their life.

They'll throw their silver into the streets

[14]They've sounded the horn and made everything ready, but there's no one going to the battle, because my wrath is against its entire horde. [15]The sword is in the street, the epidemic and the famine in the house. The person who's in the field will die by the sword, and the person who's in the town – famine and epidemic will consume him.

[16]Those of them that escape – they'll escape but be in the mountains like the pigeons in the ravines, all of them moaning, each in his waywardness. [17]All the hands will go slack, water will go down all the knees. [18]They'll wrap on sack, and shuddering will cover them, with shame on all faces and shornness on all their heads.

[19]They'll throw their silver into the streets; their gold will become taboo. Their silver and their gold won't be able to rescue them on the day of Yahweh's outburst, they won't satisfy people's desire or fill their stomachs, because their waywardness has

become the cause of their collapse.
[20]Its jewelled splendour that he set in majesty, with it they made their offensive images, their abominations with it. Therefore I'm making it taboo for them. [21]I shall give it into the hand of strangers as plunder, as spoil for the faithless of the earth, and they'll treat it as ordinary. [22]I shall turn away my face from them, and people will treat my treasured place as ordinary – intruders will come into it and treat it as ordinary.

Inflammatory images

[23]Make a chain, because the country is full of bloody exercise of authority, the town is full of violence. [24]I shall bring the nations that deal most badly and they will take possession of their houses. I shall put a stop to the majesty of the vigorous. Their sanctuaries will be made ordinary.
[25]Calamity is coming. People will seek well-being but there will be none. [26]Disaster will come upon disaster, report will follow upon report. They will seek a vision from a prophet, but instruction will perish from priest and counsel from elders. [27]The king will mourn, the ruler will put on desolation as clothing, the hands of the country's people will tremble. According to their way I shall act with them, and on the basis of their acts of authority I shall exercise authority over them. And they will acknowledge that I am Yahweh.'
8 In the sixth year, in the sixth, on the fifth of the month, I was sitting in my house and the Yehudahite elders were sitting before me, and the hand of the Lord Yahweh fell on me there. [2]I looked, and there, a form with a fiery appearance. From the appearance of his hips and downwards there was fire, and from his hips and upwards, a gold appearance, the very gleam of electrum. [3]He put out the form of a hand and took me by the hair of my head, and a wind lifted me between the earth and the heavens and brought me to Yerushalaim with a great appearance of God, to the entrance of the gateway to the inner courtyard that faces north, where was the seat of the inflammatory image, which inflames. [4]There, the splendour of Yisra'el's God was there, like the appearance that I saw in the valley.
[5]He said to me, 'Young man, raise your eyes northward, please.' I raised my eyes in the northward direction, and there, north of the altar gateway, was this inflammatory image, at the entrance. [6]He said to me, 'Young man, do you see what they're doing, great offensive things that Yisra'el's household are doing here, so that I shall go far from my sanctuary? You will see further great offensive things.'

Religion and violence

[7]He brought me to the entrance of the courtyard. I looked, and there, a hole in the wall. [8]He said to me, 'Young man, break through the wall, please.' I broke through the wall, and there, a door. [9]He said to me, 'Come in, look at the offensive bad things that they're doing here.' [10]I came and looked, and there, every form of abominable reptile and animal and all the lumps of Yisra'el's household, carved on the wall all the way round. [11]Seventy individuals of the elders of Yisra'el's household, with Ya'azanyahu ben Shaphan standing among them, were standing before them, each with his censer in his hand. The richness of the incense cloud was going up. [12]He said to me, 'Young man, have you seen what the elders of Yisra'el's household are doing in the dark, each in his image-covered rooms? Because they're saying, "Yahweh isn't looking at us. Yahweh's abandoned the country."'
[13]He said to me, 'You will again see further great offensive things that they're doing.' [14]He brought me to the entrance of the gateway of Yahweh's house that's to the north. There, the women were sitting there, bewailing Tammuz. [15]He said to me, 'Young man, have you seen? You will again see further greater offensive things than these.' [16]He brought me to the inner courtyard of Yahweh's house. There, at the gateway of Yahweh's palace, between the portico and the altar, some 25 men, their backs to Yahweh's palace and their faces to the east, and they were bowing low to the east, to the sun.
[17]He said to me, 'Young man, have you seen? Is it too slight for Yehudah's household to do the offensive things that they've done here? Because they've filled the country with violence and again provoked me. There they are, putting the branch to their nose. [18]Yes, I myself will act in wrath. My eye won't spare and I shall not pity. They will call in my ears in a loud voice but I shall not listen to them.'

Who are the people who groan and moan?

9 He called in my ears in a loud voice, 'Come near, you who have appointment over the town, each of you with his implement of devastation in his hand.' [2]And there – six individuals coming by way of the upper gateway that faces north, each with his implement of demolition in his hand, and an individual among them dressed in linen, with a writing case at his hips. They came and stood beside the copper altar. [3]Now the splendour of Yisra'el's God had gone up from on the sphinx on which it had been, to the house's terrace. He called to the one dressed in linen, at whose hips was the writing case. [4]Yahweh said to him, 'Pass through the middle of the town, through the middle of Yerushalaim, and put an X on the foreheads of the people who are groaning and who are moaning over the offensive things that are done in the middle of it.'
[5]To the others he said in my ears, 'Pass through the town after him and strike down. Your eye must not spare. You must not pity. [6]Elder, young man, girl, little one, women, you're to kill outright. But any individual on whom is the X – don't go up to them. Start from my sanctuary.' So they started with the men who were the elders who were before the house. [7]He said to them, 'Defile the house. Fill the courtyards with the people run through. Go out.' They went out and struck the town down.
[8]While they were striking down, I myself remained alone. I fell on my face and cried out and said, 'Aagh, Lord Yahweh, are you going to devastate all that remains of Yisra'el by pouring out your wrath on Yerushalaim?' [9]He said to me, 'The waywardness of the household of Yisra'el and Yehudah is very, very great. The country is full of bloodshed. The town is full of injustice. Because they've said, "Yahweh has abandoned the country. Yahweh isn't looking." [10]I, too – my eye won't spare and I won't

pity. I'm putting their own way on their head.' [11]And there – the one clothed in linen, at whose hips was the writing case, was bringing back word: 'I've acted in accordance with all that you ordered me.'

Take fire

10 I looked, and there – on the platform that was over the head of the sphinxes was an actual sapphire stone; the appearance of the form of a throne appeared on it. [2]He said to the man clothed in linen, 'Come in between the whirling, underneath the sphinx, fill the hollow of your hands with burning coals from between the sphinxes, and scatter them over the town.' He came in before my eyes. [3]The sphinxes were standing at the right of the house when the man came in, and the cloud was filling the inner courtyard.

[4]Yahweh's splendour lifted from above the sphinx above the house's terrace, the house filled with the cloud, and the courtyard was full of the brightness of Yahweh's splendour. [5]The sound of the sphinxes' wings made itself heard as far as the outer courtyard, like the voice of God Shadday when he speaks. [6]When he ordered the one dressed in linen, 'Take fire from between the whirling, from between the sphinxes', he came in and stood beside the wheel. [7]The sphinx put out its hand from between the sphinxes to the fire that was between the sphinxes, took some up and put it into the hollow of the hands of the one dressed in linen. He took it and went out. [8](The form of a human hand belonging to the sphinxes appeared under their wings.)

[9]I looked, and there – four wheels beside the sphinxes, one wheel beside one sphinx, another wheel beside another sphinx. The appearance of the wheels: the very gleam of beryl stone. [10]Their appearance: the four of them had one form, as if one wheel were inside another wheel. [11]When they went, they'd go in the direction of their four quarters. They wouldn't turn as they went, because the place that the head faced, they'd follow it. They wouldn't turn as they went.

Yahweh leaves

[12]Their entire body – their backs, their hands and their wings – and the wheels were full of eyes all round (the wheels belonging to the four of them; [13]these wheels had been called 'the whirling' in my ears). [14]Each had four faces. Face one was the sphinx's face. Face two was a human face. The third was a lion's face. The fourth was an eagle's face.

[15]The sphinxes lifted; it was the creature that I'd seen by the River Kebar. [16]When the sphinxes went, the wheels would go beside them. When the sphinxes raised their wings to lift from on the earth, the wheels wouldn't turn from beside them, too. [17]When they stopped, they'd stop, and when they lifted, they'd lift with them, because the creature's spirit was in them.

[18]Yahweh's splendour went out from above the house's terrace and stood above the sphinxes. [19]The sphinxes raised their wings and lifted from the earth before my eyes as they went out, with the wheels alongside them. It stood at the entrance of the east gateway of Yahweh's house, with the splendour of Yisra'el's God over them, above. [20]It was the creature that I saw below Yisra'el's God at the River Kebar. So I recognized that they were sphinxes. [21]Each had four faces and each had four wings, with the form of human hands under their wings. [22]The form of their faces – they were the faces that I saw by the River Kebar, their appearance and themselves. They'd each go in the direction of its face.

The pot and the meat

11 A wind lifted me and brought me to the east gateway of Yahweh's house, which faces east. There, at the entrance of the gateway, were 25 men. I saw among them Ya'azanyah ben Azzur and Pelatyahu ben Benayahu, officials of the people. [2]He said to me, 'Young man, these are the men who think up trouble and formulate bad counsel in this town, [3]who say, "The building of houses isn't near. That's the pot, and we're the meat." [4]Therefore prophesy against them. Prophesy, young man.'

[5]Yahweh's spirit fell on me, and he said to me, 'Say, "Yahweh has said this: 'This is what you've said, Yisra'el's household; I myself know what's come up into your spirit. [6]You've multiplied the people run through by you in this town. You've filled its streets with people run through.'

[7]Therefore the Lord Yahweh has said this: 'The people run through by you whom you've put in the middle of it: they're the meat. That's the pot, but he's making you go out from the middle of it. [8]You're afraid of a sword, but I shall bring a sword upon you (the Lord Yahweh's declaration). [9]I shall make you go out from the middle of it and give you into the hand of strangers. I shall execute acts of authority against you. [10]By the sword you will fall. At Yisra'el's border I shall exercise authority over you, and you will acknowledge that I am Yahweh. [11]It won't be a pot for you nor will you be the meat in the middle of it. At Yisra'el's border I shall exercise authority over you, [12]and you will acknowledge that I am Yahweh, whose laws you didn't follow and whose rulings you didn't act on, but acted in accordance with the rulings of the nations that are round you.'"'

[13]As I prophesied, Pelatyahu ben Benayahu died. I fell on my face and cried out in a loud voice, 'Aagh, Lord Yahweh, you're finishing off the remainder of Yisra'el.'

A small sanctuary

[14]Yahweh's word came to me: [15]'Young man, your brothers, your brothers who are the people in your extended family, Yisra'el's entire household, all of it, are the people of whom Yerushalaim's inhabitants have said, "Get far away from Yahweh. It's being given to us, the country, as a possession." [16]Therefore say, "The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Because I've made them go far away among the nations and because I've scattered them among the countries but become a small sanctuary for them in the countries where they've come'", [17]therefore say, "The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'I shall collect you from the peoples, gather you from the countries in which I scattered them, and I shall give you Yisra'el's land.' [18]They will come there and remove all

their abominations and their offensive practices from them, [19]and I shall give them one mind. I shall put a new spirit within you. I shall remove the mind of stone from their flesh and give them a mind of flesh, [20]so that they will follow my laws, and keep my rulings and act on them. They will be a people for me and I shall be God for them. [21]But the people whose mind is walking after the mind of their abominations and their offensive practices, I'm going to put their way on their own head (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).'"

[22]The sphinxes lifted up their wings, with the wheels alongside them and the splendour of Yisra'el's God over them, above. [23]Yahweh's splendour went up from over the middle of the town and stood over the mountain that's on the east of the town, [24]while a wind lifted me up and brought me to Kasdim to the exile community, by the appearance from God's spirit, and the appearance that I'd seen went up from over me. [25]I spoke to the exile community all Yahweh's words that he'd shown me.

Dramatizing exile

12 Yahweh's word came to me: [2]'Young man, you're living in the middle of a rebellious household, who have eyes for seeing but don't see, ears for hearing but don't hear, because they're a rebellious household. [3]You, young man, prepare things for exile for yourself and go into exile by day before their eyes. Go into exile from your place to another place before their eyes. Perhaps they will see that they're a rebellious household.

[4]You're to take your things out like things for exile by day, before their eyes, and you yourself are to go out in the evening, before their eyes, like people going out into exile. [5]Before their eyes, break through the wall for yourself and take them out through it. [6]Before their eyes, you're to lift them on to your shoulder. You're to take it out in the dark. You're to cover your face and not look at the land, because I'm making you a sign for Yisra'el's household.'

[7]I did just as I was ordered. I took my things out by day, like things for exile, and in the evening I broke through the wall for myself with my hand. In the dark I took them out. I lifted them on my shoulder before their eyes.

[8]Yahweh's word came to me in the morning: [9]'Young man, Yisra'el's household (a rebellious household) said to you, "What are you doing?", didn't they. [10]Say to them, "The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'This pronouncement: the ruler in Yerushalaim and all Yisra'el's household that are among them'." [11]Say, "I'm a sign for you. As I've done, so it will be done to them. They will go into exile, into captivity. [12]The ruler who's among them will lift them on to his shoulder in the dark. He'll go out through the wall. They'll break through in order to take them out through it. He'll cover his face, because he won't look at the land with his eye. [13]But I shall spread my net over him, and he'll be caught in my trap. I shall bring him to Babel, to the country of the Kasdites, but he won't see it, and he'll die there. [14]Everyone who's round him, his support staff and all his legions, I shall scatter to every wind, and draw a sword after them.

God won't let things drag on

[15]They will acknowledge that I am Yahweh when I scatter them among the nations and disperse them among the countries. [16]But I shall let a few of the people be left from sword, from famine and from epidemic, in order that they may recount all their offensive practices among the nations where they come. And they will acknowledge that I am Yahweh.'"

[17]Yahweh's word came to me: [18]'Young man, you're to eat your food with trembling and drink your water with shuddering and with anxiety, [19]and say to the country's people, "The Lord Yahweh has said this concerning Yerushalaim's inhabitants in the land of Yisra'el: 'They will eat their bread with anxiety and drink their water in desolation, in order that their country may be desolate of what fills it because of the violence of all the people who live in it. [20]The inhabited towns will be wasted and the country will become a desolation. And you will acknowledge that I am Yahweh.'"'

[21]Yahweh's word came to me: [22]'Young man, what's this saying that you have in the land of Yisra'el, "Days grow long and every vision perishes"? [23]Therefore say to them, "The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'I shall make this saying stop. They won't say it any more in Yisra'el.'" Rather, speak to them: "The days are drawing near, and the thing in every vision." [24]Because there won't any more be empty vision or deceptive divination within Yisra'el's household. [25]Because I Yahweh shall speak the word that I speak and it will be done. It won't drag on any more. Because in your days, rebellious household, I shall speak a word and do it (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).'

[26]Yahweh's word came to me: [27]'Young man, there, Yisra'el's household are saying, "The vision that he sees is for many days and he prophesies for far-off times." [28]Therefore say to them: "The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'None of the words that I speak will drag on any more. The word that I speak will be acted on (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).'"'

About building a wall

13 Yahweh's word came to me: [2]'Young man, prophesy against Yisra'el's prophets, who are prophesying. Say to the prophets of their own mind, "Listen to Yahweh's word. [3]The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Hey, against the villainous prophets who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing. [4]Your prophets have been like jackals among wastes, Yisra'el. [5]You didn't go up into the breaks and build up the barrier round Yisra'el's household so it would stand in the battle on Yahweh's day. [6]They saw emptiness and lying divination, those who say "Yahweh's declaration" when Yahweh hadn't sent them, and people expected the implementing of the word. [7]It was an empty vision that you saw and lying divination that you uttered, wasn't it, saying "Yahweh's declaration" when I myself hadn't spoken.'"

[8]Therefore the Lord Yahweh has said this: "Because you spoke emptiness and saw lies, here am I towards you (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh): [9]my hand will be against the prophets who see emptiness and who divine lies. They won't be in my people's council. They won't be recorded in the record of Yisra'el's household. They won't come into Yisra'el's land. And you will

acknowledge that I am the Lord Yahweh.
[10]Because, yes because they've misled my people, saying 'Things will be well', when things won't be well, and 'He's building a divider', and there – they're coating it with paint: [11]say to the people coating it with paint, 'It will fall. Pouring rain is coming and I shall send hailstones that will fall, and a hurricane wind will break it up. [12]There, the wall is falling. It will be said to you, won't it, "Where's the coating that you put on?""'
[13]Therefore the Lord Yahweh has said this: "I shall make a hurricane wind break out in my wrath, and pouring rain will come in my anger and hailstones in my wrath, to a finish. [14]I shall tear down the wall that you've coated with paint, bring it close to the earth, and its foundation will become visible. When it falls, you will come to a finish within it. And you will acknowledge that I am Yahweh.

Trapping people's lives like birds

[15]I shall finish up my wrath on the wall and on the people who coat it with paint, and I shall say to you, 'There's no wall and there are no painters of it, [16]Yisra'el's prophets who prophesy about Yerushalaim and see a vision of things being well for it when things aren't going to be well (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).'"
[17]And you, young man, set your face against your people's daughters, who prophesy out of their own mind. Prophesy against them. [18]You shall say, "The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Hey, to the women who sew straps on any wrists and make veils for the head of someone of any height, to trap their lives. Should you trap my people's lives but keep yourselves alive for yourselves? [19]You've treated me as ordinary to my people, for handfuls of barley and for crumbs of bread, so as to put to death people who shouldn't die and to keep alive people who shouldn't live, with your lying to my people who listen to lying.'"
[20]Therefore the Lord Yahweh has said this: "Here am I, against your straps, where you're [like people] hunting the lives of flying creatures. I shall tear them off from your arms and send off [free] the lives that you're hunting, [like] the lives of flying creatures. [21]I shall tear off your veils and rescue my people from your hand. They will no longer be an object for hunting in your hand. And you will acknowledge that I am Yahweh.
[22]Because of your saddening the heart of the faithful person with falsehood when I myself hadn't hurt him, and for your strengthening the hands of the faithless person so that he wouldn't turn back from his bad way so as to stay alive, [23]therefore you won't see emptiness and you won't practise divination any more. I shall rescue my people from your hand. And you will acknowledge that I am Yahweh."'

Shall I really let myself be enquired of by them?

14 People from among Yisra'el's elders came to me and sat before me, [2]and Yahweh's word came to me: [3]'Young man, these people have taken up their lumps into their mind and set their waywardness as an obstacle in front of their faces. Shall I really let myself be enquired of by them? [4]Therefore speak to them: "The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Any individual from Yisra'el's household who takes up his lumps into his mind and places his waywardness as an obstacle in front of his face, and comes to the prophet, I make an answer to him through it (through the great number of his lumps), [5]in order to lay hold of Yisra'el's household through its mind, because they've become estranged from me through their lumps, all of them.'"
[6]Therefore say to Yisra'el's household, "The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Turn back, turn yourselves back from your lumps, turn back your faces from your offensive practices. [7]Because any individual from Yisra'el's household or from the aliens residing in Yisra'el who becomes estranged from following me and takes up his lumps into his mind and sets his waywardness as an obstacle in front of his face, and comes to the prophet to enquire of him with me – I Yahweh will make an answer to him by myself. [8]I shall set my face against that individual and make him a sign and a saying. I shall cut him off from among my people. And you will acknowledge that I am Yahweh.'"
[9]When a prophet is enticed and speaks a word, I Yahweh will have enticed that prophet, and I shall stretch out my hand against him and annihilate him from among my people Yisra'el. [10]They will carry their waywardness. The enquirer's waywardness and the prophet's waywardness will be the same, [11]in order that Yisra'el's household may not wander again from following me and may not defile itself again with all its rebellions. They will be a people for me and I shall be God for them (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).'

Noah, Dan'el and Iyyob (Job)

[12]Yahweh's word came to me: [13]'Young man, when a country does wrong to me by committing a trespass, and I stretch out my hand against it, and I break its bread supply and send famine against it and cut off from it human beings and animals, [14]were these three people within it, Noah, Dan'el and Iyyob, by their faithfulness they would save their own lives (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh). [15]If I let bad creatures pass through the country, and they leave it childless and it becomes a desolation without anyone passing through in face of the creatures, [16]were these three people within it, as I live (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh), neither sons nor daughters would they save. They'd save themselves alone. The country would become a desolation.
[17]Or I might bring a sword against that country and say, "A sword is to pass through the country, and I shall cut off from it human beings and animals"; [18]were these three people within it, as I live (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh) they wouldn't save sons or daughters, but would save themselves alone.
[19]Or I might send off an epidemic to that country and pour out my wrath on it in bloodshed, cutting off from it human beings and animals; [20]were Noah, Dan'el and Iyyob within it, as I live (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh) they wouldn't save a son or a daughter. These people would save themselves alone by their faithfulness.'
[21]Because the Lord Yahweh has said this: 'How much more when I've sent off my four bad judgements – sword, famine, bad

creature and epidemic – to Yerushalaim, to cut off from it human beings and animals.
22But there – an escape group is being left in it, people who are being taken out, sons and daughters. There they are, coming out
to you. You will see their way and their deeds, and be comforted about the bad fate that I shall have brought upon Yerushalaim,
all that I've brought upon it. 23They will comfort you because you will see their way and their deeds and you will acknowledge
that it was not without reason that I did all that I did against it (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).'

The useless vine wood

15 Yahweh's word came to me: 2'Young man, how will the vine's wood be better than the wood of any branch that's among the
trees of the forest? 3Will wood be taken from it to make anything? Will they take a peg from it to hang an object on? 4There,
it's put in the fire to be consumed. If the fire consumes the two ends of it and the middle of it is burned, is it useful for anything?
5There, when it was whole, it couldn't be made into anything. How much less when the fire consumes it, and it burns, can it be
made into anything.
6Therefore the Lord Yahweh says this: "As the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest that I gave to the fire for
consuming, so I'm giving Yerushalaim's inhabitants. 7I'm setting my face against them. They got out from the fire, but the fire
will consume them. And you will acknowledge that I am Yahweh when I set my face against them. 8I shall make the country a
desolation because they committed trespass (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh)."'
16 Yahweh's word came to me: 2'Young man, get Yerushalaim to acknowledge its offensive practices. 3You're to say, "The
Lord Yahweh has said this to Yerushalaim: 'Your origin and your birth were from the Kena'anites' [Canaanites'] country –
your father an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. 4Your birth: on the day you were born, no one cut your cord and you weren't
washed in water for cleansing. You weren't rubbed with salt at all and you weren't wrapped up at all. 5No eye cared about you so
as to do one of these things for you to express compassion for you. You were thrown on to the face of the open country in loathing
for you on the day you were born. 6But I passed by you and looked at you kicking about in your bloodiness and I said to you in
your bloodiness, "Live." Yes, I said to you in your bloodiness, "Live."

You're just a whore

7I made you big like a plant in the open country, and you grew big. You grew up and came to full loveliness; your breasts
formed, your hair flourished, but you were naked, bare. 8I passed by you and saw you – there, your time was time for love. I
spread my robe over you and covered your nakedness. I took an oath to you and came into a pact with you (a declaration of the
Lord Yahweh) and you became mine.
9I washed you in water and sluiced off the blood from on you and poured oil over you. 10I clothed you with embroidery and
gave you leather footwear. I wrapped you round in fine linen and covered you in silk. 11I adorned you with jewellery and put
bracelets on your hands and a necklace on your neck. 12I put a ring on your nose, earrings on your ears and a splendid crown on
your head. 13So you adorned yourself with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen, silk and embroidery, your food
was choice flour, syrup and oil, and you became more and more beautiful, and attained a royal position. 14Your fame went out
among the nations for your beauty, because it was complete through the splendour that I put on you (a declaration of the Lord
Yahweh).
15But you relied on your beauty and whored on the basis of your fame. You poured your whorings on every passer-by. It could
become his. 16You took some of your clothes and made yourself colourful shrines, and whored at them (not things to come, and
they will not be). 17You took your splendid things of gold and of silver that I gave you and made yourself male images and
whored with them. 18You took your embroidered clothes and covered them and offered my oil and incense before them.

Yes, just a whore

19My food that I gave you, fine flour, oil and syrup that I let you eat, you gave before them as a pleasing fragrance, and so it
became (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh). 20You took your sons and your daughters to whom you gave birth for me and
sacrificed them to them to eat: were your whorings trivial? 21You slaughtered my children and gave them to them by making them
pass through [fire].
22With all your offensive practices and your whorings, you weren't mindful of your young days when you were naked and bare,
kicking about in your bloodiness. 23After all your bad dealing (hey, hey, to you: a declaration of the Lord Yahweh) 24you built
yourself an enclosure and made yourself a platform in every square. 25At the top of every street you built your platform and made
your beauty something offensive. You spread your legs to every passer-by and multiplied your whorings. 26You whored with the
Misrayimites [Egyptians], your neighbours with their big members. You multiplied your whoring to provoke me. 27So there, I'm
stretching out my hand to you and cutting your maintenance. I'm giving you over to the will of people who are hostile to you, the
Pelishtite [Philistine] women, who are ashamed of your deliberately wicked way.
28You whored with the Ashshurites because you weren't full. You whored with them, but you were still not full. 29You
multiplied your whoring with the trader country, Kasdim, but you were still not full with this. 30How feeble was your mind (a
declaration of the Lord Yahweh) when you did all these things, the action of a whorish, powerful woman.

But a strange kind of whore

31When you built your enclosure at the top of every street and made your platform in every square, you were not like a whore in

scorning a “gift”, [32]you adulterous wife who accepts strangers instead of her husband. [33]To all whores men give a fee, but you – you’ve given fees to all your lovers, and paid them to come to you from all round for your whorings. [34]With you it was the opposite from other women, in your whorings. Whoring wasn’t done by going after you but through your giving a “gift”. A “gift” was not given to you. You were the opposite.

[35]Therefore listen to Yahweh’s word, whore. [36]The Lord Yahweh has said this: “Since your copper poured out and your nakedness exposed itself in your whorings with your lovers and with all your offensive lumps, and in accordance with the bloodshed of your children whom you gave to them, [37]therefore here am I, I’m going to collect all your lovers to whom you were sweet, each one whom you loved, as well as each one to whom you were hostile. I shall collect them against you from all round and expose your nakedness to them. They will see all your nakedness [38]and I shall make for you the judgements appropriate for women who commit adultery or pour out blood.

I shall make you an object of the blood of wrath and passion. [39]I shall give you into their hand and they will tear down your enclosure and break down your platforms. They will strip you of your clothes, take your splendid things, and leave you naked and bare. [40]They will bring up a congregation against you, pelt you with stones and cut you down with their swords. [41]They will burn your houses with fire and execute acts of authority against you before the eyes of many women. I shall make your whoring stop. You will no more give ‘gifts’, either. [42]I shall set down my wrath with you and turn away my passion from you, and be calm and not vexed any more.

Yerushalaim, her mother and her sisters

[43]Since you weren’t mindful of your young days and you infuriated me with all these things, I myself shall also – yes, I shall put your way on your own head (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh). You acted on your deliberate wickedness with your offensive practices, didn’t you.

[44]There, everyone who quotes sayings will quote this saying with regard to you: ‘Like mother, like daughter’. [45]You’re your mother’s daughter, renouncing her husband and her children. You’re the sister of your sisters, who renounced their husbands and their children. Your mother was a Hittite, your father an Amorite. [46]Your big sister was Shomron [Samaria], she and her daughters who were living to the north of you. Your little sister who was living to the south of you was Sedom [Sodom] and her daughters. [47]You walked in their ways and acted by their offensive practices, didn’t you. In a very short while you became more devastating than them in all your ways. [48]As I live (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh), if Sedom your sister, she and her daughters, had acted as you and your daughters acted . . .

[49]There, this was the waywardness of Sedom your sister: she and her daughters had majesty, plenty of bread, and calm peacefulness, but they didn’t take the hand of the humble and needy. [50]They were lofty and they did something offensive before me. So I removed them, as you have seen.

[51]Shomron – she didn’t commit half your wrongdoings; you’ve multiplied your wrongdoings more than her. You made your sisters seem faithful with all your offensive deeds that you did. [52]You, too, carry your shame, you who’ve pleaded for your sisters with your wrongdoings with which you’ve acted more offensively than them. They’re more faithful than you. Yes, you – be shamed. Carry your disgrace in your making your sisters seem faithful.

But whoring will not be the end of the story

[53]I shall restore their fortunes, the fortunes of Sedom and her daughters and the fortunes of Shomron and her daughters, and the fortunes of your captivity among them, [54]in order that you may carry your disgrace and feel disgraced for all that you’ve done in enabling them to take comfort. [55]Your sister Sedom and her daughters will go back to what they were before, Shomron and her daughters will go back to what they were before, and you and your daughters will go back to what you were before. [56]Your sister Sedom was a topic of talk in your mouth in the day of your majesty, wasn’t she, [57]before your bad dealing became open, at the very time of the reviling of the daughters of Aram and all the peoples round her, the daughters of the Pelishtites, who jeer at you from all round. [58]Your scheming and your offensive deeds – you are going to carry them (Yahweh’s declaration).”’

[59]Because the Lord Yahweh has said this: ‘Yes, I shall act with you as you’ve acted, in that you’ve despised the vow, in contravening the pact. [60]But I – I shall be mindful of my pact with you in your young days. I shall implement for you a permanent pact. [61]You will be mindful of your ways and feel disgrace when you receive your sisters, the ones who are bigger than you and the ones who are younger than you. I shall give them to you as daughters, though not on the basis of your pact. [62]I – I shall implement my pact with you. And you will acknowledge that I am Yahweh, [63]in order that you may be mindful and feel shame. It won’t be for you to open your mouth again in the face of your disgrace, when I make expiation for you for all that you’ve done (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).’”’

A tale of two eagles

17 Yahweh’s word came to me: [2]‘Young man, unveil a conundrum, tell Yisra’el’s household a parable. [3]Say, “The Lord Yahweh has said this: ‘A big eagle, big-winged, long-feathered, full-plumaged, with colouring, came to the Lebanon and took the top of a cedar. [4]He broke off the highest of its shoots, brought it to a merchant country and put it in a traders’ town. [5]He took some of the country’s seed and put it in a seed field; he placed it by plentiful water, a willow. [6]It grew and became a spreading vine, low in height, its branches to turn to him, its roots being beneath it. So it became a vine, produced limbs and sent out shoots.

[7]But there was another big eagle, big-winged, much-plumaged. There – this vine turned its roots towards it and sent out its branches to it for it to water it, away from the beds where it was sown, [8]though it had been planted in a good field by plentiful

water so as to produce boughs, bear fruit, and become an impressive vine.'"
[9]Say, "The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'It may flourish, but he will tear up its roots and strip off its fruit so that it withers, won't he. All the leaves of its growth will wither (not by means of a big arm or by means of a large company) to carry it off by its roots. [10]There, though planted, will it flourish? It will totally wither when the east wind touches it, won't it. It will wither on the beds where it grew.'"'
[11]Yahweh's word came to me: [12]'Say to the rebellious household, please: "You acknowledge what these things are, don't you." Say: "There, the king of Babel came to Yerushalaim, took its king and its officials, and brought them to him, to Babel. [13]He took someone from the royal offspring and solemnized a pact with him and put him under a vow, but he took the leaders of the country [14]so that it might be a lowly kingdom and not exalt itself, keeping his pact so as to stand.

A tale of two trees

[15]But he rebelled against him by sending his envoys to Misrayim so it would give him horses and a large company. Will he flourish? Will the one who does these things escape? Will he contravene a pact and escape? [16]As I live (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh), if he doesn't die in the place belonging to the king who made him king, whose vow he despised and whose pact he contravened, inside Babel . . .
[17]Par'oh [Pharaoh] won't act towards him with a big force, with a numerous congregation – with battle, with the heaping up of a ramp and with the building of a tower, to cut down many lives. [18]He despised a vow by contravening a pact. There – he gave his hand, but he did all these things. He won't escape. [19]Therefore the Lord Yahweh has said this: 'As I live, if I don't put on his own head my vow that he despised and my pact that he contravened . . .
[20]I shall spread my net over him, and he'll be caught in my trap. I shall bring him to Babel and enter into judgement with him there for the trespass that he committed against me. [21]All the fugitives in all his legions will fall by the sword and the remainder will scatter to every wind. And you will acknowledge that I Yahweh have spoken.'"'
[22]Yahweh has said this: 'And I myself shall take from the top of a tall cedar, and put from the highest of its shoots a tender one that I shall break off and myself plant on a lofty, tall mountain. [23]On Yisra'el's high mountains I shall plant it. It will bear boughs and produce fruit, and become an august cedar. Every bird of every wing will dwell beneath it; in the shade of its branches they will dwell. [24]All the trees of the field will acknowledge that I am Yahweh. I shall have brought low the exalted tree, exalted the lowly tree, withered the green tree and made the withered tree flourish. I am Yahweh. I have spoken and I shall act.'

Father and son

18 Yahweh's word came to me: [2]'What is it to you people using this saying on Yisra'el's land, "Parents eat sour grapes, but children's teeth feel rough"? [3]As I live (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh), if you have any more using of this saying in Yisra'el . . .
[4]Here, all lives are mine. As the parent's life, so the child's life, they're mine. The person who sins, he will die. [5]When an individual is faithful and exercises authority with faithfulness:
[6]he hasn't eaten on the mountains;
nor raised his eyes to the lumps of Yisra'el's household;
nor defiled his neighbour's wife;
nor does he draw near a woman who's taboo;
[7]nor does he oppress an individual;
he gives back the pledge given him for a debt;
nor does he commit robbery;
he gives his bread to the hungry person;
he covers the naked with clothes;
[8]he doesn't give on the basis of earning interest nor take a profit;
he turns his hand back from what is evil;
he makes a truthful judgement between one individual and another:
[9]he walks by my laws and has kept my rulings by exercising truthfulness. He's faithful. He will definitely live (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).
[10]But he fathers a violent son, a shedder of blood, who does one or another of these things, [11]when he himself did none of these things. Rather he
has eaten on the mountains;
has defiled his neighbour's wife;
[12]has oppressed the humble and needy;
has committed robbery;
doesn't return a pledge;
has raised his eyes to the lumps;
has done an offensive thing;
[13]has given on the basis of earning interest and taken a profit:
is he to live? He won't live. One who has done any of these offensive things will definitely die. His bloodshed will be against him.

Do I really want the death of a faithless person?

[14]But there, he fathers a son, and he sees all his father's wrongdoings that he committed. He sees, and he doesn't act in

accordance with them:
[15]he hasn't eaten on the mountains;
he hasn't raised his eyes to the lumps of Yisra'el's household;
he hasn't defiled his neighbour's wife;
[16]he hasn't oppressed anyone;
he hasn't exacted a pledge;
he hasn't committed robbery;
he has given his bread to a hungry person;
he has covered a naked person with clothes;
[17]he has turned his hand back from the humble;
he hasn't taken interest or profit:
he has acted on my rulings; he has walked by my laws. He won't die because of his father's waywardness. He will definitely live.
[18]His father, because he practised fraud, committed robbery against his brother and did what was not good among his people:
there, he will definitely die for his waywardness.
[19]You say, "Why has the son not carried any of the father's waywardness?" But the son has exercised authority with faithfulness, kept all my laws and done them. He will live. [20]The person who does wrong, he will die. A son doesn't carry any of the father's waywardness and a father doesn't carry any of the son's waywardness. The faithfulness of the faithful person belongs to him and the faithlessness of the faithless person belongs to him. [21]But the faithless person when he turns back from all his wrongdoings that he's committed and keeps all my laws and exercises authority with faithfulness, he will definitely live. He won't die. [22]None of the rebellions that he's committed will be kept in mind for him; through the faithfulness with which he's acted, he will live. [23]Do I really want the death of the faithless person (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh) and not his turning back from his ways so that he lives?

Produce yourselves a new mind and a new spirit

[24]But when the faithful person turns back from his faithfulness and does what is evil in accordance with all the offensive things that the faithless person did, and does them, is he to live? None of his faithful acts that he's done will be kept in mind because of the trespass that he's committed and the wrongdoings that he's done. Through them he will die.
[25]You say, "The Lord's way isn't just." Listen please, Yisra'el's household. Is it my way that isn't just? It's your ways that aren't just, isn't it. [26]When a faithful person turns back from his faithfulness and does what is evil and dies for them, he dies for the wrong that he's done. [27]And when a faithless person turns back from his faithlessness that he's done and exercises authority with faithfulness, he keeps himself alive. [28]He's seen and turned back from all his rebellions that he's done. He will definitely live. He won't die.
[29]Yisra'el's household say, "The Lord's way isn't just." Is it my ways that are not just, Yisra'el's household? It's your ways that aren't just, isn't it. [30]Therefore I shall exercise authority over you, Yisra'el's household, over each person in accordance with his ways (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh). So turn back, turn yourselves back from all your rebellions, and they won't become a wayward obstacle to you. [31]Throw away from you all your rebellions that you've committed. Produce yourselves a new mind and a new spirit. Why should you die, Yisra'el's household? [32]Because I don't want the death of the person who dies (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh). So turn back and live!'

A dirge for a nation's rulers

19 'And you, take up a dirge for Yisra'el's rulers. [2]Say:

What was your mother? –
a lioness among lions.
She bedded down among the great cougars,
reared her cubs.
[3]She brought up one of her cubs,
he became a cougar.
He learned to hunt prey,
he ate human beings.
[4]Nations heard about him,
he was caught in their pit.
They brought him with hooks
to the country of Misrayim.

[5]She saw that she'd expected,
whereas her hope had perished.
She got another of her cubs,
made him a cougar.
[6]He went about among the lions;
he became a cougar.
He learned to hunt prey,
he ate human beings.

[7]He had sex with their widows,
wasted their towns.
The country and what filled it were desolate
at the sound of his roaring.
[8]But nations set against him
from provinces all round.
They spread their net over him;
he was caught in their pit.
[9]They put him in a cage with hooks,
brought him to the king of Babel.
They brought him into a great stronghold,
in order that his voice wouldn't make itself heard
any more on Yisra'el's mountains.

[10]Your mother was a real vine (with your blood),
planted by water.
It became fruitful and green
because of the abundant water.
[11]It had vigorous boughs
fit for the clubs of rulers.
The stature of one grew high, among the clouds,
and it was visible by its height, by the number of its branches.
[12]But it was uprooted in wrath, thrown to the earth,
and the east wind withered its fruit.
They broke and withered;
its vigorous bough – fire consumed it.
[13]So now it's planted in the wilderness,
in a dry, thirsty country.
[14]Fire came out from its bough,
consumed its branches with its fruit.
It didn't have a vigorous bough,
a club for ruling.'

It's a dirge. It became a dirge.

When you can't enquire of God

20 In the seventh year, in the fifth, on the tenth of the month, some Yisra'elite elders came to enquire of Yahweh, and sat before me. [2]Yahweh's word came to me: [3]'Young man, speak to Yisra'el's elders: "The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Is it to enquire of me that you're coming? As I live, if I shall let myself be enquired of by you (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh) . . .'"

[4]Will you exercise authority over them, will you exercise authority over them, young man? Get them to acknowledge their ancestors' offensive practices. [5]Say to them, "The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'On the day when I chose Yisra'el, I raised my hand [to swear] to the offspring of Ya'aqob's [Jacob's] household, and when I made myself known to them in the country of Misrayim, I raised my hand to them, saying "I am Yahweh your God." [6]On that day I raised my hand to them to get them out of the country of Misrayim to a country that I'd sought out for them, flowing with milk and syrup; it was the most splendid of all countries. [7]I said to them, "Each person, throw away the abominations before your eyes. Don't defile yourselves with Misrayim's lumps. I am Yahweh your God." [8]But they rebelled against me. They wouldn't listen to me. Each person, they didn't throw away the abominations before their eyes and abandon Misrayim's lumps.

I said I'd pour out my wrath on them, to finish up my anger against them within the country of Misrayim. [9]But I acted for the sake of my name, so that it might not be treated as ordinary in the eyes of the nations among whom they were, before whose eyes I'd caused myself to be acknowledged by them in getting them out of the country of Misrayim.

They treated the sabbath as ordinary

[10]So I got them out of the country of Misrayim and brought them into the wilderness. [11]I gave them my laws and made known to them my rulings, which a person may act on and live by. [12]I also gave them my sabbaths, to become a sign between me and them, so that they might acknowledge that I am Yahweh, who makes them sacred. [13]But Yisra'el's household rebelled against me in the wilderness. They didn't walk by my laws. They rejected my rulings, which a person may act on and live by, and they quite treated my sabbaths as ordinary.

I said I'd pour my wrath on them in the wilderness, so as to finish them off. [14]But I acted for the sake of my name so that it might not be treated as ordinary in the eyes of the nations before whose eyes I got them out. [15]But I did also raise my hand to them in the wilderness not to bring them into the country that I'd given them, flowing with milk and syrup, the most splendid of all countries, [16]because they'd rejected my rulings and not walked by my laws, and treated my sabbaths as ordinary, because their mind was following their lumps.

[17]But my eye had pity on them so as not to devastate them. I didn't bring them to a finish in the wilderness. [18]I said to their children in the wilderness, "Don't follow your parents' laws and don't keep their rulings, and don't defile yourselves with their

lumps. [19]I am Yahweh your God. Walk by my laws and keep my rulings and do them, [20]and make my sabbaths sacred so that
they're a sign between me and you, so that you acknowledge that I am Yahweh your God." [21]But the children rebelled against me.
They didn't walk by my laws and they didn't keep my rulings by acting on them, which an individual may act on and live by.
They treated my sabbaths as ordinary.
I said I'd pour my wrath on them to finish up my anger against them in the wilderness. [22]But I held back my hand and acted for
the sake of my name so that it might not be treated as ordinary in the eyes of the nations before whose eyes I'd got them out.

The shrine (*bamah*): come to what (*ba' mah*)?

[23]I did also raise my hand to them in the wilderness to scatter them through the nations and disperse them through the countries,
[24]because they didn't act on my rulings but rejected my laws and treated my sabbaths as ordinary, and their parents' lumps were
before their eyes. [25]I myself also gave them laws that weren't good and rulings they couldn't live by. [26]I defiled them by their
gifts when they made every firstborn of the womb pass through [fire], so that I might desolate them, in order that they might
acknowledge that I am Yahweh.'"
[27]Therefore speak to Yisra'el's household, young man, and say to them, "The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Your ancestors
further insulted me with this, by committing trespass against me. [28]I brought them into the country that I'd raised my hand to give
them. But they looked at every high hill and every leafy tree and slaughtered their sacrifices there, made the provocation of their
offering there, produced their pleasing fragrance there and poured their libations there. [29]I said to them, "What [*mah*] is the shrine
[*bamah*] that you're coming to [*ba*]?" (and they've named it *bamah* until this day).'"
[30]Therefore say to Yisra'el's household: "The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Are you defiling yourselves in the manner of your
ancestors and whoring after their abominations, [31]and in presenting your gifts by making your children pass though fire defiling
yourselves in connection with all your lumps, until this day? And shall I let myself be enquired of by you, Yisra'el's household?
As I live (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh), if I let myself be enquired of by you . . .
[32]What comes up into your spirit will simply not happen, that you're saying, "We'll be like the nations, like the countries' kin-
groups, in ministering to wood and stone." [33]As I live (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh), if I don't reign over you with a strong
hand and with an arm stretched out and with wrath poured out . . .

Then I will accept you

[34]So I shall get you out from the peoples and collect you from the countries among whom you're scattered, with a strong hand
and with an arm stretched out and with wrath poured out. [35]I shall bring you into the wilderness of the peoples and enter into
judgement with you there face to face. [36]As I entered into judgement with your ancestors in the wilderness of the country of
Misrayim, so I shall enter into judgement with you (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh). [37]I shall get you to pass under a club and
bring you into a pact bond. [38]I shall purge out from you the people who rebel and revolt against me; while I shall get them out
from the country where they're residing, they will not come into the land of Yisra'el. And you will acknowledge that I am
Yahweh.
[39]You, Yisra'el's household: the Lord Yahweh has said this: "Each person, go, serve his lumps, and afterwards, if you don't
listen to me. But you won't treat my sacred name as ordinary any more with your gifts and your lumps. [40]Because on my sacred
mountain, on Yisra'el's high mountain (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh), there Yisra'el's entire household, all of it, will serve
me in the country. There I shall accept them and there I shall ask after your donations and the finest of your offerings with all your
sacred things. [41]With your pleasing fragrance I shall accept you when I get you out from the peoples and collect you from the
countries in which you're scattered. I shall make myself sacred through you in the eyes of the peoples.
[42]You will acknowledge that I am Yahweh when I bring you into Yisra'el's land, into the country that I raised my hand to give
your ancestors. [43]You will be mindful there of your ways and all your deeds by which you defiled yourselves. You will be
loathsome in your own sight for all your bad dealings that you've done. [44]You will acknowledge that I am Yahweh when I deal
with you for the sake of my name, not in accordance with your bad ways and your devastating deeds, Yisra'el's household (a
declaration of the Lord Yahweh)."""'

Slaughter from south to north

[45]Yahweh's word came to me: [46]'Young man, set your face towards Teman, preach against Darom, prophesy against the open
forest of the Southland. [47]You're to say to the Southland forest, "Listen to Yahweh's word. The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Here
am I, I'm going to light a fire in you. It will consume every green tree and every dry tree in you. The burning flame won't go out.
Every face from south to north will be scorched by it. [48]All flesh will see that I, Yahweh, lit it; it won't go out.'"' [49]But I said,
'Oh, Lord Yahweh, they're saying of me, "Isn't he a teller of parables?"'
21 Yahweh's word came to me: [2]'Young man, set your face against Yerushalaim. Preach against the sanctuaries, prophesy
against Yisra'el's land. [3]You're to say to Yisra'el's land, "Yahweh has said this: 'Here am I towards you. I shall get my
sword out of its sheath and cut off from you faithful and faithless person. [4]Since I'm going to cut off from you faithful and
faithless person, therefore my sword will come out from its sheath against all flesh from south to north, [5]and all flesh will
acknowledge that I, Yahweh, got my sword out of its sheath; it won't go back again.'"
[6]So you, young man, sigh. With a breaking in your hips and with anguish you're to groan before their eyes. [7]When they say to
you, "Why are you groaning?", you're to say, "On account of the report, because it's coming. Every heart will melt. All hands
will go limp. Every spirit will faint. Water will go down all knees. There, it's coming, it will happen (a declaration of the Lord
Yahweh)."'

[8]Yahweh's word came to me: [9]'Young man, prophesy: "The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Say, "A sword, a sword sharpened,
yes, and polished, [10]sharpened in order that it can bring slaughter, polished in order that it can be a lightning-flash. Otherwise,
could we celebrate the club of my son, which rejects every tree? [11]Someone gave it for polishing and for grasping in the fist. The
sword is sharpened and polished, for putting into the hand of a killer."""

The fork in the road

[12]Cry and howl, young man, because it will happen among my people, among all Yisra'el's rulers. They're going to be tossed
to the sword, with my people. Therefore strike your thigh. [13]Because there's going to be a testing, and what if it scorns the club?
Will it not happen? (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).
[14]So you, young man, prophesy, clap palm against palm. The sword will come twice, a third time it will be the sword for people
run through, a sword of someone run through, the great one who surrounds them, [15]in order that the heart may melt and the
fallings be many. At all their gateways I have set the sword's slaughter. Aagh, it's made to be a flash of lightning, sharpened for
slaughter. [16]Slash to the right, set yourself to the left, wherever your edges are appointed. [17]I too will clap palm against palm and
set down my wrath. I Yahweh have spoken.'
[18]Yahweh's word came to me: [19]'You, young man, set for yourself two roads for the king of Babel's sword to come. They'll go
out from one country. Choose a place; choose it at the beginning of the road to the town. [20]You're to set a road for the sword to
come to Rabbah of the Ammonites, and [one] to Yehudah against fortified Yerushalaim. [21]Because the king of Babel is standing
at the split on the road, at the top of the two roads, to perform divination. He's shaking arrows, he's asking effigies, he's looking
at a liver.
[22]In his right hand was the divination for Yerushalaim, for setting battering rams, for giving the word for murder, for lifting up
the voice in the battle shout, for setting battering rams against the gateways, for heaping up a ramp, for building a tower. [23]To
them it will be like empty divination, in the eyes of the people who've been sworn with oaths. But he is one who causes
waywardness to be kept in mind, so that they will be taken.'

The sword unsheathed and sheathed

[24]Therefore the Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Since you've caused your waywardness to be kept in mind, as your rebellions
reveal themselves, as your wrongdoings become visible, in all your doings – since you've caused it to be kept in mind, you will be
taken in [his] fist.
[25]And you, Yisra'el's slain, faithless ruler, whose day has come at the time of final waywardness, [26]the Lord Yahweh has said
this: "Remove the mitre, lift off the crown. It won't stay like this. Exalt the lowly, lower the exalted. [27]Ruin, ruin, ruin, I shall
make it (indeed, this hasn't happened) until the one comes to whom authority belongs, and I shall give it to him."
[28]And you, young man, prophesy: "The Lord Yahweh has said this about the Ammonites and about their reviling." You're to
say, "Sword, sword, unsheathed for slaughter, polished for finishing off, so as to be a flash of lightning. [29]Because of beholding
something empty for you, because of divining lies for you, they will give you to the necks of the people run through, faithless
people whose day has come at the time of final waywardness.
[30]Put it back into its sheath. In the place where you were created, in the country of your origin, I shall exercise authority over
you. [31]I shall pour out my condemnation upon you. With my furious fire I shall blow on you. I shall give you into the hand of
brutal people, craftsmen in devastation. [32]You will be for fire to consume. Your blood will be in the middle of the country. You
won't be remembered. Because I, Yahweh, have spoken."'

Unfaithfulness to people and unfaithfulness to God

22 Yahweh's word came to me: [2]'You, young man, will you exercise authority, will you exercise authority, over the bloodshed
town, and get it to acknowledge all its offensive practices? [3]You're to say, "The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Town that
sheds blood within it, so that its time is coming, and makes lumps for itself, so that it becomes defiled! [4]Through your blood that
you've shed, you've incurred liability, and through the lumps that you've made, you're defiled. You've brought your days near;
you've come to your years.
Therefore I'm making you an object of reviling for the nations, an object of scorn for all the countries. [5]The ones near and the
ones far away from you will scorn you, defiled of name, abounding in tumult.
[6]There, Yisra'el's rulers were in you, each one with his powerful arm, in order to shed blood:
[7]people have slighted father and mother in you;
towards the alien they've acted with fraud within you;
orphan and widow they've oppressed in you;
[8]you've despised my sacred things and treated my sabbaths as ordinary;
[9]people who spread lies have been in you in order to shed blood;
in you they've eaten on the mountains;
they've acted on their scheming within you;
[10]in you a man has exposed his father's nakedness;
they've raped a woman defiled by taboo;
[11]an individual has done something offensive with his neighbour's wife;
another individual has defiled his daughter-in-law by scheming;
in you an individual has raped his sister, his father's daughter;

[12]in you they've taken a bribe so as to shed blood;
you've taken interest and profit;
you've looted your neighbours by fraud.
You've put me out of mind (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh). [13]So here, I am clapping my palm about your loot that you've made and over your bloodshed that there's been within you. [14]Will your mind stand firm or your hands be strong for the days when I'm dealing with you? I Yahweh have spoken and I shall act. [15]I shall scatter you among the nations and disperse you among the countries. I shall consume your defilement out of you. [16]You will be treated as ordinary in yourself before the eyes of the nations. And you will acknowledge that I am Yahweh.''''

Smelting and slag

[17]Yahweh's word came to me: [18]'Young man, Yisra'el's household has become slag to me. All of them are copper, tin, iron and lead inside a furnace. Silver has become slag.' [19]Therefore the Lord Yahweh has said this: "Because all of you have become slag, therefore here am I, I'm going to collect you into the middle of Yerushalaim. [20]The collecting of silver, copper, iron, lead and tin inside the furnace, for blowing fire on it to smelt it: so I shall collect in my anger and wrath, and lay you down, and smelt you. [21]I shall collect you and blow on you with my furious fire and you will be smelted inside it. [22]Like the smelting of silver inside a furnace, so you will be smelted inside it, and you will acknowledge that I, Yahweh, have poured out my wrath upon you.'''
[23]Yahweh's word came to me: [24]'Young man, say to it: "You're a country that's not been cleansed, and it's not to be rained on in the day of condemnation:
[25]its conspiracy of prophets within it is like a roaring lion tearing prey, they've consumed human beings, taken riches and wealth, made many widows within it;
[26]its priests have violated my instruction and treated my sacred things as ordinary, they haven't distinguished between sacred and ordinary, they haven't enabled people to know the difference between clean and defiled, they've closed their eyes to my sabbaths, and I'm treated as ordinary among them;
[27]its officials within it are like wolves tearing prey, shedding blood to destroy lives for the sake of gaining loot;
[28]its prophets have coated them with paint, seeing emptiness and divining lies for them, saying, 'The Lord Yahweh has said this' when Yahweh hasn't spoken;
[29]the country's people have practised fraud and committed robbery, they've oppressed the humble and needy, and they've defrauded the alien without the proper exercise of authority.
[30]I sought from them someone constructing the wall or standing in the breach before me on behalf of the country, so I might not devastate it, but I didn't find anyone. [31]So I'm pouring out my condemnation on them. In furious fire I'm finishing them off. I'm putting their way on their head (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).'''

A pornographic story begins

23 Yahweh's word came to me: [2]'Young man, there were two women, the daughters of one mother. [3]They whored in Misrayim. They whored in their youth. Their breasts were pressed there. There men squeezed their girls' nipples. [4]Their names: the older one was Oholah, and her sister was Oholibah. They became mine, and they gave birth to sons and daughters. Their names: Oholah was Shomron and Oholibah was Yerushalaim.
[5]Oholah whored when under me. She doted on her lovers, towards Ashshur, guardsmen [6]clothed in blue, governors and overseers, all of them desirable young men, cavalry riding horses. [7]She gave her whorings to them, all of them the choicest of the Ashshurites, and with each one on whom she doted, with all their lumps, she defiled herself. [8]She didn't abandon her whorings from Misrayim, because men had slept with her in her youth, when they'd squeezed her girl's nipples and poured out their whoring on her. [9]Therefore I gave her into the hand of her lovers, into the hand of the Ashshurites on whom she'd doted. [10]When they had exposed her nakedness, they took her sons and daughters and killed her with the sword. When they implemented rulings against her, she became well known to women.
[11]Her sister Oholibah saw, but her doting was more devastating than hers, and her whorings than her sister's whorings. [12]She doted on Ashshurites, governors and overseers, guardsmen clothed in fullness, cavalry riding horses, all of them desirable young men.
[13]I saw that she defiled herself. The two of them had one way, [14]but she increased her whorings. She saw men engraved on the wall, images of Kasdites engraved in vermilion, [15]girded with a belt round their hips, flowing turbans on their heads, all of them with the appearance of officers, the form of Babelites, Kasdim the country of their birth.

The two sisters

[16]So she doted on them on their appearing before her eyes. She sent envoys to them to Kasdim, [17]and the Babelites came to her to her love bed. They defiled her with their whoring. She defiled herself with them, then tore herself away from them. [18]So she exposed her whorings and revealed her nakedness, and I tore myself away from her, as I'd torn myself away from her sister. [19]She multiplied her whorings, being mindful of her young days when she whored in the country of Misrayim. [20]She doted on their concubinage, whose flesh was the flesh of donkeys, and their emission the emission of horses. [21]You attended to the scheming of your youth, when men from Misrayim squeezed your nipples for the sake of your young breasts.'
[22]Therefore, Oholibah, the Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Here am I, I'm going to arouse your lovers against you, the ones from whom you tore yourself away. I shall bring them against you from all round: [23]the Babelites, all the Kasdites, Peqod, Shoa, Qoa, all the Ashshurites with them, desirable young men, governors and overseers all of them, officers and men of renown, riding

horses all of them. [24]They will come against you, armoury, chariot and wheel, and with a congregation of peoples. They will set
body-shield, hand-shield and helmet against you all round. I shall put the exercise of authority before them and they will exercise
authority over you with their acts of authority.
[25]So I shall set my passion against you, and they will deal with you in fury. They will remove your nose and your ears, and the
last of you will fall by the sword. Those people will take your sons and your daughters, and the last of you will be consumed by
fire. [26]They will strip you of your clothes and take your majestic things. [27]I shall make your scheming cease from you, and your
whoring from the country of Misrayim. You won't lift up your eyes to them. You won't be mindful of Misrayim any more.'

Drunkenness and sorrow

[28]Because the Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Here am I, I'm going to give you into the hand of the people to whom you are
hostile, into the hand of the people from whom you tore yourself away. [29]They will act towards you with hostility and take all
you've toiled for and abandon you naked and bare. The nakedness of your whorings will be visible, your scheming and your
whorings. [30]They will do these things to you because of your whoring after the nations, on account of the way you defiled
yourself with your lumps. [31]You've walked in the way of your sister, so I shall put her chalice into your hand.'
[32]The Lord Yahweh has said this:

'You're to drink your sister's chalice,
deep and wide;
it will bring laughter and scorn.
It contains much;
[33]you will be full of drunkenness and sorrow,
A chalice of desolating and desolation,
your sister Shomron's chalice.
[34]You will drink it and drain it,
and break it into shards
And tear your breasts,
because I have spoken (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).'

[35]Therefore the Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Since you've put me out of mind and thrown me behind your back, you yourself
indeed – carry your scheming and your whoring.'
[36]Yahweh said to me, 'Young man, will you exercise authority over Oholah and Oholibah. Tell them of their offensive
practices. [37]Because they've committed adultery and there's blood on their hands. They've committed adultery with their lumps
and also made their children, to whom they gave birth for me, pass through [the fire] as food for them. [38]Further, they've done this
to me: defiled my sanctuary and treated my sabbaths as ordinary. [39]When they'd slaughtered their children for their lumps, they
came into my sanctuary that day, to treat it as ordinary. There, that's what they did within my house.

Worn out by adultery

[40]Furthermore you would send for men coming from afar, to whom an envoy was sent. There, they came, men for whom you
bathed, painted your eyes and donned jewellery. [41]You sat on an elegant couch with a table spread before it, and you put my
incense and my oil on it. [42]The sound of a horde feeling at peace was in it, with men from the human mass brought in, drunkards
from the wilderness. They put bracelets on the women's hands and a majestic crown on their heads.
[43]I said of one worn out by adulteries, "Even now they can engage in whorings with her, and she herself", [44]and they've had
sex with her. As men have sex with a whore, so they've had sex with Oholah and Oholibah, scheming women. [45]But faithful men
– they will exercise authority over them, a ruling for women who commit adultery and a ruling for women who've shed blood,
because they're women who commit adultery and with blood on their hands.'
[46]Because the Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Take up a congregation against them, give them over to terror and to plunder. [47]The
congregation is to pelt them with stones and cut them down with their swords. They're to kill their sons and their daughters and
burn their houses in fire. [48]I shall put a stop to scheming from the country, and all the women will accept discipline and won't act
in accordance with your scheming. [49]They'll put your scheming upon you. You will carry the wrongdoings involved in your
lumps. And you will acknowledge that I am the Lord Yahweh.'

The cooking pot

24 Yahweh's word came to me in the ninth year, in the tenth month, on the tenth of the month: [2]'Young man, write for yourself
the date today, this very day. The king of Babel is leaning on Yerushalaim on this very day. [3]And tell a parable to the
rebellious household: "The Lord Yahweh has said this:

'Put the pot on, put it on,
and pour water into it, too.
[4]Gather its pieces into it,
every good piece.
Leg and shoulder,
the choicest of the bones, fill it.

[5]Get the choicest of the flock,
pile the bones under it, too.
Get it to boil;
its bones are to cook inside it, too.'

[6]Therefore the Lord Yahweh has said this:

'Oh, town of bloodshed,
pot in which there's rust,
whose rust hasn't gone out from it!
Piece by piece get it out
no lot has fallen on it.
[7]Because the blood she shed was inside her;
she put it on the face of a cliff.
She didn't pour it on the ground
to cover over it with earth.
[8]To arouse wrath
to take redress,
I put the blood she shed on the face of a cliff
so that it wouldn't be covered.'
[9]Therefore the Lord Yahweh has said this:

'Oh, town of bloodshed,
I shall make the pile big, too.
[10]Get much wood, light the fire,
cook the meat through.
Mix the spices;
the bones must burn.
[11]Stand it on the coals empty,
in order that it may get hot and its copper burn,
So its defilement may smelt inside it,
its rust be consumed.
[12]It has wearied the trouble;
the abundance of its rust doesn't come out from it,
the rust in the fire.'

[13]Your scheming is your defilement, since I would have cleansed you, but you wouldn't be clean from your defilement. You won't be clean again until I've set down my wrath on you. [14]I Yahweh have spoken. It's coming about and I shall do it. I won't hold back. I won't spare. I won't relent. In accordance with your ways and in accordance with your deeds they are exercising authority over you (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).'"

The bereavement

[15]Yahweh's word came to me: [16]'Young man, here am I, I'm going to take from you the desire of your eyes through an epidemic. But you're not to mourn, you're not to cry, your tears aren't to come. [17]Groan quietly. Don't make mourning for the dead. Put on your hat. Put your boots on your feet. Don't cover your lips. Don't eat people's food.'
[18]I spoke to the people in the morning, and my wife died in the evening. I did in the morning as I'd been ordered, [19]and the people said to me, 'Won't you tell us what these things mean for us, that you're acting so?'
[20]I said to them, 'Yahweh's word came to me: [21]"Say to Yisra'el's household: 'The Lord Yahweh has said this: "Here am I, I'm going to treat my sanctuary as ordinary, the pride of your vigour, the desire of your eyes, the object of your heart's pity. Your sons and your daughters whom you abandoned will fall by the sword. [22]You will do as I've done. You won't cover your lips. You won't eat people's food. [23]Your hat on your heads, your boots on your feet, you won't mourn and you won't cry. You will waste away because of your wayward acts and you will groan one to another. [24]So Yehezqe'l is to be a sign for you. In accordance with all that he's done, you will do, when it come about. And you will acknowledge that I am the Lord Yahweh."'
[25]You, young man, on the day I take from them their stronghold, their splendid object of celebration, the desire of their eyes, the longing of their heart, their sons and their daughters – [26]on that day someone who has escaped will come to let you hear it with your ears, won't he. [27]On that day your mouth will open to the one who has escaped, and you will speak and no longer be dumb. You will be a sign to them. And they will acknowledge that I am Yahweh."'

Redress is mine: Ammon and Mo'ab

25 Yahweh's word came to me: [2]'Young man, set your face against the Ammonites and prophesy against them. [3]Say to the Ammonites, "Listen to the word of the Lord Yahweh. The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Because you said "Ah" about my sanctuary when it was treated as ordinary, and about Yisra'el's land when it became desolate, and about Yehudah's household when they went into exile, [4]therefore, here am I, I'm going to give you to the Qedemites as a possession. They will set up their encampments in you and put their dwellings in you. Those people will eat your fruit. Those people will drink your milk. [5]I shall

make Rabbah an abode for camels and the Ammonites a fold for sheep. And you will acknowledge that I am Yahweh.'"
[6]Because the Lord Yahweh has said this: "Since you clapped your hand and stamped your foot and rejoiced with all your contempt in your soul about Yisra'el's land, [7]therefore here am I, I'm going to stretch out my hand against you, and I shall give you as plunder to the nations. I shall cut you off from the peoples, obliterate you from the countries, annihilate you. And you will acknowledge that I am Yahweh."'
[8]The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Because Mo'ab and Se'ir said, "There – Yehudah's household is like all the nations", [9]therefore here am I, I'm going to open up Mo'ab's flank from the towns, from its towns on its extremity, the country's splendour – Bet Yeshimot, Ba'al Me'on and Qiryatayim – [10]to the Qedemites, along with the Ammonites. I shall give it as a possession, so that the Ammonites may not be remembered among the nations [11]and I shall execute acts of authority against Mo'ab. And they will acknowledge that I am Yahweh.'

Redress meets redress: Edom and Peleshet (Philistia)

[12]The Lord Yahweh said this: 'Because of Edom's action in exacting redress on Yehudah's household and incurring liability when they took redress against them', [13]therefore the Lord Yahweh has said this: 'I shall stretch out my hand against Edom and cut off from it human being and animal. I shall make it a waste from Teman to Dedan. They will fall by the sword. [14]I shall inflict my redress on Edom by the hand of my people Yisra'el. They will act against Edom in accordance with my anger and with my fury, and they will acknowledge my redress (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).'
[15]The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Because of the Pelishtites' action in taking redress and because they've exacted redress with personal contempt in devastating with ancient enmity', [16]therefore the Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Here am I, I'm going to stretch out my hand against the Pelishtites and cut off the Keretites, and obliterate what remains of the seacoast. [17]I shall execute great acts of redress against them with acts of wrathful reproof, and they will acknowledge that I am Yahweh when I impose my redress on them.'

Tsor (Tyre): just a place for spreading nets

26 In the eleventh year on the first of the month, Yahweh's word came to me: [2]'Young man, since Tsor has said about Yerushalaim, "Ah, the people's gateway has broken, it has turned round to me, I shall be full now it's been laid waste", [3]therefore the Lord Yahweh has said this: "Here am I against you, Tsor; I shall make many nations go up against you, like the sea making its waves go up. [4]They will devastate Tsor's walls and tear down its towers. I shall scrape off its soil and make it into the face of a cliff. [5]It will become a place for spreading nets in the middle of the sea: because I have spoken (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh). It will become plunder for the nations. [6]Its daughter-townships that are in the open country will be killed by the sword. And they will acknowledge that I am Yahweh."
[7]Because the Lord Yahweh has said this: "Here am I, I'm going to bring against Tsor from the north Nebukadne'tstsar king of Babel, king of kings, with horse, chariotry, cavalry, a congregation, a great company. [8]Your daughter-townships in the open country he will kill with the sword. He will build a tower against you, heap up a ramp against you and set a body-shield against you. [9]He will set his opposing force against your walls and demolish your towers with his axes. [10]From the profusion of his horses their dust will cover you. From the sound of the cavalry, wheel and chariot, your wheels will shake, when he comes through your gateways like people coming into a breached town. [11]With the hoofs of his horses he will trample all your streets. He will kill your people with the sword. Your strong columns will descend to earth. [12]They will plunder your wealth and loot your merchandise. They will tear down your walls and demolish your desirable houses. Your stones, your wood and your soil they will put in the middle of the water.

The sound of music stops

[13]I shall put a stop to the uproar of your songs, and the sound of your guitars will make itself heard no more. [14]I shall make you into the face of a cliff. You will become a place for spreading nets. You won't be built up any more. Because I, Yahweh, have spoken (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh)."
[15]The Lord Yahweh has said to Tsor: "At the sound of your downfall, at the groan of the people run through, at the instigation of killing within you, will foreign shores not shake? [16]All the sea's rulers will descend from their thrones. They will remove their robes, strip off their embroidered clothes and put on great trembling. They will sit on the ground and tremble at every moment and be desolate because of you.
[17]They will take up a dirge over you and say to you:

Oh, you've perished,
    you who were peopled from the seas,
The renowned town,
    one that was strong on the sea,
It and its inhabitants,
    people that put their terror on all its inhabitants.
[18]Now the foreign shores tremble,
    on the day of your downfall.
The foreign shores panic,
    they that are by the sea, at your passing."

[19]Because the Lord Yahweh has said this: "When I make you a wasted town, like towns that are not inhabited, when I take up the deep over you and the mighty water covers you, [20]I shall make you descend with the people who descend to the Pit, to the people of old, and I shall make you live in the world deep below, like the wastes from of old, with those who descend to the Pit, in order that you won't be inhabited. I shall make 'Splendour in the Country of the Living' – [21]I shall make you a great horror. There will be nothing of you. You will be sought out, but you won't be found again, ever (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh)."'

Tsor, perfect in beauty?

27 Yahweh's word came to me: [2]'You, young man, take up a dirge over Tsor. [3]You're to say to Tsor, which lives at the entrance to the sea, trading with the peoples at many foreign shores: "The Lord Yahweh has said this:

Tsor, you said,
'I am perfect in beauty.'
[4]Your borders were in the heart of the seas;
your builders perfected your beauty.
[5]With juniper from Senir
they built all your planks.
They got a cedar from Lebanon
to make a mast for you.
[6]With oaks from Bashan
they made your oars.
Your boarding they made of ivory inlaid in cypress
from the shores of Kittim [Cyprus].
[7]Linen with embroidery from Misrayim became your spread,
to be an ensign for you.
Blue and purple from the shores of Elishah
became your covering.
[8]The inhabitants of Tsidon and Arvad
were your rowers.
Your experts, Tsor, were within you;
they were your sailors.
[9]The elders of Gebel and its experts were within you,
strengthening your cracks.

All the ships of the sea and their mariners
were in you to deal in your merchandise.
[10]Paras [Persia], Lydia and Put were in your force,
your men of battle.
They hung shield and helmet in you;
those men gave you your splendour.
[11]People from Arvad and Helek
were on your walls all round.
Gammadites were in your towers,
they hung their quivers on your walls all round;
those men perfected your beauty.

The dealer

[12]Tarshish was your dealer because of the quantity of all your wealth; they gave your wares in exchange for silver, iron, tin and lead. [13]Yavan [Greece], Tubal and Meshek were your traders; they gave your merchandise in exchange for human life and things of copper. [14]From Bet Togarmah they gave horses, cavalry and mules in exchange for your wares. [15]The Dedanites were your traders. Many foreign shores were dealers under your control. They brought back to you ivory tusks and ebony as your payment. [16]Aram was your dealer because of the quantity of your products; they gave your wares in exchange for turquoise, purple, embroidery, fine linen, coral and ruby.

[17]Yehudah and the country of Yisra'el were your merchants; they gave your merchandise in exchange for wheat from Minnit and Pannag, syrup, oil and balm. [18]Dammeseq [Damascus] was your dealer because of the quantity of your products, because of the quantity of all your wealth, in wine of Helbon and white wool. [19]Vedan and Yavan gave yarn in exchange for your wares; there was wrought iron, cassia and cane among your merchandise. [20]Dedan was your trader in saddlecloths for riding. [21]Arabia and all Qedar's rulers were dealers under your control in lambs, rams and goats, as your dealers in these.

[22]The traders of Sheba and Ra'amah were your traders; they gave your wares in exchange for the finest of all spice and for all precious stone and gold. [23]Haran, Kanneh and Eden, the traders of Sheba, Ashshur and Kilmad, were your traders. [24]Those were your traders in fine things, in blue embroidered cloths, and in coloured rugs bound with cords and preserved with cedar, in your market. [25]Tarshish ships were your ministers for your merchandise.

The wreck of the *Titanic*

You were full and very heavy
in the heart of the seas.
[26]Into the mighty water
the rowers brought you.
The east wind broke you
in the heart of the seas.
[27]Your wealth and your wares, your merchandise,
your mariners and your sailors,
The men who strengthened your cracks,
and the people who handled your merchandise,
All your men of battle who were in you,
and in all your congregation that was within you,
Will fall in the heart of the seas
on the day of your downfall.
[28]At the sound of your sailors' cry,
the shorelands will shake.
[29]All the oarsmen
will come down from their ships.
The mariners, all the sailors of the sea,
will stand on the earth.
[30]They will let their voice be heard concerning you,
and cry in distress.
They will take up earth on to their head,

and cover themselves in ash.
[31]For you, they will shave their head,
and wrap on sack.
They will cry for you with bitterness of soul,
with bitter lament.
[32]For you they will take up a dirge as they groan,
and lament for you:
'Who was like Tsor,
like the one silenced in the middle of the sea?'
[33]When your wares went out from the seas,
you filled many peoples.
With the quantity of your wealth and your merchandise
you enriched earth's kings.
[34]The time when you broke because of the seas,
in the depths of the water,
Your merchandise and all your congregation
fell in the middle of it.
[35]All the inhabitants of foreign shores
are desolate over you.
Their kings bristled with horror,
their faces went dark.
[36]The dealers among the peoples whistled at you;
you became a horror, and you're no more, permanently."'

Another king who thinks he's a god

28 Yahweh's word came to me: [2]'Young man, say to Tsor's ruler: "The Lord Yahweh has said: 'Because your mind has been lofty and you've said, "I am a god, I am sitting as a deity – I've taken my seat in the heart of the seas"', when you're a human being and not God, but you made your mind like a deity's mind:

[3]There, you're smarter than Dan'el;
nothing hidden baffles you.
[4]Through your smartness and your discernment
you've made wealth for yourself.
You've made gold and silver in your treasuries
[5]through the magnitude of your smartness and through your trading.
You've made your wealth great,
but you've let your mind get lofty because of your wealth.

[6]Therefore the Lord Yahweh has said this:

Because of your making your mind
like the mind of a deity,
[7]Therefore here am I, I'm going to bring against you
strangers, the most violent of nations.
They will draw their swords against your smart beauty
and run you through in your splendour.
[8]Down to the Pit they will make you descend;
you will die the death of someone run through
in the heart of the seas.
[9]Will you actually say 'I'm a deity'
before your killers –
Given that you're a human being and not God –
at the hand of the people who run you through?
[10]The death of the foreskinned
you will die, at the hand of strangers,
because I have spoken (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh)."'

A dirge for a living king

[11]Yahweh's word came to me: [12]'Young man, take up a dirge over the king of Tsor. You're to say to him: "The Lord Yahweh has said this:

You were an exact seal,
full of smartness, perfect in beauty.
[13]You were in Eden, God's garden,
every precious stone your covering:

Carnelian, topaz and diamond,
beryl, onyx and jasper,
Sapphire, turquoise and emerald,
and gold, the work of your tambourines,
And your sockets in you,
that were prepared on the day of your creation.

[14]You were a sphinx, anointed as the protector, and I placed you –
you were on God's sacred mountain.
When you walked about among the fiery stones,
[15]you were a person of integrity in all your ways,
From the day of your creation,
until evil appeared in you.
[16]Through the quantity of your trading,
people filled the middle of you with violence.
You did wrong, and I am treating you as ordinary,
away from God's mountain, and destroying you,
Sphinx the protector,
from among the fiery stones.
[17]Your mind became lofty because of your beauty;
you devastated your smartness, through your splendour.
I'm throwing you out on to the earth;
before kings I'm making you something to stare at.
[18]Because of the quantity of your wayward acts,
through the evil of your trading,
You've treated your great sanctuary as ordinary.
I'm making fire go out from within you and it's devouring you.
I'm making you into ash on the earth
before the eyes of all who look at you.
[19]All who acknowledge you among the peoples
are becoming desolate at you.
You're becoming a horror,
and you will be no more, permanently."'

No more prickling briar

[20]Yahweh's word came to me: [21]'Young man, set your face towards Tsidon and prophesy against it. [22]You're to say, "The Lord Yahweh has said this:

Here am I against you, Tsidon;
I shall get honour within you.
They will acknowledge that I am Yahweh,
when I execute acts of authority against it.
I shall show myself sacred in it
[23]and let loose epidemic in it and blood in its streets.
The run through will fall within it
by the sword that's against it from all round,
and they will acknowledge that I am Yahweh.

[24]No more will there be for Yisra'el's household prickling briar and piercing thorn from all the people round them who treat them with contempt. And they will acknowledge that I am the Lord Yahweh."'
[25]The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'When I have collected Yisra'el's household from the peoples among whom they're dispersed and I've shown myself sacred among them before the eyes of the nations, they will live on their land that I gave my servant Ya'aqob, [26]and live on it with confidence. They will build houses and plant vineyards and live with confidence, when I have executed acts of authority on all the people who treat them with contempt, who are round them. And they will acknowledge that I Yahweh am their God.'

The Ye'or (Nile) is mine: I made it

29 In the tenth year, in the tenth, on the twelfth of the month, Yahweh's word came to me: [2]'Young man, set your face against Par'oh king of Misrayim, and prophesy against him and against Misrayim, all of it. [3]Speak: "The Lord Yahweh has said this:

Here am I against you,
Par'oh king of Misrayim,
Big monster stretching out
in the middle of its channels,
That said, 'My Ye'or is mine;

I'm the one who made it.'
[4]I shall put hooks in your jaws
and make the fish in your channels stick to your scales.
I shall get you up from the middle of your channels,
with all the fish in your channels that stick to your scales.
[5]I shall leave you to the wilderness,
you and all the fish in your channels.
You will fall on the face of the open country;
you won't be gathered and you won't be collected.
I'm giving you as food to the creatures of the earth
and to the birds of the heavens.
[6]And all the inhabitants of Misrayim
will acknowledge that I am Yahweh.
Since they were something to lean on that was made of reed
for Yisra'el's household,
[7]When they grasped you in their fist, you would fracture,
and tear their entire shoulder.
When they leaned on you, you'd break,
and make their entire hips collapse."
[8]Therefore the Lord Yahweh has said this: "Here am I, I'm going to bring a sword against you. I shall cut off from you human being and animal. [9]The country of Misrayim will become desolation and waste. And they will acknowledge that I am Yahweh.
Because he said, 'The Ye'or is mine; I'm the one who made it', [10]therefore here am I towards you and towards your channels: I shall make the country of Misrayim an utter waste and desolation, from Migdol to Seweneh, as far as the border with Kush [Sudan]. [11]Human foot won't pass through it and animal foot won't pass through it. It won't be inhabited for 40 years.

Misrayim as compensation

[12]I shall make the country of Misrayim a desolation in the middle of desolate countries, and its towns in the middle of ruined towns will be a desolation for 40 years. I shall scatter the Misrayimites among the nations and disperse them among the countries."'
[13]Indeed the Lord Yahweh has said this: 'At the end of 40 years I shall collect the Misrayimites from the peoples where they've scattered. [14]I shall restore the fortunes of the Misrayimites and bring them back to the country of Patros, on to the country of their origin. They will be a lowly kingdom there. [15]It will be the lowliest of the kingdoms; it won't arise again over the nations. I shall make them small so they don't have dominion over the nations. [16]It won't again be an object of reliance for Yisra'el's household, making it mindful of its waywardness in turning its face after them. And they will acknowledge that I am the Lord Yahweh.'
[17]In the twenty-seventh year, on the first of the first month, Yahweh's word came to me: [18]'Young man, Nebukadne'tstsar king of Babel has made his forces serve with great servitude against Tsor. Every head is rubbed bare. Every shoulder is scraped. But he and his forces have no wages from Tsor for the servitude with which they have served on it.'
[19]Therefore the Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Here am I, I'm going to give the country of Misrayim to Nebukadne'tstsar king of Babel. He will carry off its wealth, take spoil from it and seize plunder from it, and it will be the wages for his force. [20]As his compensation for which he served, I'm giving him the country of Misrayim, because they acted for me (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).
[21]On that day I shall make a horn grow for Yisra'el's household, and to you I shall give an opening of your mouth among them. And they will acknowledge that I am Yahweh.'

The day of the Lord for Misrayim

30 Yahweh's word came to me: [2]'Young man, prophesy: "Yahweh has said this:

Howl, aagh for the day,
[3]because Yahweh's day is near.
A day of cloud,
a time for nations, it will be.
[4]A sword will come upon Misrayim,
anguish will fall upon Kush,
When people fall, run through, in Misrayim,
and people take its wealth, and its foundations are torn down.
[5]Kush, Put, Lydia, the entire foreign group,
Cyrenaica, and members of the country in the pact
will fall by the sword with them.

[6]Yahweh has said this:

The people who support Misrayim will fall;
its vigorous majesty will go down.
From Migdol to Seweneh

they will fall there by the sword (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).

[7]They will be desolate among desolate countries, and its towns will be among wasted towns. [8]And they will acknowledge that I
am Yahweh when I put fire in Misrayim, and all its helpers break. [9]On that day envoys will go out from before me in ships to
make confident Kush tremble. Anguish will be upon them on Misrayim's day, because there, it's coming."
[10]The Lord Yahweh has said this: "And I shall put a stop to Misrayim's horde by the hand of Nebukadne'tstsar king of Babel.
[11]He and his company with him, the most violent of nations, are going to be brought to devastate the country. They will draw their
swords against Misrayim and fill the country with the people run through. [12]I shall make the channels dry ground and sell the
country into the hand of bad people. I shall desolate the country and everything in it by the hand of strangers. I, Yahweh, have
spoken."

Acts of authority on Misrayim

[13]The Lord Yahweh has said this: "I shall obliterate the lumps and make the non-entities cease from Memphis. There will no
longer be a ruler from the country of Misrayim. I shall put fear in the country of Misrayim. [14]I shall desolate Patros. I shall put fire
in Tso'an. I shall execute acts of authority in Thebes. [15]I shall pour out my fury on Pelusium, Misrayim's stronghold. I shall cut
off the horde of Thebes. [16]I shall put fire in Misrayim. Pelusium will writhe and writhe. Thebes will be torn apart. Memphis:
adversaries daily. [17]The young men of Heliopolis and Pi-beset will fall by the sword. Those – they will go into exile. [18]In
Tehaphnehes the day will be dark when I break Misrayim's yokes there, and its vigorous majesty comes to a stop in it. Cloud will
cover it and its daughter-townships will go into captivity. [19]I shall execute acts of authority in Misrayim, and they will
acknowledge that I am Yahweh."'
[20]In the eleventh year, in the first, on the seventh of the month, Yahweh's word came to me: [21]'Young man, I'm breaking the
arm of Par'oh king of Misrayim. There, it's not bound up so as to give healing, by putting a bandage to bind it up to strengthen it
for grasping a sword.'
[22]Therefore the Lord Yahweh has said this: [22]'Here am I towards Par'oh king of Misrayim. I shall break his arms, the strong
one and the broken one. I shall make the sword fall from his hand. [23]I shall scatter the Misrayimites among the nations and
disperse them among the countries. [24]I shall strengthen the arms of the king of Babel and put my sword in his hand. I shall break
the arms of Par'oh. He will groan before him with the groans of someone run through. [25]I shall strengthen the arms of the king of
Babel, but Par'oh's arms – they will fall. And they will acknowledge that I am Yahweh, when I put my sword into the hand of the
king of Babel and he stretches it out against the country of Misrayim. [26]I shall scatter the Misrayimites among the nations and
disperse them among the countries, and they will acknowledge that I am Yahweh.'

An empire on which the sun never sets?

31 In the eleventh year, in the third, on the first of the month, Yahweh's word came to me: [2]'Young man, say to Par'oh king of
Misrayim and to his horde: "To whom are you like in your greatness?

[3]There, Ashshur was a cedar in Lebanon,
beautiful in boughs, and a shady thicket,
Lofty in height,
and its top was among the clouds.
[4]Water made it big, the deep made it high,
going with its rivers round its plantation.
It sent its channels
to all the trees of the open country.
[5]As a result its height was loftier
than all the trees of the open country.
Its branches abounded, its boughs extended,
because of the abundant water in its channel.
[6]All the birds of the heavens
nested in its branches.
All the animals of the open country
gave birth under its boughs.
All the great nations
were living in its shade.
[7]It was beautiful in its great size, in the length of its branches,
because its root was by abundant water.
[8]Cedars in God's garden didn't overshadow it,
junipers didn't equal its branches,
plane trees didn't compare with its boughs.
No tree in God's garden
equalled it in its beauty.
[9]I made it beautiful
in the number of its branches.
All the trees of Eden were jealous of it,

the ones that were in God's garden."

Learn from its fall

[10]Therefore the Lord Yahweh has said this: "Since you were lofty in height – and it put its top into the middle of the clouds, and its mind became exalted in its loftiness, [11]I gave it into the hand of the leader of the nations so he'd deal effectively with it. In accordance with its faithlessness I dispossessed it. [12]Strangers, the most violent of nations, cut it down and left it. Its branches fell on the mountains and in all the ravines, and its boughs broke into all the canyons in the earth. All the peoples of the earth went down from its shade and left it.
[13]Upon it, fallen, all the birds of the heavens dwell, and to its boughs came all the animals of the open country – [14]in order that no trees by water should become lofty in their height or put their top among the clouds, nor should any of their mighty ones, drinkers of water, stand up in their loftiness, because all of them were given over to death, to the country below, among all human beings, with the people who go down to the Pit."
[15]The Lord Yahweh has said this: "On the day it went down to She'ol, I caused mourning, I closed the deep over it. I held back its rivers; the abundant water held back. I made Lebanon grieve over it. All the trees of the open country languished over it. [16]At the sound of its fall I made the nations shake, when I made it go down to She'ol with the people who go down to the Pit. In the country below, all the trees of Eden, the choicest and best of Lebanon, all the drinkers of water, found consolation. [17]They also went down with it to She'ol, to the people run through by the sword, and its [supporting] arm, the people who had lived in its shadow among the nations.
[18]To whom are you thus like, in honour and in greatness among the trees of Eden? You will be brought down with the trees of Eden to the country below. Among the foreskinned you will lie, with the people run through by the sword. That is Par'oh and his entire horde (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh)."'

The dragon caught

32 In the twelfth year in the twelfth month on the first of the month, Yahweh's word came to me: [2]'Young man, take up a dirge over Par'oh king of Misrayim:

Lion of the nations, you are being terminated,
though you are like the dragon in the water.
You've thrust forth with your rivers,
you've stirred up the water with your feet,
you've muddied their rivers.
[3]The Lord Yahweh has said this:

And I shall spread my mesh over you
in a congregation of many peoples.
I shall lift you up in my net [4]and leave you on the earth;
I shall throw you on the face of the open country.
I shall get all the birds of the heavens to dwell on you;
I shall get the animals of the entire earth to be full from you.
[5]I shall put your flesh on the mountains
and fill the ravines with your height.
[6]I shall drench the earth
with the flow of your blood on the mountains,
and canyons will fill from you.
[7]I shall cover the heavens when I put you out,
and make their stars dark.
I shall cover the sun with cloud,
and the moon won't give its light.
[8]All the bright lights in the heavens
I shall make dark above you.
I shall put darkness on your country (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh)
[9]and vex the mind of many peoples,
When I bring you broken among the nations,
to countries that you haven't known.
[10]I shall make many peoples desolate because of you;
their kings will bristle with horror because of you.
When I whirl my sword in their faces,
they will tremble at every moment,
Each for his own life,
on the day of your fall.

The great leveller

[11]Because the Lord Yahweh has said this:

The king of Babel's sword will come to you;
[12]by strong men's swords I shall make your horde fall,
the most violent among the nations, all of them.
They will destroy Misrayim's majesty;
its entire horde will be annihilated.
[13]I shall obliterate all its cattle
from beside abundant water.
Human feet will no more muddy them,
and animal hoofs won't muddy them.
[14]Then I shall settle their water,
make their rivers go like oil (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).
[15]When I make the country of Misrayim a desolation
and the country is desolate of what filled it,
When I strike down all the people who live in it,
they will acknowledge that I am Yahweh.

[16]That is a dirge, and people will lament with it;
the nations' daughters will lament with it.
Over Misrayim and over its entire horde
they will lament with it (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).'

[17]In the twelfth year, on the fifteenth of the month, Yahweh's word came to me: [18]'Young man, wail for Misrayim's horde. You're to send them down, it and the daughter-townships of mighty nations, to the country deep below, with the people who go down to the Pit.
[19]"Than whom are you more beautiful? Go down and be laid down with the foreskinned." [20]They will fall among people run through by the sword. The sword has been given over. They're dragging it off with all its hordes. [21]The mightiest of strong men speak to him from within She'ol, with his helpers. The foreskinned, people run through by the sword, have gone down and lain down. [22]Ashshur is there, and all its congregation, round him his graves, all of them run through, fallen by the sword, [23]whose graves were put in the Pit's far parts, and its congregation was round its grave, all of them run through, fallen by the sword, people who'd spread terror in the country of the living.

The strange consolation

[24]Elam is there, and all its horde, round its grave, all of them run through, fallen by the sword, people who went down foreskinned to the country deep below, people who had put their terror in the country of the living but carried their shame with the people who go down to the Pit. [25]Among the run through they've given it a bed, with all its graves round it, all of them foreskinned, run through by the sword. Because their terror was put in the country of the living, they carried their shame with the people who go down to the Pit; among the run through, he is put.
[26]Meshek and Tubal and its entire horde are there. Its graves are round it, all of them foreskinned, run through by the sword, because they put their terror in the country of the living. [27]They don't lie with the fallen strong men of the foreskinned, who went down to She'ol with their battle equipment and put their swords under their heads. Their wayward acts were upon their frames, because the strong men's terror had been in the country of the living. [28]And you yourselves will break among the foreskinned and will lie down with people run through by the sword.
[29]Edom is there, its kings and all its rulers, who despite their strength are put with the people run through by the sword. Those people lie with the foreskinned and with the people who go down to the Pit. [30]The leaders of the north, all of them, are there, and all the Tsidonites, who went down with the people run through despite their terror that issued from their strength, disgraced. They lie foreskinned with the people run through by the sword. They carried their shame with the people who go down to the Pit.
[31]These Par'oh will see, and he will be consoled over his entire horde, Par'oh's people who were run through by the sword, all his force (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh). [32]Because I'm putting my terror in the country of the living. He will be laid down among the foreskinned with the people run through by the sword, Par'oh and his entire horde (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).'

The lookout

33 Yahweh's word came to me: [2]'Young man, speak to the members of your people: "Regarding a country: when I bring the sword against it, and the country's people take someone from their number and make him into their lookout, [3]and he sees the sword coming against the country and blows the horn and warns the people, [4]and someone hears the sound of the horn but doesn't take warning and the sword comes and takes him – his blood will be on his own head. [5]He heard the sound of the horn but didn't take warning; his blood will be on him. Had that person taken warning, he'd have saved his life. [6]But should the lookout, when he sees the sword coming, not blow the horn, and the people don't take warning, and the sword comes and takes one of them, that person gets taken because of his own waywardness, but I shall require his blood from the lookout."
[7]So you, young man, I've made you a lookout for Yisra'el's household. You will hear a word from my mouth, and you're to warn them from me. [8]When I say to the faithless person, "Faithless one, you shall definitely die", and you haven't spoken to warn the faithless person from his way, that faithless person will die because of his waywardness, but I shall require his blood from your hand. [9]But you – when you've warned the faithless person from his way, to turn back from it, and he hasn't turned from his way, he will die because of his waywardness, but you will rescue your life.

[10]But you, young man, say to Yisra'el's household: "You've said this: 'Our rebellions and our wrongdoings rest upon us. Because of them we're wasting away, and how can we live?'" [11]Say to them, "As I live (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh), if I want the death of the faithless person . . . rather that the faithless person should turn back from his way and live. Turn back, turn back, from your bad ways. Why should you die, Yisra'el's household?"

The news arrives

[12]So you, young man, say to the members of your people: "The faithfulness of the faithful person won't rescue him on the day of his rebellion, and the faithlessness of the faithless person – he won't fall because of it on the day he turns back from his faithlessness. So the faithful person won't be able to live because of it on the day he commits wrongdoing. [13]When I say of the faithful person, 'He will indeed live', but he trusts in his faithfulness and does evil, none of his faithful deeds will be kept in mind. Because of the evil that he's done – he will die because of it. [14]And when I say to the faithless person, 'You will definitely die', and he turns back from his wrongdoing and exercises authority faithfully [15](the faithless person gives back a pledge, makes good for what was stolen, walks by the laws of life, so as not to do evil), he will definitely live, he won't die. [16]None of his wrongdoings that he's committed will be kept in mind for him. He's exercised authority faithfully. He will definitely live."
[17]The members of your people say, "The Lord's way isn't right." But they – their way isn't right. [18]When a faithful person turns from his faithfulness and does evil, he will die because of them. [19]When a faithless person turns from his faithlessness and exercises authority faithfully, on account of them that person will live. [20]And you say, "The Lord's way isn't right." I exercise authority over each person in accordance with his ways, Yisra'el's household.'
[21]In the twelfth year of our exile, in the tenth, on the fifth of the month, somebody who'd escaped from Yerushalaim came to me, saying, 'The town's been struck down.' [22]Yahweh's hand had come upon me in the evening before the person who'd escaped came, and he'd opened my mouth, before he came to me in the morning. So my mouth had opened. I was no longer dumb.

On how not to listen to a preacher

[23]Yahweh's word came to me: [24]'Young man, the people living in these wastes on Yisra'el's land are saying, "Abraham was one man, but he came to possess the country, whereas we're many. The country is given to us as a possession." [25]Therefore say to them, "The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'You eat with the blood, you raise your eyes to your lumps and you shed blood – and you will enter into possession of the country? [26]You've stood by your sword, you've done an offensive thing and you've each defiled his neighbour's wife – and you will enter into possession of the country?'"
[27]You're to say this to them: "The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'As I live, if the people in the wastes don't fall by the sword and I don't give the people in the open country to the animals for them to eat, and the people in the strongholds and in the caves don't die in an epidemic . . .
[28]I shall make the country desolating and desolation. Its vigorous majesty will cease, Yisra'el's mountains will be desolate, with no one passing through, [29]and they will acknowledge that I am Yahweh, when I make the country desolating and desolation because of all their offensive deeds that they've done.'"
[30]But you, young man: the members of your people are speaking about you by the walls and in the entrances of the houses. One speaks to another, a man to his brother: "Come, please, listen to what word is coming out from Yahweh." [31]They will come to you like a people coming, and sit before you, my people, and listen to your words. But they won't do them, because while they're making amorous sounds with their mouths, their mind is going after their loot. [32]And there are you, like a singer of amorous sounds to them, beautiful in voice and doing well in playing, and they listen to your words but none of them are doing them. [33]But when it comes about (there, it's coming), they will acknowledge that a prophet's been among them.'

The self-indulgent shepherds

34 Yahweh's word came to me: [2]'Young man, prophesy against Yisra'el's shepherds. Prophesy and say to them, "About the shepherds, the Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Hey, Yisra'el's shepherds, who've been shepherding themselves: isn't it the flock that shepherds shepherd? [3]You eat the fat and clothe yourselves in the wool, you sacrifice the fatlings; you don't shepherd the flock. [4]You haven't strengthened the weak, nor healed the sick, nor bandaged the broken, nor brought back the scattered, nor sought the missing, but ruled them with harshness and cruelty. [5]They scattered for lack of a shepherd, and they became food for any animal of the open country when they scattered. [6]My flock wanders through all the mountains and on every high hill. My flock scattered over the face of the country. There's been no one seeking and no one looking.'"'
[7]Therefore, shepherds, listen to Yahweh's word. [8]'As I live (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh), since my flock's become plunder and my flock's become food for any animal of the open country through the lack of anyone shepherding, and my shepherds haven't sought my flock, but the shepherds have shepherded themselves and not shepherded my flock, if I don't . . .'
[9]Therefore listen, you shepherds, to Yahweh's word. [10]The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Here am I towards the shepherds. I shall require my flock from their hand. I shall make them stop shepherding the flock, and the shepherds won't shepherd themselves any more. I shall rescue my flock from their mouth. They won't be food for them.'

The good shepherd

[11]Because the Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Here am I, I myself, and I shall enquire after my flock and search for them. [12]Like a shepherd searching after his herd when he's among his dispersed flock, so I shall search for my flock and rescue them from all the places where they've scattered on the day of cloud and gloom. [13]I shall get them out from the peoples, collect them from the

countries and bring them to their land. I shall shepherd them on Yisra'el's mountains by the canyons and by all the country's settlements. [14]I shall shepherd them on good pasturage; their abode will be on Yisra'el's high mountains. There they will lie down in a good abode, and they will pasture on rich pasturage on Yisra'el's mountains. [15]I myself shall shepherd my flock and I myself shall get them to lie down (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh). [16]I shall seek the missing, bring back the scattered, bandage the broken and strengthen the weak. But the fat and the strong I shall destroy. I shall shepherd with authority.

[17]And you, my flock (the Lord Yahweh has said this): here am I, I'm going to decide between one animal and another. About rams and he-goats: [18]is it too little for you that you pasture on good pasturage, but you trample with your feet what's left of your pasturage, and that you drink the clearest of the water, but muddy what's left with your feet, [19]so that my flock pastures on what your feet have trampled and your feet have muddied?'

[20]Therefore the Lord Yahweh has said this to them: 'Here am I, and I shall decide between fat animal and thin animal. [21]Since you were pushing with flank and shoulder, and butting with your horns against all the sick, until you scattered them abroad, [22]I shall deliver my flock, and it will no longer be plunder. I shall decide between one animal and another.

The Davidic shepherd

[23]And I shall set up over them one shepherd and he will shepherd them, my servant David. He's the one who will shepherd them. He'll be their shepherd. [24]I, Yahweh, will be their God, with my servant David ruler among them. I Yahweh have spoken. [25]I shall solemnize a pact of well-being for them. I shall stop bad creatures from the country, and they will live in the wilderness with confidence and sleep in the forests.

[26]I shall make them and the environs of my hill a blessing. I shall make the rain come down in its season; they will be showers that bring blessing. [27]The trees of the open country will give their fruit; the earth will give its produce. People will be on their land with confidence, and they will acknowledge that I am Yahweh, when I break the bars of their yoke and rescue them from the people who make them serve them. [28]They will no longer be plunder for the nations. The country's creatures won't eat them and they will live in confidence with no one disturbing them.

[29]I shall set up for them a plantation of renown, and they will no longer be carried off by famine in the country. They will no longer bear the nations' shame. [30]And they will acknowledge that I am Yahweh their God with them and they, Yisra'el's household, are my people (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh). [31]You, my flock, the flock I shepherd, you're human, and I am your God (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).'

The two peoples

35 Yahweh's word came to me: [2]'Young man, set your face against Mount Se'ir and prophesy against it. [3]You're to say to it: "The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Here am I towards you, Mount Se'ir. I shall stretch out my hand against you and make you desolating and desolation. [4]Your towns I shall make into a waste and you will be a desolation, and you will acknowledge that I am Yahweh.

[5]Since you had an ancient enmity and you hurled the Yisra'elites into the power of the sword at the time of their calamity, at the time of their final waywardness, [6]therefore, as I live (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh), I shall make you into blood; blood will pursue you. Given that you were not hostile to blood, blood will pursue you. [7]I shall make Mount Se'ir desolation and desolating, and I shall cut off from it anyone passing by and anyone coming back. [8]I shall fill its mountains with its people run through. Your hills, your valleys and all your canyons – people run through by the sword will fall in them. [9]I shall make you a permanent desolation, your towns won't be inhabited and you will acknowledge that I am Yahweh.

[10]Since you said, "The two nations and the two countries will be mine, and we shall possess them" (but Yahweh was there), [11]therefore as I live (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh), I shall act in accordance with your anger and with your passion with which you acted out of your hostility to them. I shall cause myself to be acknowledged among them as I exercise authority over you. [12]You will acknowledge that I Yahweh have heard all your insults, which you've uttered about Yisra'el's mountains: "They're desolate, they've been given to us as food." [13]You acted big against me with your mouth and you made your words proliferate against me. I myself heard.'"'

[14]The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'In accordance with the rejoicing over the entire country, I shall make you a desolation. [15]In accordance with your rejoicing over the domain that belonged to Yisra'el's household, because it became desolate, so I shall act towards you. You will become a desolation, Mount Se'ir and all Edom, all of it. And they will acknowledge that I am Yahweh.'

The mountains renewed

36 'And you, young man, prophesy towards Yisra'el's mountains: "Mountains of Yisra'el, listen to Yahweh's word. [2]The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Since the enemy said over you, "Ah", and "The ancient shrines have become ours as a domain", [3]therefore prophesy: "The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Since, yes since they made you desolate and trampled you all round, so that you became the possession of the remaining nations, and you were taken up on to the lip of the tongue and the slur of the people, [4]therefore, Yisra'el's mountains, listen to the Lord Yahweh's word.

The Lord Yahweh has said this to the mountains, to the hills, to the canyons, to the ravines, to the desolate wastes, and to the abandoned towns that have become plunder and derision to the remaining nations that are all round – [5]therefore the Lord Yahweh has said: "If I haven't spoken in my passionate anger against the remaining nations and against Edom, all of it, which made my country a possession for itself with wholehearted rejoicing, with contempt of soul, for the sake of pastureland, as plunder . . ."'"

[6]Therefore prophesy about Yisra'el's land. You're to say to the mountains, to the hills, to the canyons and to the ravines, "The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Here am I, I'm going to speak in my passion and in my fury, since you've carried the nations'

shame.' [7]Therefore the Lord Yahweh has said this: 'I myself have raised my hand [to swear]: if the nations that are from all round you don't carry their shame . . .

[8]But you, Yisra'el's mountains, will produce your boughs and bear your fruit for my people Yisra'el, because they're near coming. [9]Because here am I towards you, and I shall turn my face to you, and you will be served and sown. [10]I shall make the people on you abundant, Yisra'el's entire household, all of it. The towns will be inhabited, the wastes built up. [11]I shall multiply on you human beings and animals; they'll be many and they'll be fruitful. I shall cause you to be inhabited as you were before and I shall make things good for you, better than before for you, and you will acknowledge that I am Yahweh. [12]I shall get people, my people Yisra'el, to walk upon you. They will come to possess you and you will be their domain. You won't bereave them ever again.''''

Yahweh takes pity on his name

[13]The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Since they're saying to you, "You've been one who devours human beings, who bereaves your nations", [14]therefore you will no more devour human beings, you will not bereave your nations again any more (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh). [15]I shall not let you hear the nations' shaming any more. You will no more carry the peoples' reviling. You will no more make your nations collapse (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).'

[16]Yahweh's word came to me: [17]'Young man, when Yisra'el's household were living on their land, they defiled it with their way and with their deeds. In my eyes their way was like the defilement of a woman who's taboo. [18]So I poured out my fury on them because of the blood they had poured out on the earth, and they had defiled it with their lumps. [19]I scattered them among the nations and they were dispersed among the countries. In accordance with their way and with their deeds I exercised authority over them.

[20]They came to the nations, wherever they came, and treated my sacred name as ordinary, in that people said of them, "These are Yahweh's people, but they went out of his country." [21]But I have taken pity on my sacred name, which Yisra'el's household caused to be treated as ordinary among the nations where they came.

[22]Therefore say to Yisra'el's household: "The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'It's not for your sake that I'm going to act, Yisra'el's household, but for my sacred name, which you've caused to be treated as ordinary among the nations where you came. [23]I shall make my great name sacred, which has been treated as ordinary among the nations among whom you have caused it to be treated as ordinary, and the nations will acknowledge that I am Yahweh (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh) when I show myself sacred through you before their eyes.

[24]I shall take you from the nations, collect you from all the countries and bring you to your land. [25]I shall toss clean water over you and you'll be clean. From all your defilements and from all your lumps I shall cleanse you.

The gift of a new mind and a new spirit

[26]I shall give you a new mind and I shall put a new spirit inside you. I shall remove the stony mind from your flesh and give you a fleshy mind, [27]and I shall put my spirit inside you. I shall make it so that you walk by my laws and keep my rulings and do them. [28]You will live in the country that I gave your ancestors, and you will be my people and I shall be your God. [29]I shall deliver you from all your defilements. I shall call for the grain and make it abundant, and not put famine upon you. [30]I shall make the fruit of the trees and the produce of the fields abundant, so that you no more receive reviling because of famine among the nations. [31]You will be mindful of your bad ways and your practices that were not good, and you will be loathsome in your own sight because of your wayward acts and because of your offensive practices. [32]It's not for your sake that I'm going to act (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh), be it known to you. Be disgraced and ashamed because of your ways, Yisra'el's household.''''

[33]The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'On the day I cleanse you from all your wayward acts, I shall cause your towns to be inhabited, the wastes will be built up, [34]and the desolate country will be served instead of being a desolation in the sight of every passer-by. [35]People will say, "That country which was desolate has become like Eden Garden, and the towns that were wasted and desolate and torn down, people live in, fortified." [36]The nations that remain all round you will acknowledge that I Yahweh have built up the wastes; I have planted the desolations. I Yahweh have spoken and I shall act.'

[37]The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Further, in this I shall let myself be enquired of by Yisra'el's household, to act for them. I shall make people as abundant as a flock. [38]Like the flock of sacred ones, like the Yerushalaim flock at its set occasions, so the wasted towns will be full of a human flock, and they will acknowledge that I am Yahweh.'

Dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones

37 Yahweh's hand came on me and took me out by Yahweh's wind, and set me down in the middle of a valley. It was full of bones. [2]He got me to pass through them, all the way round. There, they were very many on the face of the valley. And there, they were very dry. [3]He said to me, 'Young man, could these bones come to life?' I said, 'Lord Yahweh, you know.'

[4]He said to me, 'Prophesy to these bones: "You dry bones, listen to Yahweh's word. [5]The Lord Yahweh has said this to these bones: 'Here, I'm going to make breath come into you, and you will come to life. [6]I shall put muscles on you, make flesh go up on you, spread skin on you and put breath into you, and you'll come to life, and you will acknowledge that I am Yahweh.''''

[7]I prophesied as I was ordered, and a sound came as I prophesied, and there – a shaking, and the bones drew near bone to its bone. [8]I looked, and there, muscles were on them, and flesh went up, and skin spread on them above. But there was no breath in them. [9]He said to me, 'Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, young man. You're to say to the breath, "The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Come from the four winds, breath, and breathe into these people who are run through, so that they come to life.''''

[10]So I prophesied as he ordered me, and the breath came into them. They came to life and stood on their feet, a very, very great force.
[11]He said to me, ‘Young man, these bones are Yisra’el’s entire household. There, they’re saying, “Our bones are dry, our hope has perished, we’re totally finished.” [12]Therefore prophesy and say to them, “The Lord Yahweh has said this: ‘Here, I’m going to open your graves and get you to go up from your graves, my people, and bring you to Yisra’el’s land. [13]You will acknowledge that I am Yahweh when I open your graves and get you to go up from your graves, my people. [14]I shall put my spirit in you and you will come to life and I shall settle you down on your land, and you will acknowledge that I Yahweh have spoken and acted (Yahweh’s declaration).’”’

The two become one

[15]Yahweh’s word came to me: [16]‘And you, young man, get yourself a piece of wood and write on it, “Belonging to Yehudah and to the Yisra’elites who are its associates”, and get a piece of wood and write on it, “Belonging to Yoseph (Ephrayim’s piece of wood) and all Yisra’el’s household that are its associates”. [17]Bring them close one to the other so they become one piece of wood. They’re to become one in your hand.
[18]When members of your people say to you, “Tell us what these things of yours are, won’t you”, [19]speak to them: “The Lord Yahweh has said this: ‘Here am I, I’m going to take Yoseph’s piece of wood that’s in Ephrayim’s hand, and the Yisra’elite clans that are his associates, and I shall put them on it (Yehudah’s piece of wood), and make them one piece of wood. They will be one in my hand.’”
[20]The pieces of wood on which you’ve written are to be in your hand before their eyes, [21]and you’re to speak to them, “The Lord Yahweh has said this: ‘Here am I, I’m going to get the Yisra’elites from among the nations where they’ve gone, collect them from all round and bring them to their land. [22]I shall make them into one nation in the country, on Yisra’el’s mountains. One king will be king for all of them. There won’t be two nations again. They won’t divide into two kingdoms ever again. [23]And they won’t defile themselves again with their lumps and their abominations and all their rebellions. I shall deliver them from all their settlements in which they did wrong and cleanse them, and they will be my people and I shall be their God.
[24]My servant David will be king over them and they will all have one shepherd. They will walk by my rulings and keep my laws and do them. [25]They’ll live in the country that I gave to my servant, to Ya’aqob, in which your ancestors lived. They’ll live in it, they and their children and their grandchildren, permanently, with David my servant as their ruler permanently.
[26]I shall solemnize a pact of well-being for them. It will be a permanent pact with them. I shall give it to them and multiply them, and I shall put my sanctuary among them permanently. [27]My dwelling will be with them. I shall be their God and they will be my people. [28]And the nations will acknowledge that I am Yahweh, the one who makes Yisra’el sacred, when my sanctuary is among them permanently.’”’

Gog and Magog

38 Yahweh’s word came to me: [2]‘Young man, set your face towards Gog, in the country of Magog, the highest ruler in Meshek and Tubal. You’re to prophesy against him: [3]“The Lord Yahweh has said this: ‘Here am I towards you, Gog, highest ruler in Meshek and Tubal. [4]I shall turn you back and put hooks in your jaws and make you go out, with your entire force, horses and cavalry, clothed in fullness all of them, a great congregation, with body-shield and hand-shield, grasping swords, all of them. [5]Paras, Kush and Put are with them, all of them with shield and helmet, [6]Gomer and all its legions, Bet Togarmah in the far parts of the north and all its legions – many peoples with you. [7]Be ready, get yourselves ready, you and your entire congregation who are forming round you. You’re to be a watch for them. [8]After many days you will be appointed; at the end of the years you will come to a country restored from the sword, collected from many peoples – against Yisra’el’s mountains, which have been a waste continually. But it will have been taken out from the peoples, and they will be living with confidence, all of them. [9]When you go up, you will come as devastation; you will be like a cloud to cover the country, you and all your legions and many peoples with you.’”’
[10]The Lord Yahweh has said: ‘On that day, things will come up into your mind. You will think up a bad plan. [11]You will say, “I shall go up against a country of open villages. I shall come to quiet people living in confidence, all of them, living without walls and without bars or gateways, [12]to take plunder and seize spoil”, to turn your hand against wastes that have become inhabited, and upon a people gathered from the nations, making livestock and possessions, living at the centre of the earth. [13]Sheba and Dedan, the traders of Tarshish and all its lions will say to you, “Is it to take plunder that you’re coming? Is it to seize spoil that you’ve formed your congregation, to carry off silver and gold, to get livestock and possessions, to take much plunder?”’

The last great battle

[14]Therefore prophesy, young man, and say to Gog: ‘The Lord Yahweh has said this: “On that day, when my people Yisra’el are living with confidence, you will acknowledge it, won’t you, [15]and come from your place, from the far parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, riding horses all of them, a great congregation, a huge force. [16]You’ll go up against my people Yisra’el like a cloud to cover the country. At the end of the time it will come about. I shall bring you against my country in order that the nations may acknowledge me when I show myself sacred through you before their eyes, Gog.”’
[17]The Lord Yahweh said this: ‘Are you the one of whom I spoke in earlier days by means of my servants Yisra’el’s prophets, who prophesied in those days for years that I would bring you against them? [18]On that day, on the day Gog comes against Yisra’el’s land (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh), my wrath will go up into my nostrils. [19]In my passion, in my furious fire, I have spoken. If on that day a great earthquake doesn’t happen in Yisra’el’s land . . .

[20]Before me things will quake: the fish in the sea, the birds in the heavens, the animals of the open country, everything that moves on the ground and all the human beings that are on the face of the ground. The mountains will be toppled, the cliffs will fall, every wall will fall to the earth.
[21]I shall call for a sword against him through all my mountains (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh). One person's sword will be against his brother. [22]I shall enter into judgement with him by epidemic and by bloodshed, and I shall pour torrential rain, hailstones, fire and sulphur, on him, on his legions and on the many peoples that are with him. [23]I shall show I am great and show I am sacred and cause myself to be acknowledged before the eyes of many nations. And they will acknowledge that I am Yahweh.'

The peace dividend

39 And you, young man, prophesy against Gog: 'The Lord Yahweh has said this: "Here am I towards you, Gog, the highest ruler of Meshek and Tubal. [2]I shall turn you back. I shall lead you along and get you to go up from the far parts of the north and bring you against Yisra'el's mountains. [3]But I shall strike down your bow from your left hand and make your arrows fall from your right hand. [4]You will fall on Yisra'el's mountains, you and all your legions and the peoples that are with you. I shall give you as food to birds of prey of every kind and to the animals of the open country [5]when you fall on the face of the open country, because I have spoken (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).
[6]I shall send off fire on Magog and on the people who live with confidence on foreign shores, and they will acknowledge that I am Yahweh. [7]I shall cause my sacred name to be acknowledged among my people Yisra'el and not let my sacred name be treated as ordinary any more, and the nations will acknowledge that I Yahweh am sacred in Yisra'el.
[8]There, it's coming, it's happening (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh). It's the day of which I have spoken. [9]The inhabitants of Yisra'el's towns will go out and make a fire and burn the weaponry, hand-shield and body-shield, bow and arrows, hand pike and spear. They'll make a fire with them for seven years. [10]They won't carry wood from the open country and they won't cut it from the forests, because they'll make a fire with the weaponry. They'll plunder their plunderers and despoil their despoilers (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).

Proper burial

[11]On that day I shall give Gog a place where there will be a grave in Yisra'el, Travellers' Ravine, east of the sea. It will obstruct travellers; they'll bury Gog and his entire multitude there. They'll call it Gog's Multitude's Ravine. [12]Yisra'el's household will bury them to cleanse the country, for seven months; [13]the entire people of the country will bury them. It will mean renown for them, the day I show my splendour (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh). [14]They will set apart permanent people as travellers in the country, burying (the travellers) ones that remain on the face of the country, to cleanse it. At the end of seven months they'll search. [15]As travellers travel in the country and see human bones, one is to build a marker by it, until the buriers have buried it in Gog's Multitude's Ravine [16](the name of the town will also be Multitude) and cleansed the country."
[17]And you, young man (the Lord Yahweh has said this), say to birds of every kind and to every animal of the open country, "Collect yourselves and come, gather from all round to my sacrifice that I'm going to make for you, a great sacrifice on Yisra'el's mountains. You'll eat flesh and drink blood. [18]You'll eat strong men's flesh and drink the blood of earth's rulers: rams, lambs, goats, bulls, Bashan fatlings, all of them. [19]You'll eat fat until you're full and drink blood until you're drunk from my sacrifice that I shall have made for you. [20]At my table you'll become full of horses, chariotry, strong men, every man of battle (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).

I shall not hide my face any more

[21]I shall put my splendour among the nations, and all the nations will see my authoritative decision that I've made and my hand that I've set against them. [22]Yisra'el's household will acknowledge that I Yahweh am their God, from that day onwards. [23]And the nations will acknowledge that Yisra'el's household went into exile for their waywardness, because they trespassed against me. I hid my face from them and gave them into the hand of their adversaries, and all of them fell by the sword. [24]It was in accordance with their defilement and with their rebellions that I dealt with them and hid my face from them."'
[25]Therefore the Lord Yahweh has said this: 'Now I shall restore Ya'aqob's fortunes and have compassion on Yisra'el's entire household, and be passionate about my sacred name. [26]They will carry their shame and all their trespass that they committed against me when they live on their land with confidence, with no one disturbing them, [27]when I bring them back from the peoples and collect them from their enemies' countries and show myself sacred among them before the eyes of many nations. [28]They will acknowledge that I Yahweh am their God, when I've exiled them to the nations but gathered them on their land. I shall leave none of them there any more. [29]I shall not hide my face from them any more when I've poured out my spirit on Yisra'el's household (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).'

A town on a mountain

40 In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth of the month, in the fourteenth year after the town was struck down, on this very day Yahweh's hand came upon me, and he brought me there. [2]In a great appearance of God he brought me to the country of Yisra'el and set me down on a very high mountain. On it was the very structure of a town to the south. [3]He brought me to it, and there – a man, his appearance the very appearance of copper, a linen cord in his hand, and a measuring rod. He was standing in the gateway. [4]The man spoke to me: 'Young man, look with your eyes, listen with your ears

and set your mind on everything that I'm going to show you, because you've been brought here in order to show you. Tell Yisra'el's household everything you see.'

[5]There – a wall outside the house, all the way round. In the man's hand was a six-cubit measuring rod, by the cubit-plus-a-handbreadth [three metres]. He measured the structure's width – one rod, and the height – one rod. [6]He came to the gateway whose face was towards the east, and went up its steps. He measured the gateway's threshold – one rod in depth (the one threshold – one rod in depth). [7]Each alcove – one rod in length and one rod in width. Between the alcoves – five cubits.

The gateway's threshold next to the gateway's porch, facing the house – one rod. [8]He measured the gateway's porch facing the house – one rod. [9]He measured the gateway's porch – eight cubits, and its columns – two cubits; the gateway's porch was facing the house. [10]The gateway alcoves towards the east were three on one side and three on the other side, one measurement for the three of them and one measurement for the columns on each side.

Gateways (1)

[11]He measured:
the width of the gateway opening – ten cubits;
the gateway's length – 13 cubits;
[12]the barrier in front of the alcoves – one cubit, so the barrier was one cubit on each side;
the alcove – six cubits on one side and six cubits on the other side.
[13]He measured the gateway from the back of an alcove to the back of the other; the width – 25 cubits, opening to opening. [14]He made columns – 60 cubits, and next to the column was the gateway courtyard all the way round. [15]Starting at the front of the outer gateway to the front of the inner gateway's porch – 50 cubits. [16]There were narrow windows to the alcoves and to their columns inside the gateway all the way round, and similarly to the porches there were windows all the way round on the inside, with palms on a column.

[17]He brought me to the outer courtyard, and there – halls, and a pavement made for the courtyard all the way round, 30 halls to the pavement. [18]The pavement was by the side of the gateways, alongside the length of the gateways (the lower pavement). [19]He measured the width from in front of the lower gateway to the front of the outer courtyard – a hundred cubits, east and north.

[20]The gateway whose face was towards the north, belonging to the outer courtyard – he measured its length and its width, [21]its three alcoves on one side and three on the other side, its columns and its porches. Like the measurement of the first gate, its length – 50 cubits, and the width – 25 cubits. [22]Its windows, its porches and its palms were like the measurement of the gateway that faced towards the east. By seven steps people would go up on to it, and its porch would be in front of them. [23]There was a gateway to the inner courtyard facing the northern gate as well as the east; he measured from one gateway to the other gateway – a hundred cubits.

Gateways (2)

[24]He took me towards the south. There – a gate towards the south. He measured its columns and its porches, in accordance with these measurements. [25]It and its porches had windows all the way round like these windows; the length – 50 cubits, and the width – 25 cubits. [26]There were seven steps up to it. Its porch was in front of them. It had palms, one on one side and one on the other side, on its columns. [27]The inner courtyard had a gateway towards the south. He measured from the gateway to the gateway on the south – a hundred cubits.

[28]He brought me to the inner courtyard through the southern gateway and measured the southern gateway in accordance with these measurements. [29]Its alcoves, its columns and its porches were in accordance with these measurements. It and its porches had windows all the way round. The length – 50 cubits, and the width – 25 cubits [30](the porches all the way round, the length – 25 cubits, the width – 5 cubits). [31]Its porch was towards the outer courtyard. There were palms on its columns and eight steps in its staircase.

[32]He brought me to the inner courtyard towards the east and measured the gateway in accordance with these measurements. [33]Its alcoves, its columns and its porches were in accordance with these measurements. It and its porches had windows all the way round. The length – 50 cubits, and the width – 25 cubits. [34]Its porch was towards the outer courtyard. There were palms on its columns, on one side and on the other side, and eight steps in its staircase.

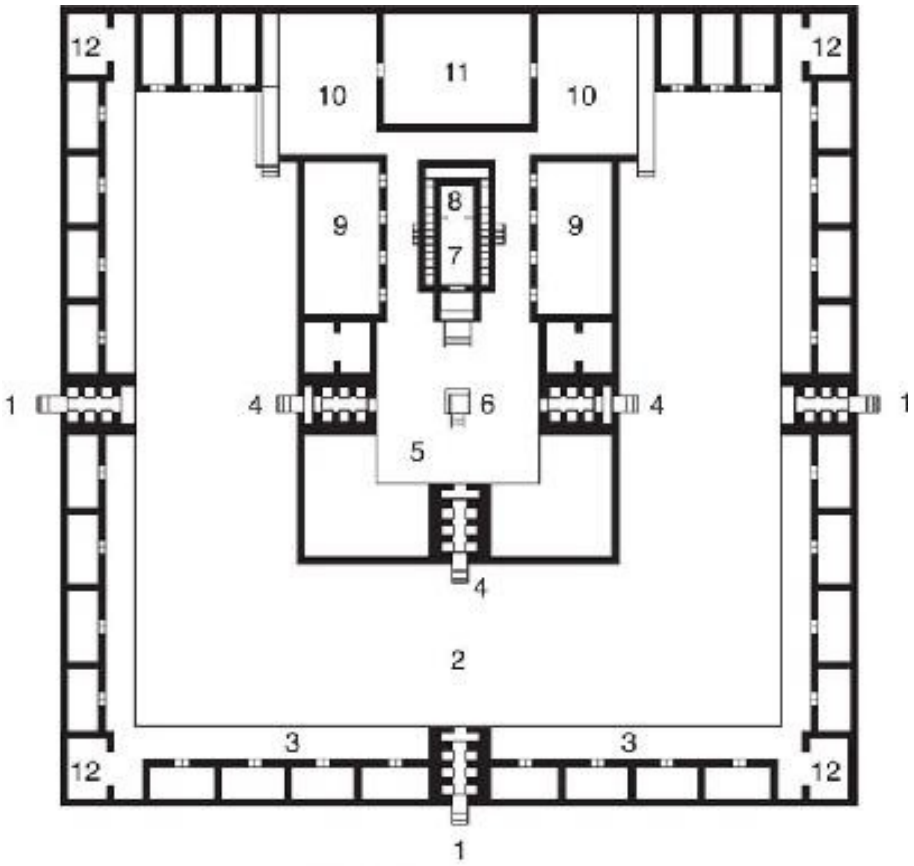
[35]He brought me to the northern gateway and measured it in accordance with these measurements – [36]its alcoves, its columns and its porches, and its windows all the way round. The length – 50 cubits, and the width – 25 cubits. [37]Its columns were towards the outer courtyard. There were palms on its columns, on one side and on the other side, and eight steps in its staircase.

Provision for the priests and the singers

[38]There was a hall and its entrance in the porch at the gateways, where they would wash the burnt offering. [39]In the gateway porch were two tables on one side and two tables on the other side for slaughtering the burnt offering, the purification offering and the restitution offering on them. [40]On the outer side wall for someone going up to the entrance of the northern gateway were two tables and on the other side wall in relation to the gateway's porch were two tables, [41]four tables on one side and four tables on the other side at the side wall of the gateway, eight tables on which they would slaughter things. [42]The four tables for the burnt offering were of hewn stone. The length – a cubit and a half, the width – a cubit and a half, and the height – a cubit. On them they'd set down the things with which they would slaughter the burnt offering and the sacrifice. [43]There were ledges – one handbreadth, fixed inside all the way round. The flesh of the offering was on the tables.

[44]Outside the inner gateway were the singers' halls in the inner courtyard, one that was on the side wall of the northern gateway with their face towards the south, one on the side wall of the eastern gateway facing towards the north. [45]He spoke to me: 'This, the hall that faces towards the south, is for the priests having charge of the house. [46]The hall that faces towards the north is for the priests having charge of the altar. They are the Tsadoqites, who of the Levites draw near Yahweh to minister to him.'

[47]He measured the courtyard. The length – a hundred cubits, the width – a hundred cubits, foursquare. The altar was before the house. [48]He brought me to the house's porch and measured a porch column – five cubits on one side and five cubits on the other side. The width of the gateway – three cubits on one side and three cubits on the other side. [49]The length of the porch – 20 cubits, and the width – 11 cubits. It was by steps that people would go up to it. There were pillars by the columns, one on one side, one on the other side.



Start: Eastern gateway

The list approximately follows Ezekiel's walk through the temple

1 Outer gateways
2 Outer courtyard
3 Lower pavement
4 Inner gateways
5 Inner courtyard
6 Altar
7 Sanctuary
8 Most sacred place
9 Rooms for ministers
10 Separate place
11 Building (storage?)
12 Kitchens

Ezekiel 40: The temple in Yehezqe'l's (Ezekiel's) vision

Yahweh's palace (1)

41 He brought me into the palace and measured the columns – six cubits the width on one side, six cubits the width on the other side (the width of the tent). [2]The width of the entrance – ten cubits, and the side walls of the entrance – five cubits on one side and five cubits on the other side. He measured its length – 40 cubits, and the width – 20 cubits. [3]He came inside and

measured an entrance column – two cubits, the entrance – six cubits, and the entrance's width – seven cubits. [4]He measured its length – 20 cubits, and the width – 20 cubits, before the palace. He said to me, 'This is the especially sacred place.'

[5]He measured the wall of the house – six cubits, and the width of a side room – four cubits, round the house, all the way round. [6]The side rooms – side room above side room, 33-fold. There were insets in the wall that belonged to the house for the side rooms all the way round, to be supports but so that they wouldn't be supports in the wall of the house. [7]It widened as it went round higher and higher to the side rooms. Because the house's surrounding went higher and higher all the way round the house, consequently the width of the house went higher, and one would go up from the lowest to the highest via the middle.

[8]I saw belonging to the house a raised area all the way round, the foundations of the side rooms. Its height – the full length of a rod, six cubits, to the joint. [9]The width of the wall of a side room on the outside – five cubits. What was left clear between the side rooms of the house [10]and between the halls, the width – 20 cubits round the house, all the way round. [11]The entrance of a side room towards what was left clear, one entrance towards the north, one entrance to the south, and the width of the place that was left clear – five cubits all the way round. [12]The building that was towards the front of the separate place at the corner towards the west: the width – 70 cubits. The wall of the building: the width – five cubits all the way round, and its length – 90 cubits.

Yahweh's palace (2)

[13]He measured the house:
the length – a hundred cubits;
the separate place, the building and its walls: the length – a hundred cubits;
[14]the width of the front of the house and the separate place on the east – a hundred cubits.
[15]He measured the length of the building facing the separate place that was at the back of it, and its galleries on one side and on the other side – a hundred cubits. The palace inside, the courtyard porches [16](the thresholds), the narrow windows, and the galleries round the three of them by the threshold, were panelled with wood all the way round. The ground up to the windows, and the windows, they were covered, [17]above the entrance and as far as the house, inside and outside.

On the entire wall, all the way round, inside and outside, was a measured area. [18]Sphinxes and palms were made, a palm between sphinx and sphinx. A sphinx had two faces, [19]a human face towards the palm on one side and a lion face towards the palm on the other side. It was made for the entire house all the way round. [20]From the ground to above the entrance the sphinxes and the palms were made, and the palace wall.

[21]The palace: there was a square door frame, and facing the sacred place something with an appearance like the appearance of [22]a wood altar. The height – three cubits, its length – two cubits. It had corners, and its length and its walls were wood. He spoke to me: 'This is the table that's before Yahweh.' [23]The palace had double doors, and the sacred place [24]had double doors. The double doors had double doors that could be turned, two doors for one and two doors for the other. [25]Sphinxes and palms were made for them (for the palace doors) as they were made for the walls. There was a wood canopy in front of the porch, on the outside. [26]There were narrow windows and palms on one side and on the other, on the porch's side walls and the side rooms of the house and the canopies.

The halls

42 He took me out into the outer courtyard by the way towards the north and brought me into the hall that was opposite the separate place and that was opposite the northern building. [2]Facing the length – a hundred cubits – was the northern entrance. The width – 50 cubits. [3]Opposite the 20 of the inner courtyard, and opposite the pavement of the outer courtyard, one gallery was facing another gallery in threes.

[4]Facing the halls was a walkway (the width – ten cubits, on the inside; a path – one cubit), with its entrances to the north. [5]The upper halls were cut back, because galleries had an effect on them, more than the lowest and the middle ones in the building, [6]because they were divided into three, and they had no pillars like the pillars in the courtyards. Therefore it got narrower from the lowest and from the middle, from the ground.

[7]There was a wall outside, alongside the halls, towards the outer courtyard facing the halls. Its length – 50 cubits, [8]because the length of the halls belonging to the outer court was 50 cubits. So there, in front of the palace, it was a hundred cubits. [9]From below these halls was the passageway from the east when someone comes here from the outer courtyard.

[10]In the width of the wall towards the east, facing the separate place and facing the building, there were halls. [11]Towards the front of them was a similar appearance of halls that were towards the north. Corresponding to their length, so was their width. All their exits were in accordance with the prescriptions for them and in accordance with their entrances. [12]Like the halls' entrances that were towards the south was the entrance at the head of the path, the path in front of the wall going towards the east, as one comes into them.

Separating between the sacred and the ordinary

[13]He said to me, 'The northern halls, the southern halls, that are facing the separate place, are the sacred halls where the priests who come near Yahweh will eat the most sacred things. They will set down the most sacred things there (the grain offering, the purification offering and the restitution offering), because the place is sacred. [14]When the priests come in, they won't go out from the sacred place to the outer courtyard. They'll set down their garments in which they minister there because it's sacred, and put on other garments and go near the people's area.'

[15]He finished measuring the inner house and took me out towards the gateway that faces towards the east, and measured all the way round.

[16]He measured the eastern side with the measuring rod – 500 (in rods) with the measuring rod, all round.
[17]He measured the northern side – 500 (in rods) with the measuring rod, all round.
[18]He measured the southern side – 500 (in rods) with the measuring rod.
[19]He turned to the southern side and measured – 500 (in rods) with the measuring rod.
[20]Four sides he measured it. It had a wall all the way round (the length – 500; the width – 500) to separate between the sacred and the ordinary.

Yahweh's splendour is returning

43 He took me to a gateway, the gateway that faces towards the east. [2]There – the splendour of Yisra'el's God was coming from the eastern direction, its sound like the sound of much water. The earth was lit up by his splendour. [3]The appearance was like the appearance that I saw, like the appearance that I saw when I came to devastate the town, and the great appearance was like the appearance that I saw at the River Kebar. I fell on my face.
[4]Yahweh's splendour came into the house by way of the gateway whose face is towards the east. [5]A spirit lifted me up and brought me to the inner courtyard. There, Yahweh's splendour was filling the house. [6]I heard someone speaking to me from the house, while the man was standing next to me. [7]He said to me, 'Young man: the place for my throne and the place for the soles of my feet, where I shall dwell among the Yisra'elites permanently – Yisra'el's household shall not defile my sacred name any more, they and their kings by their whoring and by their kings' corpses, their mounds. [8]When they put their threshold with my threshold and their door frame next to my door frame with a wall between me and them, they would defile my sacred name with their offensive deeds that they did, and I consumed them in my anger. [9]Now they are to put their whoring and their kings' corpses far away from me, and I shall dwell among them permanently.
[10]You, young man, tell Yisra'el's household about the house. They're to be ashamed of their wayward acts, but they're to measure out the plan. [11]When they're ashamed of all that they did, make known the house's form, its plan, its exits, its entrances, all its forms, all its laws, all its forms and all its instructions. Write it down before their eyes so they may keep its entire form and all its laws, and act on them. [12]This is the instruction for the house on the mountain top. Its entire boundary all the way round is most sacred. Here, this is the instruction for the house.'

The altar

[13]These are the measurements of the altar in cubits (a 'cubit' is a cubit plus a handbreadth):
the base – a cubit, and the width – a cubit;
its rim at its lip all round – one hand span; this is the altar's mound;
[14]from the base in the ground to the lower ledge – two cubits, and the width – one cubit;
from the small ledge to the big ledge – four cubits, and the width – a cubit;
[15]the hearth – four cubits, and from the hearth upwards, four horns;
[16]the hearth: the length – 12, the width – 12, made square on its four sides;
[17]the ledge: the length – 14, with the width – 14, on its four sides;
the rim round it – half a cubit;
the base to it – a cubit round it, with its steps facing east.
[18]He said to me, 'Young man, the Lord Yahweh has said this: "These are the laws for the altar on the day it's built, for offering the burnt offering on it and tossing blood on it. [19]You're to give to the Levitical priests who are of the offspring of Tsadoq, who come near to me (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh) to minister to me, a bullock from the herd as a purification offering. [20]You're to get some of its blood and put it on its four horns and towards the four corners of the ledge and towards the rim round, and purge it and expiate it. [21]And you're to get the purification offering bullock and burn it in the appointed place in the house, outside the sanctuary. [22]On the second day you're to present a male goat, whole, as a purification offering. They're to purge the altar as they purged it with the bull. [23]When you've completed the purging, you're to present a bullock from the herd, whole, and a ram from the flock, whole. [24]You're to present them before Yahweh, and the priests are to throw salt on them and offer them as a burnt offering to Yahweh.

Preparations for the splendour's return

[25]For seven days you're to prepare a goat as a purification offering, daily, and they're to prepare a bullock from the herd and a ram from the flock, whole. [26]For seven days they are to expiate the altar, purify it and commission it. [27]They're to complete these days, and on the eighth day and onwards the priests are to make your burnt offerings and your fellowship sacrifices on the altar. And I shall accept you (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh)."'
44 He took me back towards the sanctuary's outer gateway that faces east. It was shut. [2]Yahweh said to me, 'This gateway is to be shut. It's not to be opened. No one is to come through it, because Yahweh, Yisra'el's God, came through it. It's to be shut. [3]As for the ruler, the ruler himself will sit in it to eat bread before Yahweh. By way of the gateway's threshold he may come in and by way of it he may go out.'
[4]He brought me by way of the northern gateway to the front of the house. I looked, and there – Yahweh's splendour was filling Yahweh's house. I fell on my face. [5]Yahweh said to me, 'Young man, apply your mind, look with your eyes, listen with your ears to all that I'm going to speak with you regarding all the laws for Yahweh's house and all the instructions for it. Set your mind on the entrance into the house with all the exits from the sanctuary. [6]You're to say to the rebellious, to Yisra'el's household: "The

Lord Yahweh has said this: ‘You have plenty of all your offensive deeds, Yisra’el’s household, [7]in that you brought foreigners, foreskinned in spirit and foreskinned in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to make my house ordinary when you present my meal, the fat and blood. You contravened my pact with all your offensive deeds. [8]You didn’t kept the charge of my sacred things; you appointed them as people to keep my charge in my sanctuary for you.’”’

Who can properly minister?

[9]The Lord Yahweh has said this: ‘No foreigner, foreskinned in spirit and foreskinned in flesh, is to come into my sanctuary, of any foreigner who’s among the Yisra’elites. [10]Rather, the Levites who went far from me when Yisra’el went astray (when they went astray from me, following their lumps) will carry their waywardness, [11]but in my sanctuary they will be ministering with oversight at the gateways of the house and ministering to the house. They will slaughter the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people and they will stand before them to minister to them.

[12]Because they used to minister to them before their lumps, and to Yisra’el’s household they were obstacles that tripped them into waywardness, therefore I’ve raised my hand [to swear] concerning them (a declaration of the Lord Almighty) that they will carry their waywardness. [13]They’re not to come near me to act as priests to me or to come near to any of my sacred things, to the most sacred things. They’re to carry their shame, the offensive deeds that they did. [14]But I shall make them guards in charge of the house, for all its service and for all that’s done in it.

[15]But the Levitical priests who are descendants of Tsadoq, who kept the charge of my sanctuary when Yisra’el’s household went astray from me, they may draw near to me to minister to me. They may stand before me to present fat and blood to me (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh). [16]They’re the ones to come into my sanctuary. They’re the ones to draw near to my table to minister to me, and they will keep my charge.

[17]When they come to the gateways of the inner courtyard they’re to wear linen garments. They’re not to put wool on themselves when they minister in the gateways of the inner courtyard and inside. [18]Linen attire is to be on their head and linen pants round their hips; they’re not to wrap on anything sweaty. [19]When they go out to the outer courtyard (to the outer courtyard to the people) they’re to take off their garments in which they were ministering, set them down in the sacred halls, and put on other garments, and not make the people sacred by their garments.

Priests

[20]They’re not to shave their head or grow long hair, but definitely to trim their heads. [21]They’re not to drink wine, any priest, when they go into the inner courtyard. [22]They’re not to take a widow or a divorcee for themselves as wives, but rather to take a girl from the offspring of Yisra’el’s household or a widow who’s a priest’s widow.

[23]They’re to teach my people between sacred and ordinary and to enable them to know between clean and defiled. [24]In connection with an argument, they’re the ones to stand to give a ruling; they’re to give a rule by my rulings. They’re to keep my instructions and my laws regarding all set occasions, and to keep my sabbaths sacred.

[25]An individual isn’t to go in to someone dead, except that he may defile himself for father or for mother, for a son or for a daughter, for a brother or for a sister who hasn’t come to belong to a man. [26]After his cleansing they’re to count seven days for him, [27]and on the day he comes into the sacred place, into the inner courtyard, to minister in the sacred place, he’s to present his purification offering (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).

[28]They’re to have as a domain: I am their domain. You’re to give them no holding in Yisra’el; I am their holding. [29]The grain offering, the purification offering and the restitution offering – they’re the ones to eat them. Everything devoted in Yisra’el will be theirs. [30]The first of all the first fruits of everything and every donation of anything, of all your donations, will be the priests’. The first of your dough you’re to give to the priest, to make a blessing set down on your house. [31]The priests aren’t to eat anything that’s died naturally or any prey, bird or animal.

Constraining the ruler

45 When you allot the country as a domain:

You’re to raise a donation for Yahweh, a sacred area of the country: the length – 25,000 in length; the width – 10,000. It’s to be a sacred area in its entire border, all round.

[2]Of this, there’s to be 500 by 500 squared all round for the sacred place, and 50 cubits as an open space all round.

[3]From this measurement you’re to measure 25,000 in length and 10,000 in width; in it is to be the sanctuary, the most sacred place. [4]It will be the sacred area of the country, for the priests, the sanctuary ministers, who draw near to minister to Yahweh. It will be a place for homes for them, and a sanctuary for the sanctuary.

[5]25,000 in length and 10,000 in width will be for the Levites, the ministers of the house, for them as a holding, 20 halls.

[6]The town’s holding: you’re to give 5,000 in width, and in length 25,000, alongside the sacred donation. It will belong to Yisra’el’s entire household.

[7]To the ruler there will belong on one side and on the other side of the sacred donation and of the town’s holding, in front of the sacred donation and in front of the town’s holding, on the west westwards and on the east eastwards, a length alongside one of the shares, from the western border to the eastern border [8]of the country. It will be a holding for him in Yisra’el. My rulers are no more to oppress my people. They will give the country to Yisra’el’s household, to their clans.’

[9]The Lord Yahweh has said this: ‘There’s plenty for you, Yisra’el’s rulers. Remove violence and destruction. Exercise authority with faithfulness. Lift your expulsions of my people (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh). [10]You’re to have faithful balances, a

faithful *ephah*, a faithful *bat*. [11]The ephah and the bat are to be one size. The bat is to contain a tenth of a *homer*, and the ephah a tenth of a homer. The size will be based on the homer. [12]The sheqel is 20 *gerahs*. Twenty sheqels plus 25 sheqels plus 15 sheqels are a *mina* for you.

Responsibilities of people and ruler

[13]This is the donation that you're to raise:
a sixth of an ephah from a homer of wheat;
a sixth of an ephah from a homer of barley;
[14]the law for oil – oil by the bat: a tenth of a bat from a *kor* (ten bats or a homer, because ten bats make a homer);
[15]one sheep from the flock, out of 200, from Yisra'el's pastureland for a grain offering, for a burnt offering and for fellowship sacrifices, to make expiation for them (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).
[16]The entire people of the country are to be involved in this donation to the ruler in Yisra'el, [17]but the burnt offerings, the grain offering, the libation – at festivals, at new months and on sabbaths, on all set occasions for Yisra'el's household – are incumbent on the ruler. He is to make the purification offering, the grain offering, the burnt offering and the fellowship sacrifices to make expiation for Yisra'el's household.'
[18]The Lord Yahweh has said this: 'On the first of the first month, you're to get a bullock from the herd, whole, and purify the sanctuary. [19]The priest is to get some of the blood of the purification offering and put it on the door frame of the house, on the four corners of the altar's ledge, and on the door frame of the gateway to the inner courtyard. [20]So you're to do on the seventh of the month, because of someone making a mistake or being ignorant; you're to expiate the house.
[21]In the first, on the fourteenth day of the month, it's to be Pesah [Passover] for you. For the seven-day festival, flatbread is to be eaten. [22]On that day the ruler is to make on his behalf and on behalf of the entire people a bull as a purification offering. [23]For the seven days of the festival he's to make a burnt offering for Yahweh, seven bullocks and seven rams, whole, daily for the seven days, and as a purification offering a male goat, daily. [24]He's to make as a grain offering an ephah for the bullock, an ephah for the ram, and oil: a *hin* for the ephah. [25]In the seventh, on the fifteenth day of the month, during the festival, he's to make it in accordance with these for seven days, in accordance with the purification offering, with the burnt offering, with the grain offering and with the oil.'

Daily, weekly, monthly, annually and spontaneously

46 The Lord Yahweh said this: 'The gateway of the inner court facing east is to be shut for the six days of work, but on the sabbath day it's to be open, and on the new month day it's to be open. [2]The ruler is to come in by way of the outer gateway's threshold and to stand at the door frame, and the priests are to make his burnt offering and his fellowship sacrifices. He's to bow low at the gateway's terrace and go out, but the gateway isn't to be shut until evening.
[3]The country's people are to bow low at that gateway door on sabbaths and on new months, before Yahweh. [4]The burnt offering that the ruler presents for Yahweh on the sabbath day: six lambs, whole, a ram, whole, [5]and a grain offering: an ephah for the ram, and for the lambs as a grain offering a gift from his hand, and oil: a hin for the ephah. [6]On the day of the new month: a bullock from the herd, whole, six lambs and a ram; they're to be whole. [7]He's to make an ephah for the bullock, an ephah for the ram as a grain offering, and for the lambs as his hand attains to, and oil: a hin for the ephah.
[8]When the ruler comes in, he's to come in by way of the gateway's threshold, and go out the same way. [9]But when the country's people come in before Yahweh on the set occasions, someone who comes in by way of the northern gateway to bow low is to go out by way of the southern gateway, and someone who comes in by way of the southern gateway is to go out by way of the northern gateway. He isn't to go back by way of the gateway by which he came in but go out by the one opposite him.
[10]The ruler will come in among them when they come in, and go out when they go out. [11]On festivals and on set occasions the grain offering is to be an ephah for the bullock, an ephah for the ram, for the lambs a gift from his hand, and oil: a hin for the ephah.

Preparations for sacrifices

[12]When the ruler makes a burnt offering as a voluntary offering or fellowship sacrifices as a voluntary offering to Yahweh, someone is to open the gateway facing east for him and he's to make his burnt offering and his fellowship sacrifices as he does on the sabbath day, and he's to go out. Someone is to shut the gateway after he goes out.
[13]With a lamb of the first year, whole, you're to make an offering for the day for Yahweh; morning by morning you're to make it. [14]You're to make a grain offering with it morning by morning: a sixth of an ephah and a third of a hin of oil to moisten the fine flour as a grain offering for Yahweh – permanent laws, regularly. [15]They're to make the lamb, the grain offering and the oil morning by morning, a regular burnt offering.'
[16]The Lord Yahweh said this: 'When the ruler gives a gift to one of his sons, it will be his domain; it will belong to his sons. It will be their holding as a domain. [17]But when he gives a gift out of his domain to one of his servants, it will belong to him until the year of release, and go back to the ruler. After all, his sons – his domain is to belong to them. [18]But the ruler isn't to take from the people's domain, oppressing them out of their holding. From his own holding he may give a domain to his sons, so that my people may not be scattered, each person from his holding.'
[19]He brought me by the entrance that was by the side of the gateway to the sacred halls belonging to the priests, facing north. There, in the far parts to the west, a place was there. [20]He said to me, 'This is the place where the priests are to cook the restitution offering and the purification offering, where they're to bake the grain offering, so as not to have them go out into the outer

courtyard and make the people sacred.' [21]He took me out into the outer courtyard and got me to pass the courtyard's four corners. There, a courtyard in each courtyard corner: [22]in the four corners of the courtyard were enclosed courtyards: length – 40; width – 30, one measurement for the four of them set in corners, [23]with a ledge all round them (all round the four of them), and cooking places made underneath the ledges all round. [24]He said to me, 'These are the kitchens where the ministers in the house will cook the people's fellowship sacrifice.'

Life-giving water

47 He took me back to the entrance of the house. There, water was going out from under the house's terrace, eastward, because the front of the house was to the east. The water was going down from under the right side of the house, south of the altar. [2]He took me out by way of the northern gateway and took me round by way of the outside to the outer gateway, the way facing east. There, water was flowing from the right side. [3]As the man went out eastward with a line in his hand, he measured 500 metres and got me to pass through the water, ankle-deep water. [4]He measured 500 and got me to pass through the water, the water being knee-deep. He measured 500 and got me to pass through the hips-deep water. [5]He measured 500, a wadi that I couldn't pass through because the water had risen, swimming water, a wadi that couldn't be passed through.

[6]He said to me, 'Have you seen, young man?', and got me to go and return to the wadi's bank. [7]As I returned, there – on the wadi's bank, very many trees, this side and that. [8]He said to me, 'This water is going out towards the eastern region, going down to the Steppe, and coming to the sea, to the sea of polluted water. The water will become healthy. [9]Any living being that moves will live wherever the great wadi goes, and the fish will be very abundant because this water comes there. It will be healthy, and anything will live where the wadi comes. [10]Fishermen will stand by it from Gedi Spring to Eglayim Spring, a place for spreading nets. In kind their fish will be like the fish of the Sea, very abundantly great. [11]But its swamps and marshes won't become healthy; they're given over to salt.

[12]By the wadi there will grow, on its bank this side and that, every tree for food. Their foliage won't wither, their fruit won't come to an end. By their months they will produce, because their water is going out from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food and their foliage for medicine.'

The extent of the country

[13]The Lord Yahweh said this: 'This is the border by which you're to have the country as a domain for Yisra'el's 12 clans (Yoseph – holdings). [14]You're to have it as a domain (each the same as his brother), that which I raised my hand [to swear] to give your ancestors. This country will fall to you as your domain. [15]This is the border of the country:

On the northern side: from the Great Sea by way of Hetlon, Lebo, to Tsedad, [16]Hamat, Berotah, Sibrayim (which is between the border of Dammeseq and the border of Hamat), Hatser Hattikon (which is on the border of Havran). [17]The border will be from the Sea to Hatser Enon, the border of Dammeseq and north, northward, and the border of Hamat: the north side.

[18]The eastern side: from between Havran and Dammeseq, and Gil'ad and Yisra'el's country, the Yarden [Jordan], you're to measure from the border to the Eastern Sea: the east side.

[19]The southern side: to the south from Tamar as far as the water at Meribot Qadesh, the Wadi, to the Great Sea: the southern side, to the south.

[20]The western side: the Great Sea from the border as far as opposite Lebo Hamat: this is the western side.

[21]You're to share out this country for yourselves among Yisra'el's clans. [22]You're to allot it as a domain for yourselves and for the aliens residing among you who've had children among you. They're to be like natives among the Yisra'elites. With you they'll receive a domain in the property among Yisra'el's clans. [23]In the clan with which the alien resides, there you're to give him his domain (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh).'

The clans

48 'These are the names of the clans.

At the northern end, by the side of the Hetlon road to Lebo-hamat, Hatsar Enan, the border of Dammeseq to the north by the side of Hamat, from the eastern side to the Sea will belong to it: one, Dan.

[2]At Dan's border, from the eastern side as far as the western side: one, Asher.

[3]At Asher's border, from the eastern side as far as the western side: one, Naphtali.

[4]At Naphtali's border, from the eastern side as far as the western side: one, Menashsheh.

[5]At Menashsheh's border, from the eastern side as far as the western side: one, Ephrayim.

[6]At Ephrayim's border, from the eastern side as far as the western side: one, Re'uben.

[7]At Re'uben's border, from the eastern side as far as the western side: one, Yehudah.

[8]At Yehudah's border, from the eastern side as far as the western side, will be the donation that you raise, width and length – 25,000, like one of the holdings from the eastern side as far as the western side. The sanctuary will be in the middle of it. [9]The donation that you raise for Yahweh: length – 25,000; width – 10,000. [10]It will belong to these: the sacred donation to the priests, on the north – 25,000; on the west the width – 10,000; on the east the width – 10,000, and on the south the length – 25,000. Yahweh's sanctuary will be in the middle of it. [11]What is made sacred will belong to the priests, the Tsadoqites, who kept my charge, who didn't go astray when the Yisra'elites went astray, as the Levites went astray. [12]It will belong to them as a donation out of the donation from the country, most sacred, at the Levites' border. [13]The Levites, alongside the priests' border: length – 25,000, and width – 10,000 (the entire length – 25,000, and the width – 10,000). [14]They're not to sell any of it. A person isn't to

exchange or transfer the first fruits of the country, because it's sacred to Yahweh.
[15]The 5,000 in width by 25,000 in length that remain: it's ordinary land for the town, for dwelling and for pasture. The town will be in the middle of it. [16]These are its measurements: the northern side – 4,500; the southern side – 4,500; the eastern side – 4,500; and the western side – 4,500. [17]The pasture will belong to the town, northward – 250; southward – 250; eastward – 250; and westward – 250.

Yahweh-Is-There

[18]What is left in the country alongside the sacred donation will be 10,000 eastward and 10,000 westward. It will be alongside the sacred donation, and its produce will be for food for the town's servants. [19]One who serves the town – from all Yisra'el's clans they will serve it. [20]The entire donation, 25,000 by 25,000 square, you're to raise, the sacred donation with the town's holding. [21]What is left will belong to the ruler, on this side and on the other of the sacred donation and the town's holding. In front of the 25,000 of the donation as far as the eastern border, and on the west in front of the 25,000 to the western border, alongside the shares, will belong to the ruler. The sacred donation and the sanctuary belonging to the house in the middle of it, [22]and apart from the Levites' holding and the town's holding within what belongs to the ruler, between Yehudah's border and Binyamin's border will belong to the ruler.
[23]The rest of the clans:
from the eastern side as far as the western side: one, Binyamin;
[24]at Binyamin's border, from the eastern side as far as the western side: one, Shim'on;
[25]at Shim'on's border, from the eastern side as far as the western side: one, Yissakar;
[26]at Yissakar's border, from the eastern side as far as the western side: one, Zebulun;
[27]at Zebulun's border, from the eastern side as far as the western side: one, Gad;
[28]at Gad's border, to the southern side, southward: the border will be from Tamar to the water at Meribat Qadesh, the Wadi, as far as the Great Sea.
[29]This is the country that you're to allot as a domain to Yisra'el's clans. These will be the shares (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh). [30]These are the town's exits:
on the northern side, the measurement is 4,500 [31](the town's gateways will be by the names of Yisra'el's clans), three northern gateways: one the Re'uben gateway, one the Yehudah gateway, one the Levi gateway;
[32]on the eastern side, 4,500, and three gateways: one the Yoseph gateway, one the Binyamin gateway, one the Dan gateway;
[33]on the southern side, the measure is 4,500, and three gateways: one the Shim'on gateway, one the Yissakar gateway, one the Zebulun gateway;
[34]on the western side, 4,500, their three gateways: one the Gad gateway, one the Asher gateway, one the Naphtali gateway.
[35]All round – 18,000. The town's name from now on will be "Yahweh-Is-There".'

Daniel

The book of Daniel [Daniyye'l] divides into two halves. The first half is a series of stories, amazing but easy to understand. They tell about a series of pressures that come on four Judahite boys taken off into exile in Babylon at the beginning of the sixth century, who are well-born and clever enough to get drafted into the Babylonian administration. The question is, can they survive the pressures as well as succeed there? Will God enable them to do so? God does, and the imperial authorities recognize it.

The second half is a series of dreams and visions (expanding on a first dream vision in chapter 2), amazing and hard to understand. Each of the dreams and visions tells the story from Daniel's own day up to a great crisis four centuries later. In the 160s bc Jerusalem was ruled from Syria as part of the Seleucid Empire, one of the entities into which Alexander the Great's empire split. Its current ruler, Antiochus IV, banned worship in accordance with the Torah and imposed alien forms of worship in Jerusalem. The dreams and visions in Daniel envisage the sequence of empires from Daniel's day up to Antiochus (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, the Seleucids) and promise that at the end of this story God will put the empires down and bring in his own rule.

To judge from parallels with other dream visions from the cultural context, these stories expressed as depictions of the future are actually accounts formulated near the end of the story they tell. The actual future promise in them promises deliverance from Antiochus. And against all the odds the people of Jerusalem did get their freedom from Antiochus, and became masters of their own fate for the first time for many centuries. Of course it wasn't the final end, but it was a kind of anticipation of the final end, like the fall of Jerusalem in ad 70. The visions were thus vindicated and shown to be God-given. The pressures of the time, the persecution and the outrageous action on the part of the emperor recurred a century or two later when the Romans annexed Judea, and the portrait of events helped people in Jesus' day to understand what was going on and to live in hope.

On drawing the line

1 In the third year of the reign of Yehoyaqim king of Yehudah, Nebukadne'tstsar king of Babel came to Yerushalaim and besieged it. [2]The Lord gave into his hand Yehoyaqim king of Yehudah and some of the articles from God's house, and he brought them to the country of Shin'ar, to his god's house. He brought the articles to his god's treasure house.

[3]The king said to Ashpenaz, the chief over his courtiers, to bring some of the Yisra'elites, both some of royal descent and some of the important people [4](young men in whom there was no defect, good in appearance, insightful in terms of all smartness, knowledgeable, discerning in knowledge and in whom there was capacity to stand in attendance in the king's palace), and to teach them the learning and the language of the Kasdites. [5]The king assigned to them a daily allocation from the king's supplies and from the wine he drank, and to bring them up for three years and some of them would stand in attendance before the king.

[6]Among them were some Yehudahites, Daniyye'l, Hananyah, Misha'el and Azaryah, [7]but the officer over the courtiers determined on names for them. For Daniyye'l he determined on 'Beltesha'tstsar', for Hananyah 'Shadrak', for Misha'el 'Meshack' and for Azaryah 'Abed Nego'.

[8]Daniyye'l determined in his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's supplies and with the wine he drank, and he asked the officer over the courtiers that he might not defile himself. [9]God gave Daniyye'l commitment and compassion before the officer over the courtiers, [10]but the officer over the courtiers said to Daniyye'l, 'I'm afraid of my lord the king, who assigned your food and your drink. What if he sees your faces thinner than the other young men of your generation and you risk my head with the king?'

The test

[11]So Daniyye'l said to the guard whom the officer over the courtiers had assigned over Daniyye'l, Hananyah, Misha'el and Azaryah, [12]'Please test your servants for ten days. They could give us some legumes to eat and water to drink, [13]and our appearance and the appearance of the young men who eat the king's supplies will be visible before you. Deal with your servants in accordance with what you see.' [14]He listened to them regarding this thing, and tested them for ten days. [15]At the end of ten days their appearance looked better and they were heftier in body than all the young men who were eating the king's supplies. [16]So the guard would carry away their supplies and the wine they were to drink, and give them legumes.

[17]These young men, the four of them: God gave them knowledge and insight in all writing and smartness, while Daniyye'l had discernment in all vision and dreams. [18]At the end of the time that the king had said to bring them, the head of the courtiers brought them before Nebukadne'tstsar. [19]The king spoke with them, and from all of them there was not found anyone like Daniyye'l, Hananyah, Misha'el and Azaryah. So they stood in attendance before the king. [20]Every matter of discerning smartness that he asked of them, the king found them ten times superior to all the diviners and chanters that were in his entire kingdom.

[21]Daniyye'l was there until the first year of Koresh [Cyrus] the king.

Except the gods, whose home is not with humanity

2 In the second year of Nebukadne'tstsar's reign, Nebukadne'tstsar had dreams. His spirit was agitated, but his sleep came over him. [2]The king said to call the diviners, chanters, charmers and Kasdites to tell the king his dreams, and they came and stood in attendance before the king. [3]The king said to them, 'I had a dream, and my spirit is agitated to know the dream.' [4]The Kasdites spoke to the king (in Aramaic): 'Long live the king! Relate the dream to your servants and we'll explain its meaning.' [5]The king answered the Kasdites: 'A firm decision has issued from me: if you don't make known to me the dream and its

meaning, you'll be torn limb from limb and your houses turned into rubble. [6]But if you explain the dream and its meaning, you'll receive a reward and gift and great honour from me. Now: explain to me the dream and its meaning.'

[7]They answered a second time, 'May Your Majesty relate the dream to his servants, and we'll explain its meaning.' [8]The king answered, 'I know for sure that you're buying time, because you see that a firm decision has issued from me [9]that if you don't make the dream known to me, there's a specific decree for you. You've arranged with each other to tell me something false and base, until the situation changes. Now: relate the dream to me, and I'll know that you can explain its meaning.' [10]The Kasdites answered the king, 'There's no one on earth who can explain the thing for the king. Thus no great king or ruler has asked a thing like this of any diviner or chanter or Kasdite. [11]The thing that the king is asking is so daunting that there's no one else who can explain it to the king except the gods, whose home is not with humanity.' [12]At this, the king became furious, very angry, and he said to put to death all Babel's experts.

The God who changes times and eras

[13]So the decree went out and the experts were to be killed, and they looked for Daniyye'l and his companions, to kill them. [14]Daniyye'l responded with shrewdness and judgement to Aryok, the king's chief of police, who had gone out to kill the experts in Babel. [15]He answered Aryok, 'Royal marshal, why is there the severe decree from the king?' Aryok made the thing known to Daniyye'l, [16]and Daniyye'l went and asked the king that he might give him a time, and he would explain the meaning to the king.

[17]Then Daniyye'l went to his house and made the thing known to his companions, Hananyah, Misha'el and Azaryah, [18]for them to ask for compassion from the God of the heavens about this mystery, so that Daniyye'l and his companions might not be put to death, with the rest of the experts in Babel.

[19]Then the mystery was revealed to Daniyye'l in a vision by night. So Daniyye'l blessed the God of the heavens. [20]Daniyye'l avowed:

The name of God be blessed from age to age,
because smartness and strength are his.
[21]He changes times and eras,
removes kings and establishes kings.
He gives smartness to the smart,
knowledge to the people who know discernment.
[22]He reveals things that are deep and hidden;
he knows what's in the dark, and light dwells with him.
[23]God of my ancestors, I confess and praise you,
because you've given me smartness and strength.
You've now made known to me what we asked of you;
you've made known to us the thing that the king asked.

[24]Thus Daniyye'l went to Aryok, whom the king had appointed to kill Babel's experts. He came and said this to him: 'Don't kill the experts in Babel. Take me to the king and I'll explain the meaning to the king.'

The dream statue

[25]With haste Aryok took Daniyye'l before the king and said this to him: 'I've found a man from the Yehudahite exiles who can make known the meaning to the king.' [26]The king answered Daniyye'l (whose name was Beltesha'tstsar), 'Can you make known to me the dream that I saw, and its meaning?' [27]Daniyye'l answered before the king, 'The mystery about which the king asked – experts, chanters, diviners and exorcists can't explain it to the king. [28]But there is a God in the heavens revealing mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebukadne'tstsar what will happen at the end of the time.

Your dream, the visions in your head in bed, was this. [29]Your Majesty, in bed your thoughts came concerning what will happen after this, and the one who reveals mysteries made known to you what will happen. [30]And I – not because of smartness that there is in me above any other human being has this mystery been revealed to me, but in order that the meaning should be made known to the king, and you may know the thoughts in your mind.

[31]Your Majesty, you were looking, and there – a large statue. This statue was big and its brightness extraordinary, standing in front of you, an awe-inspiring sight. [32]That statue: its head was of fine gold, its chest and its arms of silver, its stomach and its sides of copper, [33]its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of pottery. [34]You watched as a stone broke off, not by hands, and hit the statue on its feet of iron and pottery, and shattered them. [35]All at once the iron, the pottery, the copper, the silver and the gold shattered. They became like chaff from a summer threshing-floor. The wind carried them. No place was found for them. But the stone that hit the statue became a big crag and filled the entire earth.

[36]That was the dream. We will relate its meaning before the king.

After Nebukadne'tstsar, what?

[37]You, Your Majesty, king of kings, to whom the God of the heavens gave kingship, sovereignty, power and honour, [38]and gave into your hand, wherever they live, human beings, animals of the wild and birds of the heavens, and made you rule over all of them – you're the head of gold. [39]In your place another kingship will arise, inferior to you, and another, third kingship, of copper, which will rule over the entire earth. [40]The fourth kingship will be strong as iron, because iron shatters and smashes

anything. Like iron that crushes, it will shatter and crush all these. [41]In that you saw the feet and toes partly of clay pottery and partly of iron, it will be a split kingship, but some of the toughness of iron will be in it. Insofar as you saw iron mixed with earthen pottery, [42]and the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, to some extent the kingship will be strong but in part it will be fragile. [43]In that you saw the iron mixed with earthen pottery, human beings will unite, but they won't stick with each other, as iron doesn't stick with pottery.

[44]In the time of those kings, the God of the heavens will set up a kingship that won't be destroyed through the ages; the kingship won't pass to another people. It will shatter and terminate all these kingships, and it will stand through the ages, [45]insofar as you saw that a stone broke off from the crag, not by hands, and shattered the iron, the copper, the pottery, the silver and the gold.

The great God has made known to the king what will happen after this. The dream is true. Its meaning is reliable.'

[46]King Nebukadne'tstsar fell on his face and bowed down before Daniyye'l. He said to present an offering and fragrant oblations to him. [47]The king answered Daniyye'l, 'Indeed your God is God of gods, Lord of kings, and revealer of mysteries, that you can reveal this mystery.' [48]The king elevated Daniyye'l and gave him many great gifts. He would have made him ruler over the entire province of Babel and chief officer over all the experts in Babel, [49]but Daniyye'l asked the king to appoint Shadrak, Meshak and Abed Nego over the administration of the province of Babel, with Daniyye'l at the king's court.

On facing the music

3 Nebukadne'tstsar the king made a gold statue 30 metres in height, three metres in width. He set it up in the Dura Valley in the province of Babel. [2]Nebukadne'tstsar the king sent to assemble the satraps, the governors and the commissioners, the counsellors, the treasurers, the judges, the officers, and all the provincial officials, to come for the dedication of the statue that Nebukadne'tstsar the king had set up. [3]They assembled, the satraps, the governors and the commissioners, the counsellors, the treasurers, the judges, the officers and all the provincial officials, for the dedication of the statue that Nebukadne'tstsar the king had set up, and they stood in front of the statue that Nebukadne'tstsar had set up.

[4]The herald called out forcefully, 'To you it is being declared, peoples, nations and languages, [5]at the time when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, cithara, trigon, psaltery, ensemble and all types of music, you're to fall and bow down to the gold statue that Nebukadne'tstsar the king has set up. [6]Anyone who doesn't fall and bow down will at that moment be thrown inside a red-hot blazing furnace.' [7]So at that time when all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, cithara, trigon, psaltery and all types of music, all the peoples, the nations and the languages would bow down to the gold statue that Nebukadne'tstsar the king had set up.

[8]So at that time some Kasdites came and denounced the Yehudahites. [9]They avowed to King Nebukadne'tstsar: 'Long live the king! [10]Your Majesty, you gave notice that anyone who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, cithara, trigon, psaltery, ensemble and all types of music is to fall and bow down to the gold image, [11]and anyone who doesn't fall and bow down will be thrown inside a red-hot blazing furnace. [12]There are some Yehudahites whom you appointed over the business of the province of Babel, Shadrak, Meshak and Abed Nego. These men have not taken any notice of you, Your Majesty. They haven't revered your gods or bowed down to the gold image that you've set up.'

But even if our God doesn't rescue us . . .

[13]Nebukadne'tstsar in rage and fury said to bring Shadrak, Meshak and Abed Nego, and these men were brought before the king. [14]Nebuchadnezar avowed to them: 'Shadrak, Meshak and Abed Nego, do you really not revere my gods and bow down to the gold statue that I've set up? [15]If you're indeed now ready, at the time when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, cithara, trigon, psaltery, ensemble and all types of music, to fall and bow down to the statue that I've made . . .

But if you won't bow down, at that moment you'll be thrown inside a red-hot blazing furnace. And who is the god who could rescue you from my hand?' [16]Shadrak, Meshak and Abed Nego answered, 'King Nebukadne'tstsar, we don't need to make any response to this. [17]If our God, whom we revere, exists, he's able to rescue us from the red-hot blazing furnace, and he will rescue us from your hand, Your Majesty. [18]But if he doesn't, be it known to you, Your Majesty, that we won't revere your gods or bow down to the gold statue that you've set up.'

[19]Nebukadne'tstsar filled with wrath, and the expression on his face towards Shadrak, Meshak and Abed Nego changed. He avowed that they should heat the furnace seven times higher than it was customary to heat it. [20]He said to the strongest men in his forces to tie up Shadrak, Meshak and Abed Nego, to throw them into the red-hot blazing furnace. [21]These men were tied up in their trousers, shirts, headwear and other clothes, and thrown inside the red-hot blazing furnace. [22]So because of the king's strict word, when the furnace was heated excessively, the flame from the fire killed those men who took up Shadrak, Meshak and Abed Nego.

Four men walking free in the furnace

[23]So these three men, Shadrak, Meshak and Abed Nego, fell inside the red-hot blazing furnace, tied up. [24]Then Nebukadne'tstsar the king was startled and stood up in haste. He avowed to his advisers, 'Wasn't it three men, bound, that we threw inside the furnace?' They answered the king, 'Certainly, Your Majesty.' [25]He avowed, 'There, I see four men, free, walking about inside the fire. There's no effect on them. The appearance of the fourth is like a divine being.'

[26]Nebukadne'tstsar went near the door of the red-hot blazing furnace. He avowed, 'Shadrak, Meshak and Abed Nego, servants of God on High, come out, come here.' Shadrak, Meshak and Abed Nego came out from inside the fire. [27]The satraps, the governors and the commissioners, and the king's advisers, assembled. They looked at these men, on whose bodies the fire had not had power and the hair on whose head was not singed. Their trousers were unaffected. The smell of the fire had not come on

them.
[28]Nebukadne'tstsar avowed, 'The God of Shadrak, Meshak and Abed Nego be blessed, who's sent his envoy and rescued his servants who entrusted themselves to him. They defied the king's word and gave up their body so they might not revere or bow down to any god but their God. [29]Notice is given by me that any people, nation or tongue that says something remiss about the God of Shadrak, Meshak and Abed Nego will be torn limb from limb and his house turned into rubble, because there's no other god who can rescue like this.' [30]The king promoted Shadrak, Meshak and Abed Nego in the province of Babel.

Nebukadne'tstsar gives his testimony

4 'Nebukadne'tstsar the king to all the peoples, the nations and the languages that live in all the earth. May your well-being abound! [2]It has seemed good to me to relate the signs and wonders that God on High has done with me. [3]His signs – how great. His wonders – how mighty. His kingship is a kingship that lasts permanently, his rule continues generation after generation.
[4]I, Nebukadne'tstsar, was at peace in my house, flourishing in my palace. [5]I had a dream and it disturbed me, and images while I was in bed, visions that came into my head, alarmed me. [6]Notice was given by me to bring all Babel's experts so they could make known the dream's meaning. [7]The diviners, the chanters, the Kasdites and the exorcists came, and I related the dream before them, but they couldn't make its meaning known to me.
[8]Finally there came before me Daniyye'l, whose name is Beltesha'tstsar in accordance with my God's name, and in whom is the spirit of the sacred gods. I related the dream before him: [9]"Beltesha'tstsar, chief of the diviners, I know that the spirit of the sacred gods is in you and that no mystery defeats you. Tell me the visions in the dream that I had, and its meaning.
[10]The visions that came into my head: I looked, and there, a tree in the middle of the earth. Its height was big. [11]The tree grew and became mighty. Its height reached the heavens. It was visible to the end of the entire earth. [12]Its foliage was lovely, its fruit abundant, and there was food for everyone in it. Beneath it the animals of the wild sheltered. In its branches the birds of the heavens dwelt. From it all humanity fed.

The dream should be for your enemy

[13]I looked in the visions that came into my head in bed, and there, a lookout, a sacred being, coming down from the heavens. [14]He called forcefully, 'Fell the tree, cut off its branches, strip off its foliage, scatter its fruit. The animals must flee from beneath it, the birds from its branches. [15]Yet leave its rooted stump in the earth. With a ring of iron and copper, with the grass of the wild, with the dew of the heavens he is to be watered, and with the animals his share will be in the plants of the earth. [16]His mind is to be changed from that of a human being; the mind of an animal is to be given him. Seven periods are to pass over him.
[17]The decision is by the decree of the lookouts, the intent is by the word of the sacred ones, with the object that human beings may acknowledge that the One on High rules over human kingship. He can give it to whomever he wishes and set up over it the lowest of people.'"
[18]I, King Nebukadne'tstsar, had this dream. You, Beltesha'tstsar, tell me its meaning, since all my kingdom's experts can't make its meaning known to me. But you can, because the spirit of the sacred gods is in you.'
[19]Daniyye'l, whose name was Beltesha'tstsar, was overcome at that very moment. His thoughts alarmed him. The king avowed, 'Beltesha'tstsar, the dream and its meaning shouldn't alarm you.' Daniyye'l avowed, 'My lord, the dream should be for your enemy, its meaning for your foe. [20]The tree that you saw that grew and became mighty, its height reached the heavens and it was visible to the end of the entire earth, [21]its foliage was lovely, its fruit abundant, and there was food for everyone in it, beneath it animals of the wild sheltered, in its branches the birds of the heavens dwelt: [22]you, Your Majesty, are the one who's grown and become mighty. Your stature has grown and reached the heavens, your rule to the end of the earth.

Break with your wrongdoings by faithfulness

[23]In that Your Majesty saw a lookout, a sacred one, come down from the heavens and say, "Fell the tree, destroy it, yet leave its rooted stump in the earth; with a ring of iron and copper, with the grass of the wild, with the dew of the heavens he's to be watered, and with the animals his share will be, until seven periods pass over him": [24]this is the meaning, Your Majesty.
It is the decision of the One on High that has befallen my lord the king. [25]They're going to lead you away from human beings, and your home will be with the animals of the wild. They'll feed you plants, like oxen, and water you with dew from the heavens. Seven periods will pass over you, until you acknowledge that the One on High rules over human kingship. He can give it to whomever he wishes. [26]But in that they said to leave the rooted stump of the tree: your kingship is going to arise for you from when you acknowledge that the heavens rule.
[27]But, Your Majesty, may my counsel be pleasing to you. Break with your wrongdoings by faithfulness, your waywardness by grace to the humble, in case there may be an extending of your being at peace.'
[28]It all befell King Nebukadne'tstsar. [29]At the end of 12 months, he was walking on the royal palace in Babel. [30]The king avowed, 'This is great Babel, which I myself built as a royal home by my sovereign might and for my majestic honour.'

A warning implemented

[31]The thing still on the king's lips, a voice fell from the heavens: 'To you they're saying, King Nebukadne'tstsar: your kingship has passed from you. [32]They're going to lead you away from human beings and your home will be with the animals of the wild. They'll feed you plants, like oxen. Seven periods will pass over you, until you acknowledge that the One on High rules over human kingship and can give it to whomever he wishes.'

[33]At that moment the thing was fulfilled upon Nebukadne'tstsar. He was led away from human beings, he ate plants, like oxen, and his body was watered with the dew of the heavens, until his hair had grown long like eagles and his nails like birds.
[34]'At the end of the time, I, Nebukadne'tstsar, raised my eyes to the heavens. My sanity came back to me and I blessed the One on High, praised and honoured the One Who Lives Permanently, whose rule is a rule that lasts permanently, whose kingship continues generation after generation. [35]All earth's inhabitants are counted as nothing. He acts in accordance with his wishes with the force in the heavens and the inhabitants of the earth. There's no one who can restrain his hand or say to him, "What have you done?"
[36]At that time, my sanity came back to me, and as for the honour of my kingship, my glory and my splendour came back to me. My advisers and my important people sought audience with me. I was established over my kingdom, and exceeding power was added to me. [37]Now I, Nebukadne'tstsar, praise, exalt and honour the King of the Heavens, all of whose deeds are true and his ways just, and who can put down people who walk in pride.'

A party interrupted

5 Belsha'tstsar the king served a big dinner for his thousand important people, and in the presence of the thousand he was drinking wine. [2]Belsha'tstsar said, when he tasted the wine, to bring the gold and silver vessels that Nebukadne'tstsar his father had taken from the palace in Yerushalaim so they could drink from them – the king, his important people, his queens and his consorts. [3]The gold and silver vessels that had been taken from the palace in God's house in Yerushalaim were brought in, and they drank from them – the king, his important people, his queens and his consorts. [4]They drank wine and praised gods of gold and silver, copper, iron, wood and stone.
[5]At that moment the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote, over against the lamp-stand, on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace. The king saw the palm of the hand that wrote. [6]The king – his face changed colour. His thoughts alarmed him. His hip joints went loose and his knees knocked one against the other. [7]The king called forcefully to bring the chanters, Kasdites and exorcists. The king avowed to the smart people of Babel, 'Anyone who can read this writing and tell me its meaning will wear the purple, and the gold chain on his neck, and will rule as Third in the kingdom.'
[8]All the king's smart people came, but they couldn't read the writing or make known its meaning to the king. [9]King Belsha'tstsar became very alarmed, his face changed colour further and his important people were put in turmoil.

You can keep your rewards

[10]The queen – because of the words of the king and his important people, she came into the banquet hall. The queen avowed, 'Long live the king! Your thoughts shouldn't alarm you or your face change colour. [11]There'a man in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the sacred gods. In your father's days, illumination, insight and smartness like the gods' smartness was found in him. King Nebukadne'tstsar your father appointed him as chief of the diviners, chanters, Kasdites and exorcists – your father as king. [12]Since a remarkable spirit, knowledge and insight – interpreting dreams, explaining puzzles and resolving enigmas – was found in him, in Daniyye'l whom the king named Beltesha'tstsar, Daniyye'l should now be called. He'll relate the meaning.'
[13]Daniyye'l was brought before the king. The king avowed to Daniyye'l, 'You are Daniyye'l, one of the exiles from Yehudah that my father as king brought from Yehudah. [14]I've heard about you, that the spirit of the gods is in you, and illumination, insight and remarkable smartness are found in you. [15]The smart people (the chanters) have now been brought before me so they could read this writing and make its meaning known to me, but they couldn't relate the words' meaning. [16]I myself have heard about you, that you can explain meanings and resolve enigmas. If you can now read the writing and make known its meaning to me, you will wear the purple and the gold chain on your neck, and rule as Third in the kingdom.'
[17]Daniyye'l answered before the king, 'Your gifts can be for you; give your gifts to someone else. Nevertheless I'll read the writing for Your Majesty and make known the meaning to him.

Weighed and found wanting

[18]You, Your Majesty – God on High gave kingship, greatness, majesty and honour to Nebukadne'tstsar, your father. [19]Because of the greatness given him, all peoples, nations and languages trembled and feared before him. Whomever he wished, he killed, and whomever he wished, he kept alive. Whomever he wished, he elevated, and whomever he wished, he put down. [20]When his mind became elevated and his spirit arrogant, so that he became presumptuous, he was taken from his royal throne, and his honour was removed from him. [21]He was led away from human beings, and his mind was made like an animal, his dwelling with wild donkeys. They fed him grass like oxen and his body was watered with the dew of the heavens, until he acknowledged that God on High rules over human kingship and can set up over it whomever he wishes.
[22]But you, his son, Belsha'tstsar, have not humbled your mind because you knew all this, [23]but have elevated yourself above the Lord of the Heavens. They brought the vessels from his house before you, and you, your important people, your queens and your consorts have drunk wine in them, and praised gods of silver and gold, copper, iron, wood and stone, that don't see, don't hear and don't know. But the God who has your breath in his hand, with all your ways, you haven't glorified.
[24]From before him the palm of the hand was sent, and this writing inscribed. [25]This is the writing that was inscribed: "Counted at a mina, a teqel and two halves". [26]This is the meaning of the words: "A mina": God counted out [*mena*] the days of your kingship and handed it over. [27]"A teqel": you've been weighed [*teqal*] on the scales and found deficient. [28]"A half": your kingship has been broken in half [*peras*] and given to Maday and Paras [Media and Persia].' [29]Belsha'tstsar gave orders and they clothed Daniyye'l with the purple and with the gold chain on his neck and called out concerning him that he would rule as Third in the kingdom.

[30]That night Belsha'tstsar the Kasdite king was killed, [31]and Dareyavesh [Darius] the Maday acquired the kingship, as a man of 62 years.

Standing firm in faith

6 It seemed good to Dareyavesh to appoint over his kingdom 120 satraps who would be spread through the entire kingdom, [2]and over them three supervisors, of whom Daniyye'l was one, to whom these satraps would give account, and the king would not be troubled. [3]This man Daniyye'l distinguished himself above the other supervisors and satraps because of the remarkable spirit in him, and the king was inclined to appoint him over the entire kingdom.

[4]The supervisors and satraps were seeking to find some fault on Daniyye'l's part in the kingdom's affairs, but they couldn't find any fault or corruption because he was trustworthy; no negligence or corruption could be found against him. [5]Those men said, 'We shall not find any fault in this Daniyye'l unless we find it regarding his God's law.'

[6]So these supervisors and satraps mustered to see the king and said this to him: 'Long live Dareyavesh the king! [7]All the supervisors of the kingdom, the governors, the satraps, the advisers and the commissioners have taken counsel about the setting up of a royal decree and the enforcing of an injunction that anyone who makes a petition of any god or human being for 30 days, except of you, Your Majesty, will be thrown into a lion pit. [8]Your Majesty, issue the injunction now and sign the document, so that it may not be changed, as a law of Maday and Paras, which won't pass away.' [9]So King Dareyavesh signed the document and the injunction.

[10]When Daniyye'l got to know that the document had been signed, he went to his house with its windows open at its top, facing Yerushalaim, and three times a day he'd get down on his knees and pray and give thanks before his God, because he'd been doing so before this.

The frustrated king

[11]Those men mustered and found Daniyye'l petitioning and praying for grace before his God. [12]They came near and spoke before the king about the royal injunction: 'You signed an injunction, didn't you, that anyone who petitions any god or human being for 30 days except you, Your Majesty, will be thrown into the lion pit.' The king answered, 'The thing stands firm, as a law of Maday and Paras, which won't pass away.' [13]They answered before the king, 'Daniyye'l, one of the exiles from Yehudah, has not taken notice of you, Your Majesty, or of the injunction that you signed. Three times a day he makes his petition.'

[14]When he heard the thing, he was very displeased in himself, and regarding Daniyye'l he set his mind to delivering him. Until sunset he was working on rescuing him. [15]Then those men mustered and said to the king, 'Your Majesty, acknowledge that it is a law of Maday and Paras that any injunction or decree that the king sets up cannot be changed.' [16]Then the king said, and they brought Daniyye'l and threw him into the lion pit.

The king avowed to Daniyye'l, 'Your God whom you revere continually must deliver you.' [17]A stone was brought and put on the mouth of the pit, and the king sealed it with his signet and with the signets of his important people, so that the intention regarding Daniyye'l might not be changed. [18]The king went off to his palace. He spent the night without food; nothing was brought before him. Sleep eluded him.

Shutting the lions' mouths

[19]In the morning, the king got up at first light and went off in haste to the lion pit. [20]As he drew near to the pit, he cried in an anguished voice to Daniyye'l. The king avowed, 'Daniyye'l, servant of the living God, your God whom you revere continually – could he deliver you from the lions?' [21]Daniyye'l spoke with the king: 'Long live the king! [22]God sent his envoy and shut the lions' mouth. They haven't injured me, because before him innocence was found in me – and also before you, Your Majesty, I've done no injury.'

[23]The king was very glad about him, and said to get Daniyye'l up out of the pit. So Daniyye'l was got up out of the pit. No injury was found in him, because he had trusted in his God. [24]The king said, and they brought those men who had attacked Daniyye'l and threw them into the lion pit, them, their children and their wives. They hadn't reached the ground in the pit before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

[25]Then Dareyavesh the king wrote to all peoples, nations and languages that live in the entire earth: 'May your well-being abound! [26]From me notice is given that in every domain of my kingdom, people must tremble and fear before Daniyye'l's God, because he is the living God and he stands permanently. His kingship is one that will experience no injury, his rule will continue to the end. [27]He delivers and rescues and does signs and wonders in the heavens and in the earth. He rescued Daniyye'l from the hand of the lions.'

[28]So this Daniyye'l flourished during the reign of Dareyavesh and during the reign of Koresh the Parsite [Cyrus the Persian].

The four weird animals

7 In the first year of Belsha'tstsar king of Babel, Daniyye'l had a dream, visions that came into his head in bed. He wrote the dream down.

The beginning of the account: [2]Daniyye'l avowed, 'I looked in my vision during the night, and there, the four winds of the heavens stirring up the Great Sea, [3]and four huge animals coming up out of the sea, each different from the others.

[4]The first was like a lion but it had an eagle's wings. I looked as its wings were plucked off and it was lifted up from the ground and set on its feet like a human being, and a human mind was given to it.

[5]And there – another, second animal. It was like a bear, but it was lifted up on one side, with three ribs in its mouth, between its teeth. They said this to it: "Get up, eat lots of meat."
[6]After that, I looked, and there – another, like a leopard, but it had four bird's wings on its back. The animal had four heads, and authority was given it.
[7]After that, I looked in the night visions and there – a fourth animal, fearsome, terrifying and extremely powerful. It had huge iron teeth, devouring, crushing and trampling what was left with its feet. It was different from all the animals that were before it. It had ten horns. [8]I looked at the horns, and there – another small horn came up among them, and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. And there – something like human eyes in this horn, and a mouth speaking great things.

A throne scene

[9]I looked as

Thrones were set in place
and someone advanced in years sat down.
His clothing was like white snow,
the hair of his head like lamb's wool.
His throne was flashes of flame,
its rings a blazing flame.
[10]A river of flame was flowing,
coming out from before him.
A thousand thousands ministered to him,
a myriad myriads stood in attendance before him.
The court sat,
and books were opened.
[11]I looked because of the sound of the great things that the horn was speaking. I looked as the animal was killed. Its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire. [12]The rest of the animals: their authority was taken away, but an extension of their lives was given to them for a set time. [13]I looked in my night visions, and there,

With the clouds in the heavens
someone like a human being came.
He reached the one advanced in years
and they presented him before him.
[14]To him was given authority, honour and kingship;
all peoples, nations and languages were to revere him.
His authority is an authority that lasts permanently,
that won't pass away,
his kingship one that won't be destroyed.

[15]I (Daniyye'l) was disturbed in my spirit within me at this. The visions that came into my head alarmed me. [16]I came near one of those standing in attendance and asked him the truth about all this. He told me and made known the meaning of the thing: [17]"These huge animals, of which there were four: four kings will arise from the earth, [18]but the sacred ones on high will acquire the kingship. They will take hold of the kingship permanently, lastingly and permanently."

One who talks big is silenced

[19]I wanted to understand about the fourth animal which was different from all of them (extremely fearsome, its iron teeth, its copper claws), devouring, crushing and trampling what was left with its feet, [20]and about the ten horns that were on its head, and the one that came up and three fell before it – and that horn had eyes and a mouth speaking great things, and its appearance was bigger than its companions. [21]I looked, and that horn made war with the sacred ones and prevailed over them, [22]until the one advanced in years came and judgement was given for the sacred ones on high, and the time arrived and the sacred ones took hold of the kingship.
[23]He said this:
"The fourth animal – there will be a fourth kingship in the earth that will be different from all the kingships. It will devour the entire earth, tread it down and crush it.
[24]The ten horns – from that kingship ten kings will arise.
After them another will arise. He will be different from those before him. He will bring low three kings. [25]He will say things against the One on High and oppress the sacred ones on high. He will try to change times and a law. They will be given into his hand for a period, periods and half a period. [26]But the court will sit and take away his authority, to annihilate it and obliterate it permanently. [27]The kingship, the authority and the greatness of the kingships under the entire heavens will be given to the people of the sacred ones on high. Its kingship will be a kingship lasting permanently. All authorities will revere and bow down to it."
[28]That's the end of the account.
I Daniyye'l – my thoughts were very alarming to me. My face changed colour. I kept the thing in my mind.'

A ram, a goat and the terminating of offerings

8 In the third year of the reign of Belsha'tstsar the king, a vision appeared to me (me, Daniyye'l), after the one that appeared to earlier. [2]I looked in the vision (when I saw it, I was in Shushan, the fortress town in Elam Province) – I looked in the vision and I was at the Ulay Gate. [3]I raised my eyes and looked, and there – a ram standing before the gate. It had two horns. The horns were high, but the one was higher than the other. The high one came up later. [4]I looked at the ram charging west and north and south. No animals could stand before it. There was no one could rescue from its hand. It acted according to its wishes and got big.

[5]As I was considering it, there, a male goat coming from the west across the face of the entire earth, without touching the ground. The goat, a conspicuous horn between its eyes, [6]came to the ram that possessed the two horns, which I had seen standing before the gate, and ran at it in energetic wrath. [7]I looked at it reaching the ram. It raged at it, struck the ram down and broke its two horns. The ram didn't have the energy to stand before it. It threw it to the earth and trampled it. There was no one could rescue the ram from its hand.

[8]The male goat grew very big, but just when it had become so substantial, the big horn broke. Four conspicuous ones came up in its place, towards the four winds in the heavens. [9]From one of them came up a small horn. It grew abundantly towards the south and towards the east and towards the splendour. [10]It grew as far as the army of the heavens, and made some of the army, some of the stars, fall to earth, and it trampled them. [11]It grew as far as the officer over the army. By it the regular offering was removed and his sacred place and an army were overthrown. [12]It will be set over the regular offering in rebellion; it will throw truthfulness to the ground. It will act and succeed.

The Greek king who goes too far

[13]I heard a sacred one speaking, and another sacred being said to the one who was speaking, 'How long will the vision be – the regular offering and the desolating rebellion, the giving of both the sacred place and the army to trampling?' [14]He said to me, 'For 2,300 evenings and mornings. But the sacred place will emerge in the right.'

[15]While I (Daniyye'l) was looking at the vision and seeking understanding, there – standing in front of me was a human-like person, [16]and I heard a human voice within Ulay. It called, 'Gabri'el, help this man understand the vision.' [17]He came near where I was standing. When he came, I was overwhelmed and I fell on my face. He said to me, 'Understand, young man, that the vision relates to the time of the end.' [18]When he spoke with me, I fell into a trance, on the face of the ground, but he touched me and stood me up where I had been standing. [19]He said, 'Here am I; I'm going to make known to you what will happen at the conclusion of the condemnation, because it's for the time set for the end.

[20]The ram that you saw, having two horns, is the kings of Maday and Paras.

[21]The buck (the he-goat) is the king of Yavan [Greece].

The big horn between its eyes – that's the first king.

[22]The one that broke and four stood up in its place: four kingships will stand up from a nation, but not with its energy.

[23]At the conclusion of their kingship, when the rebels reach full measure, a king will arise fierce of face and understanding conundrums. [24]His energy will be substantial, but not by his own energy. He will perform extraordinary acts of devastation and he will succeed when he acts. He will devastate the substantial, and a people of sacred ones, [25]with his insight. He will succeed in deceit through his power, and through his mind he will get big. With ease he will devastate many, and he will stand against the officer-in-chief. But without a human hand he will break.

[26]The vision of evening and morning: what has been said is the truth. You, seal the vision, because it relates to many days.'

[27]I (Daniyye'l) fell ill for some days, but got up and performed the king's business. But I was overcome by the vision and there was no one could help me understand it.

What happened to the 70 years of Jeremiah 29?

9 In the first year of Dareyavesh son of Ahashverosh, of Maday birth, who was made king over the kingdom of the Kasdites – [2]in the first year of his reign, I (Daniyye'l) was considering in the Scriptures the number of years that were (Yahweh's word to Yirmeyah the prophet) to be fulfilled for Yerushalaim's wastes, 70 years.

[3]I set my face towards the Lord God, to make a plea and prayers for grace with fasting, sack and ash. [4]I pleaded with Yahweh my God and made confession: 'Oh, Lord, great and awe-inspiring God, who keeps pact and commitment to people who are loyal to him and keep his orders: [5]we did wrong, we were wayward, we were faithless, we rebelled, we turned aside from your orders and your rulings. [6]We didn't listen to your servants the prophets who spoke in your name to our kings, our officials and our ancestors, and to all the country's people.

[7]To you, Lord, belongs the right; to us, shame of face this very day, to Yehudah's people, to Yerushalaim's inhabitants and to all Yisra'el, near and far, in all the countries where you drove them because of their trespass that they committed against you. [8]Yahweh, to us belongs shame of face, to our kings, to our officials and to our ancestors, who did wrong to you. [9]To the Lord our God belong compassion and acts of pardon, because we rebelled against him [10]and didn't listen to the voice of Yahweh our God by walking according to his instructions that he set before us by means of his servants the prophets. [11a]All Yisra'el transgressed your instruction and turned aside so as not to listen to your voice.

Lord, listen, Lord, pardon!

[11b]The vow and the oath that was written in the instruction of Mosheh [Moses], God's servant, overwhelmed us. Because we did wrong to him, [12]he confirmed his word that he spoke against us and against the people who exercised authority over us, by bringing great bad fortune upon us that hasn't been done under the entire heavens as it has been done in Yerushalaim.

[13]As it is written in Mosheh's instruction, all this bad fortune came upon us, but we didn't seek the goodwill of Yahweh our God by turning away from our waywardness and gaining insight through your truthfulness, [14]so Yahweh watched over this bad fortune and brought it on us, because Yahweh our God was in the right in all his actions that he undertook, and we didn't listen to his voice.

[15]But now, Lord our God, who got your people out of the country of Misrayim [Egypt] with a strong hand and made yourself a name this very day, we did wrong, we were faithless. [16]Lord, in accordance with all your faithfulness, please may your anger and your wrath turn back from your town, Yerushalaim, your sacred mountain, because through our wrongdoings and our ancestors' wayward acts, Yerushalaim and your people became an object of reviling to all the people round us.

[17]So now, listen, our God, to your servant's plea and to his prayers for grace, and shine your face on your desolate sanctuary, for the Lord's sake. [18]Bend your ear, my God, and listen, open your eyes and look at our desolations and at the town over which your name is called, because it's not on the basis of our faithful acts that we're letting our prayers for grace fall before you, but on the basis of your abundant compassion. [19]Lord, listen, Lord, pardon! Lord, heed and act, and don't delay, for your sake, my God, because your name is called over your town and over your people.'

Seventy sevens until that king who goes too far

[20]I was still speaking, pleading, confessing my wrongdoing and the wrongdoing of my people Yisra'el, and letting my prayers for grace fall before Yahweh my God for my God's sacred mountain – [21]I was still speaking in my plea when Gabri'el, the person whom I saw in the vision I had before, tired and weary, reached me at the time of the evening offering [22]and enabled me to understand. He spoke with me: 'Daniyye'l, I have now come out to give you insight in understanding. [23]At the beginning of your prayers for grace a word went out, and I myself have come to relate it, because you're held in high regard. So understand the word and gain understanding into the vision.

[24]Seventy sevens have been assigned for your people and for your sacred town to bring the rebellion to an end, to do away with wrongdoings, to wipe away waywardness, to bring permanent faithfulness, to seal vision and prophet, and to anoint a most sacred place.

[25]You're to acknowledge and perceive:
from the issuing of a word for restoring and building up Yerushalaim to an anointed, a leader, there are seven sevens;
for 62 sevens it will again be built up, square and moat;
but in the pressure of the times, [26]after the 62 sevens, an anointed will be cut off, and will have neither the town nor the sacred place; a leader to come will devastate a people and its end will come by a flood, but until the end of battle, devastations are determined;
[27]a pact will prevail for many people for one seven, for half the seven he will suspend sacrifice and offering, and upon a wing will be a great abomination, desolating, until a conclusion and something decreed overwhelms the desolator.'

The last great vision

10 In the third year of Koresh king of Paras, a word revealed itself to Daniyye'l who was called Beltesha'tstsar. The word was true: a great war. He understood the word; he had understanding through the vision.

[2]'In those days I (Daniyye'l) was mourning for a period of three weeks. [3]I ate no food held in high regard; meat and wine didn't come into my mouth. I didn't put on make-up at all until the completion of the period of three weeks.

[4]On the twenty-fourth day of the first month I was on the bank of the big river (i.e. Hiddeqel [the Tigris]). [5]I raised my eyes and looked, and there, a man clothed in linen, his hips belted with pure gold, [6]his body like topaz, his face like the brightness of lightning, his eyes like fiery torches, his arms and his feet like the gleam of polished copper, and the sound of his words like the sound of thunder. [7]I (Daniyye'l) alone saw this vision. The people who were with me didn't see the vision, yet a great terror fell on them and they fled into hiding. [8]So I remained alone. I looked at this great vision. No energy remained in me. My vigour turned to devastation in me. I didn't retain any energy.

[9]I heard the sound of his words, but when I heard the sound of his words, I went into a trance on to my face, with my face to the ground. [10]But there, a hand touched me and shook me on to my knees and the palms of my hands. [11]He said to me, 'Daniyye'l, man held in high regard, understand the words that I'm going to speak to you. Stand up in your place, because I've now been sent to you.' When he spoke this word with me, I stood up, trembling.

A battle in the heavens

[12]He said to me, 'Don't be afraid, Daniyye'l, because from the first day that you set your mind to understand and humble yourself before your God, your words were heard. I've come because of your words. [13]The officer over the kingdom of Paras was standing over against me for 21 days, but there, Mika'el, one of the senior officers, came to help me. So I had remained there with the kings of Paras, [14]but I've come to enable you to understand what will happen to your people at the end of the time, because there's yet a vision for that time.'

[15]While he spoke with me in accordance with these words, I put my face to the ground and kept silence. [16]But there, someone with the likeness of human beings touched my lips, and I opened my mouth and spoke to the one standing over against me: 'My lord, because of the vision my convulsions have overthrown me. No energy has remained in me. [17]How can this servant of my lord speak with this my lord when I – no energy now stays in me, no breath remains in me.'

[18]The one with a human appearance touched me again and strengthened me. [19]He said, 'Don't be afraid, man held in high regard, things will be well for you. Be strong, be strong.' When he had spoken with me I asserted my strength and said, 'My lord

may speak, because you've strengthened me.'
[20]He said, 'You know why I've come to you, don't you. Now I shall go back to do battle with the officer over Paras. When I go off, there, the officer over Yavan is going to come. [21]Nevertheless, I shall tell you what is inscribed in the truthful document. No one is asserting his strength with me against these except Mika'el, your [people's] officer.
11 But I – in the first year of Dareyavesh the Maday, my place was to strengthen and fortify him.

On earth as it is in the heavens

[2]Now I shall tell you some truth. There, three kings more are going to stand for Paras, and a fourth will possess great wealth, more than anyone. In accordance with the strength he gets through his wealth, he will stir up everyone against the kingdom of Yavan. [3]A strong man king will arise, rule a great dominion and act in accordance with his will. [4]But as soon as he arises, his kingdom will break and scatter to the four winds of the heavens, and not to his posterity nor in accordance with the dominion that he ruled, because his kingdom will uproot and belong to other people apart from these.
[5]The southern king will be strong, but one of his officers will be stronger than him, and he will rule a greater dominion than his dominion. [6]At the end of some years people will make an alliance, and the southern king's daughter will come to the northern king to effect an agreement. But she won't retain the energy of her strength, nor will his strength stand. She will be given up, she and her escorts and the one who fathered her and the one who gave her strength.
In time [7]one of the shoots from her roots will stand in his place. He will come against the force and come into the stronghold of the northern king. He will act against them and be strong. [8]Also their gods with their images, with their articles held in high regard, gold and silver, he will take captive to Misrayim. For some years he will stand back from the northern king. [9]He will come against the kingdom of the southern king but will go back to his own country. [10]His sons will wage war and gather a horde of many forces. It will come repeatedly, and sweep and pass through, and again wage war as far as his stronghold.

The meaningless to and fro

[11]The southern king will rage and go out and do battle with him (with the northern king). He will raise a large horde, but the horde will be given into his hand. [12]The horde will be carried off, but his mind will become superior. He will make myriads fall, but he won't prevail. [13]The northern king will again raise a horde, greater than the first. At the end of a period of years he will come repeatedly with a great force and with much equipment.
[14]In those times many will stand against the southern king. Wild men among your people will raise themselves, to confirm a vision, but they will collapse. [15]The northern king will come, heap up a ramp and capture a fortified town. The southern forces won't stand, even his company of picked soldiers. There will be no energy to stand. [16]The one who comes against him will act as he pleases, and there will be no one standing before him. He will stand in the splendid country, destruction in his hand. [17]He will set his face to come into control of his entire kingdom, but will make an agreement with him and give him a wife, in order to devastate it. But it won't stand, it won't come about for him. [18]He will set his face towards foreign shores and capture many, but a commander will stop his reviling for him so that he won't be able to turn back his reviling for him. [19]He will turn his face back to the strongholds in his own country. But he will collapse and fall and not be found.
[20]There will stand in his place one who sends round an oppressor of royal splendour. But in a few days he will break, not by anger or battle.

People who break faith with the covenant

[21]There will stand in his place someone despised, to whom they've not given royal honour. He will come with ease and gain power over the kingdom by empty words. [22]Overwhelming forces will be overwhelmed before him and will break; so too a ruler of the pact. [23]Through the making of alliances with him, he will exercise deceit. He will arise and become substantial with a small group, [24]with ease. He will come against the richest of provinces and do what his father and forefathers didn't do. Plunder, spoil and wealth he will scatter among people. He will devise plans against fortresses, until a certain time. [25]He will assert his strength and his mind against the southern king with a large force. The southern king will do battle with a large and very substantial force, but he won't stand, because people will devise plans against him. [26]People who eat his provisions will break him. His force will be overwhelmed. Many will fall, run through. [27]The two of them, the kings, their mind set on bad dealing, will speak lies at one table, but it won't succeed, because an end will yet wait for the set time.
[28]He will go back to his country with great wealth and with his mind against a sacred pact. So he will act and go back to his country. [29]At the set time he will come against the south again, but it won't be like the first and the second time. [30]Ships from Kittim will come against him, and he will cower and turn back. He will be condemning a sacred pact and he will act. He will go back and heed the people who abandon a sacred pact. [31]Forces of his will stand and treat the sanctuary, the fortress, as ordinary. They will remove the regular offering and set up the desolating abomination.
[32]People who act faithlessly towards a pact he will make into apostates by empty words, but a people that acknowledge their God will be strong and will act. [33]The insightful among the people will help the multitude to understand, but they will fall by sword, by fire, by captivity and by becoming prey, for a time.

The end approaches

[34]When they fall, they will receive a little help, but many will join them with empty words. [35]Some of the insightful people will fall, to refine them, to purify and to cleanse, until the time of the end, because it will yet wait for the set time.

[36]So the king will do as he pleases. He will exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and against the God of gods he will speak extraordinary things. He will succeed until condemnation is complete, because what has been decreed has been done. [37]To his ancestors' gods he won't heed, nor to the one women hold in high regard. He won't heed any god, because over everything he will magnify himself. [38]A stronghold god he will honour in his place. A god whom his ancestors didn't acknowledge he will honour with gold and with silver, with precious stones and with things held in high regard. [39]He will attend to the securest of fortresses with the help of an alien god. To those whom he recognizes he will give great honour. He will let them rule over the multitude and divide up land as payment.

[40]At the time of the end the southern king will wrestle with him, but the northern king will storm against him with chariotry, with cavalry and with many ships. He will come against countries, sweep and pass through, [41]and come against the splendid country. Many will fall, but these will escape from his hand: Edom, Mo'ab and the chief part of the Ammonites. [42]He will put out his hand on other countries, and the country of Misrayim will not find escape. [43]He will rule the treasuries of gold and silver and all the things held in high regard in Misrayim, with the Putites and Kushites [Sudanese] at his heel. [44]But reports will alarm him from the east and from the north and he will go out in great wrath to destroy and annihilate many. [45]He will pitch his royal tents between the seas and the splendid sacred mountain. But he will come to his end. There will be no helper for him.

The people who will shine like stars

12 At that time Mika'el will stand, the high officer who stands by the members of your people. There will be a time of pressure such as hasn't happened since it became a nation until that time. But at that time your people will escape, everyone who is found written in the book, [2]and many sleeping in the earth country will wake up, some to permanent life, some to great reviling, to permanent abhorrence. [3]The insightful people will be bright, like the sky's brightness, and the people who helped many to be faithful like stars, for ever and ever.

[4]You, Daniyye'l, close up the words, seal the book, until the time of the end. Many will run to and fro so that knowledge may increase.'

[5]I (Daniyye'l) looked, and there – two others standing, one on the riverbank this side, one on the riverbank the other side. [6]Someone said to the man dressed in linen, who was above the water of the river, 'How long until the end of the extraordinary events?' [7]I listened to the man dressed in linen who was above the water of the river. He raised his right hand and his left hand to the heavens and swore by the Ever-Living One, 'For a set time, set times and a half. When the shattering of the power of the sacred people ends, all these things will come to an end.'

[8]Though I listened, I didn't understand. I asked, 'My lord, what will be the final stage in these events?' [9]He said, 'Go, Daniyye'l, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end. [10]Many will purify themselves, cleanse themselves and refine themselves, but the faithless will act faithlessly. None of the faithless will understand, but the people of insight will understand.

[11]From the time when the regular offering is removed and a desolating abomination put in place will be 1,290 days. [12]The blessings of the one who waits and reaches 1,335 days! [13]You, go to the end and settle down, so you may stand for your destiny at the end of the time.'

Hosea

Hosea [Hoshea] is the first of the 12 shorter prophetic books that close the Old Testament. Chronologically, Hosea, Amos and Micah belong together, and they reflect a similar set of religious, social and political circumstances. They were all contemporaries of Isaiah ben Amoz. Hosea, however, worked in northern Israel, to which he often refers as Ephraim with its capital in Samaria, rather than in Judah with its capital in Jerusalem. His task was thus to seek to win Ephraim back to Yahweh in order to forestall Yahweh's taking action against it. Occasional references to Judah indicate that Judah needs to learn from Ephraim's bad example and its consequent fate.

Hosea's key image for portraying Ephraim's wrongdoing is that Ephraim is a whore in the sense of someone who is immoral and faithless to her husband, Yahweh. She expresses her whoring both in having recourse to other deities to get their help in making the land and its people fruitful, and also in having recourse to other political allies to get their help in standing up to Assyria as the threatening superpower. In the opening chapters Hosea's own marriage to someone who was unfaithful provides an acted parable of the nation's life.

Ephrayim (Ephraim) and Yehudah (Judah) at the time of Hoshea (Hosea)

The whore

1 Yahweh's word which came to Hoshea ben Be'eri in the days of Uzziyah, Yotam, Ahaz and Yehizqiyyah, kings of Yehudah,
and in the days of Yarob'am ben Yo'ash king of Yisra'el.

[2]As the beginning of Yahweh's word through Hoshea, Yahweh said to Hoshea, 'Go get yourself a whorish woman and whorish children, because the country is really whoring away from Yahweh.' [3]So he went and got Gomer bat Diblayim.

She got pregnant and gave birth to a son for him. [4]Yahweh said to him, 'Name him "Yizre'e'l", because in yet a little while I shall attend to the bloodshed in Yizre'e'l upon Yehu's household. I shall stop the kingship of Yisra'el's household. [5]On that day I shall break Yisra'el's bow in Yizre'e'l Vale'.

[6]She got pregnant again and gave birth to a daughter. He said to him, 'Name her "Not-Compassioned", because I shall no more have compassion again on Yisra'el's household, that I should carry them. [7](But on Yehudah's household I will have compassion, and I will deliver them through Yahweh their God – I shall not deliver them through bow, through sword and through battle, through horses and through cavalry.)

[8]She weaned Not-Compassioned, got pregnant and gave birth to a son. [9]He said, 'Name him "Not-My-People", because you're not my people and I – I shall not be God to you.'

[10]But the number of the Yisra'elites will be like the sand at the sea that cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it is said to them 'You are not my people' it will be said to them, 'Children of the living God'. [11]The Yehudahites and the Yisra'elites will collect together and make one head for themselves. They will go up from the country, because Yizre'e'l's day will be great.

2 Say to your brothers, 'My people', and to your sisters, 'Compassioned'.

Like mother, like sons and daughters

[2]Argue with your mother, argue,
because she isn't my woman and I'm not her man.
She must put away her whoring from her face,
her adultery from between her breasts.
[3]Otherwise I shall strip her naked,
and turn her into like the day she was born.
I shall make her like the wilderness,
change her into dry land, let her die of thirst.
[4]On her children I shall have no compassion,
because they're whorish children.
[5]Because their mother has been whorish;
the one who conceived them has acted shamefully.
Because she's said,
'I'll go after my lovers,
The ones who give me my bread and my water,
my wool and my linen, my oil and my drink.'

[6]Therefore:
here am I, I'm going to hedge up your way with thorn-bushes,
And I shall build a wall for her,
so she can't find her paths.
[7]She'll pursue her lovers but she won't catch them,
she'll look for them but she won't find them,
And she'll say,
'I'll go and return to my first man,
because it was better for me then than now.'
[8]She – she hasn't acknowledged
that I myself am the one who gave her
the grain, the new wine and the fresh oil.
I produced an abundance of silver for her,
and gold, which they used for the Master.
[9]Therefore:
I shall take back my grain in its season
and my new wine at its set time.
I shall rescue my wool and my linen
for covering her nakedness.
[10]Now I shall uncover her villainy
before her lovers' eyes.
No one will rescue her from my hand,
[11]and I shall make all her celebrating stop,
Her festival, her new month, her sabbath,
every set event of hers.
[12]I shall devastate her vine and her fig tree,
of which she's said, 'It's my "gift",
which my lovers gave me.'
I shall turn them into a forest;
animals of the wild will consume them.
[13]I shall attend to her for the Masters' days
when she burns incense for them.
She's decked herself with her ring and her jewellery,

gone after her lovers,
and put me out of mind (Yahweh's declaration).

Trouble Vale can become Hope's Door

[14]Therefore:
here, I'm going to charm her,
and get her to go into the wilderness, and speak to her heart.
[15]I shall give her vineyards from there,
Trouble Vale as Hope's Door.
She'll answer there as in her young days,
as in the day she went up from the country of Misrayim [Egypt].
[16]On that day (Yahweh's declaration) she'll call, 'My Man';
she'll no more call me 'My Master'.
[17]I shall remove the Masters' names from her mouth;
they'll be mentioned by their name no more.

[18]I shall solemnize a pact for them on that day
with the creature of the wild,
With the bird in the heavens,
and with what moves on the ground.
Bow and sword and battle
I shall break from the country, and enable them to lie down in confidence.

[19]I shall marry you to me permanently,
marry you to me with faithfulness and with the exercise of authority,
With commitment and with compassion,
[20]marry you to me with truth.
You will acknowledge Yahweh,
[21]and on that day I shall answer (Yahweh's declaration).
I shall answer the heavens,
and they will answer the earth.
[22]The earth will answer
with grain, new wine and fresh oil,
Those will answer with Yizre'e'l,
[23]and shall sow it for myself in the country.
I shall have compassion on Not-Compassioned,
and I shall say to Not-My-People 'My people'
and it will say 'My God'.

3 Yahweh said to me further, 'Go, love a woman who is loved by a neighbour and who commits adultery – like Yahweh's love for the Yisra'elites, though they're turning their face towards other gods and loving raisin slabs.' [2]So I bought her for myself for 15 silver pieces, a barrel of barley and half a barrel of barley. [3]I said to her, 'For a long time you're to live for me. You will not go whoring; you will not belong to a man. So also will I be for you.' [4]Because for a long time the Yisra'elites are to live with no king, no official, no sacrifice, no pillar, no ephod or effigies. [5]Afterwards the Yisra'elites will turn back and have recourse to Yahweh their God and David their king. They will be in dread of Yahweh and of his goodness at the end of the time.

No acknowledgement

4 Listen to Yahweh's word,
Yisra'elites:
Because Yahweh has an argument
with the country's inhabitants.
Because there's no truthfulness and no commitment,
no acknowledging of God in the country.
[2]Vowing, deceit, murder,
robbery and adultery have spread out;
bloodshed follows on bloodshed.

[3]Therefore the country grieves,
everyone who lives in it languishes,
With the animal in the wild and with the bird in the heavens –
even the fish in the sea are gathered up.

[4]Yet no one is to argue
no one is to reprove.

Your people are like people arguing with a priest,
[5]and you will collapse by day.
A prophet will also collapse with you by night,
and I shall terminate your mother.
[6]My people are terminated
for lack of acknowledgement.
Because you've rejected acknowledgement
I shall reject you from being a priest for me.
You've put out of mind your God's instruction;
I shall put out of mind your children, I too.
[7]As they became many, so they did wrong to me;
I shall exchange their honour for slighting.
[8]They feed on my people's wrongdoing;
they direct its appetite to their waywardness.
[9]So it will be: as the people, so the priest;
I shall attend to its ways for it.
I shall bring back its practices for it;
[10]they will eat but not be full.
They've whored but they won't spread out,
because they've abandoned Yahweh,
To keep watch [11]on whoring,
as wine and new wine takes away sense.
[12]My people asks things of its piece of wood;
its stick tells it.
Because a whorish spirit has led it astray;
they've whored from under their God.
[13]On the tops of the mountains they sacrifice,
on the hills they burn incense,
Under oak, poplar and terebinth,
because its shade is good.
That's why your daughters whore,
your brides commit adultery.
[14]I shall not attend to your daughters because they whore,
or to your brides because they commit adultery.
Because the men themselves consort with whores
and sacrifice with hierodules,
and a people that doesn't understand comes to ruin.
([15]If you're whorish, Yisra'el,
Yehudah must not become liable.
Don't come to Gilgal, don't go up to Bet Aven ['Trouble House'],
don't swear 'As Yahweh lives!'

Malcontents have made deep slaughter

[16]Because like a defiant cow
Yisra'el has been stubborn.
Now Yahweh will pasture them
like sheep on the range.
[17]Ephrayim is attached to images;
leave him to himself.
[18]Their drink has gone as they've whored and whored;
as they've loved and loved, slighting is its 'gift'.
[19]The wind has bound it up in its wings,
so that they'll be shamed because of their sacrifices.
5 Listen to this, priests;
heed, Yisra'elites.
Give ear, royal household,
because authority belongs to you.
Because you've been a snare to The Watchtower,
you've spread a net over Tabor.
[2]When malcontents have made deep slaughter,
I was the correction for them all.
[3]I myself acknowledge Ephrayim;
Yisra'el has not eluded me.
Because you've now been whoring, Ephrayim;
Yisra'el has become defiled.

[4]Their practices don't allow them
to turn back to their God.
Because there's a whorish spirit within them,
and they don't acknowledge Yahweh.
[5]Yisra'el's majesty will avow against it;
so Yisra'el and Ephrayim will collapse through their waywardness
(Yehudah has fallen with them, too).
[6]They may go out with their flock and with their cattle,
to seek Yahweh.
But they won't find him – he's withdrawn from them;
[7]they've broken faith with Yahweh.
Because they've given birth to alien children,
the new moon will now consume their shares.

[8]Sound a horn in Gib'ah,
a trumpet in Ramah.
Raise a shout in Bet Aven,
after you, Binyamin.
[9]Ephrayim will become a desolation
on the day of reproof.
Against Yisra'el's clans
I've made known something truthful.
([10]Yehudah's officials have become like people who move a boundary;
on them I shall pour out my outburst like water.)

What shall I do with you, Ephrayim?

[11]Ephrayim is oppressed, crushed by the exercise of authority;
because he resolved to go after filth:
[12]I myself am like a moth to Ephrayim,
like rot to Yehudah's household.
[13]Ephrayim saw its sickness,
Yehudah its sore.
Ephrayim went to Ashshur,
it sent to the king who would argue.
But that man won't be able to heal you;
he won't cure you of a sore.
[14]Because I shall be like a lion to Ephrayim,
like a cougar to Yehudah's household.
I, I myself, will tear,
and as I go I shall carry, and there'll be no one to rescue.

[15]I shall go, I shall return to my place,
until they make restitution,
And seek my face;
in their pressure they'll seek me urgently:
6 'Come on, let's return to Yahweh,
because he's the one who tore, but he can heal us.
He strikes down but he can bandage us;
[2]he can bring us to life after two days.
On the third day he can raise us up,
so we can live before him.
[3]When we acknowledge, pursue the acknowledging of Yahweh,
like dawn his coming out is sure.
He'll come to us like rain,
like spring rain that waters earth.'
[4]What shall I do with you, Ephrayim,
what shall I do with you, Yehudah,
When your commitment is like morning cloud,
like dew going early?

[5]That's why I hewed them down with my prophets,
killed them with the words of my mouth;
with rulings against you, light goes out.
[6]Because I wanted commitment not sacrifice,
acknowledgement of God more than burnt offerings.
[7]But they – as at Adam they transgressed the pact;

there they broke faith with me.
[8]Gil'ad is a township of people who bring trouble,
trailed in blood.
[9]The company of priests
is like gangs waiting for someone.
On the road to Shekem they commit murder,
when they have committed deliberate wickedness.
[10]In Yisra'el's household I have seen something horrible:
Ephrayim's whoring is there.
Yisra'el has become defiled [11a](Yehudah, too);
he's appointed a harvest for you.

A loaf not turned over

[11b]When I restore my people's fortunes,
7 as I heal Yisra'el,
Ephrayim's waywardness reveals itself,
Shomron's [Samaria's] bad dealings.
Because people have practised falsehood, a thief enters,
a gang has made a dash in the street.
[2]Their mind doesn't say,
'I've kept in mind all their bad dealing.'
Now their practices have surrounded them;
they've been in front of my face.
[3]They make a king rejoice, with their bad dealing,
and officials, with their lies.
[4]All of them are committing adultery,
like an oven burning without a baker.
He stops stirring
from the kneading of the dough to its yeasting.
[5]On our king's day,
officials got sick with the heat of wine.
He extended his hand to the arrogant [6]when they came near,
their mind like an oven with intrigue.
All night their baker slept,
in the morning he's burning, like a flaming fire.
[7]All of them burn as hot as an oven,
they consume their authorities.
All their kings have fallen;
there's no one among them calling to me.

[8]Ephrayim among the peoples, he wastes away.
Ephrayim has become a loaf not turned over.
[9]Strangers have consumed his energy,
and he has not acknowledged it.
Yes, grey hair has spread over him,
and he has not acknowledged it.
[10]Yisra'el's majesty avows against it,
but they haven't turned back to Yahweh their God.
they haven't sought him despite all this.

[11]Ephrayim has become like a simple pigeon,
without sense.
They've called on Misrayim,
they've gone to Ashshur.
[12]When they go,
I shall spread my net over them.
Like a bird in the heavens, I shall bring them down;
I shall correct them in accordance with the report of their assembly.
[13]Oh, these people, because they've strayed from me;
destruction for them, because they've rebelled against me.
Whereas I'm the one who could redeem them,
but they themselves have spoken lies about me.
[14]They haven't cried out to me in their heart,
when they wail on their beds.
Over grain and new wine they quarrel;

they turn against me.
[15]I myself corrected them, strengthened their arms,
but they think up bad things against me.
[16]They turn back, not to the One on High;
they've become like a false bow.
Their officials will fall by the sword
because of the condemnation of their tongue
(i.e. their jabbering in the country of Misrayim).

They have made kings, but not through me

8 Horn to your mouth,
like an eagle over Yahweh's house!
Since they've transgressed my pact,
rebelled against my instruction.
[2]To me they cry out,
'My God, as Yisra'el we've acknowledged you.'
[3]Yisra'el has rejected what's good;
an enemy pursues them.
[4]They've made kings, but not through me;
they've made officials, but I haven't acknowledged them.
With their silver and gold they've made images for themselves,
in order that [Yisra'el] may be cut off.
[5]He's rejected your bullock, Shomron;
my anger burns against them.
How long will they be incapable of being free of guilt? –
[6]because it was from Yisra'el.
That thing – a metal worker made it;
it's not a god.
Because Shomron's bullock
will be broken bits.

[7]Because they sow wind,
they'll reap a hurricane.
A stalk that has no growth
doesn't produce flour.
If perhaps it produces,
strangers will swallow it;
[8]Yisra'el has been swallowed up
and they have now become among the nations,
Like an object that no one wants,
[9]because they've gone up to Ashshur.
A wild donkey on its own,
Ephrayim has hired lovers.
[10]Even when they hire among the nations,
now I shall collect them.
They've writhed for a while
because of the burden (king, officers).
[11]Because Ephrayim has built many altars for wrongdoing;
for it, they've become altars for wrongdoing.
[12]Though I write for it many things in my instruction,
they've been thought of as alien.
[13]Though they offer sacrifices to me as gifts,
and eat flesh,
Yahweh doesn't accept them;
now he'll be mindful of their waywardness.
He'll attend to their wrongdoings;
those people – they'll go back to Misrayim.
[14]Yisra'el has put out of mind its maker
and built palaces,
(and Yehudah has built many fortified towns).
I shall send off fire to its towns
and it will consume its citadels.

I found Yisra'el as like grapes in the wilderness

Don't rejoice, Yisra'el, with joy like the peoples,

9 because you've gone whoring away from your God.
You have loved the 'gift'
on every grain threshing-floor.
[2]Threshing-floor and winepress won't pasture them,
new wine will deceive her.
[3]They won't live in Yahweh's country;
Ephrayim will go back to Misrayim,
in Ashshur they'll eat defiled food.
[4]They won't pour wine for Yahweh;
their sacrifices won't please him.
Like mourners' bread to them,
all who eat it will be defiled.
Because their bread will be for their own appetite;
it will not come into Yahweh's house.
[5]What will you do for the set day,
for the day of Yahweh's festival?
[6]Because there – when they have gone from destruction,
Misrayim will collect them, Memphis will bury them.
Whereas high regard will attach to their silver,
briar will dispossess them, bramble will be in their tents.
[7]The days of giving attention have come,
the days of making good have come,
Yisra'el must acknowledge it, though the prophet is stupid,
the person of the spirit is crazy,
On account of the abundance of your waywardness,
your abundant animosity.
[8]A prophet, with my God,
is a lookout over Ephrayim.
There's a hunter's snare over all his ways,
animosity in its God's house.
[9]They've gone deep in devastation, as in the days at Gib'ah;
he'll be mindful of their waywardness, he'll attend to their wrongdoings.

[10]I found Yisra'el
as like grapes in the wilderness.
I saw your fathers
as like the first fruit on a fig tree in its beginning.
When those people came to the Master of Pe'or,
they dedicated themselves to Shame,
and became abominations like the thing they loved.

The King: what would he do for us?

[11]Ephrayim – their splendour will fly off like a bird,
away from birth, from the womb, from conception.
[12]Even if they rear their children,
I shall bereave them of people.
Because – oh they, indeed,
when I turn away from them.
[13]Ephrayim – as I've seen with Tsor [Tyre],
planted in a meadow,
so Ephrayim is to take out its children to the killer.

[14]Give them: Yahweh, what are you to give? –
give them a miscarrying womb, dry breasts.
[15]All their bad dealing was at Gilgal,
because there I was hostile to them.
Because of the bad nature of their practices,
I shall drive them from my house.
I shall not add to my love for them;
all their officials are defiant.

[16]Ephrayim is struck down, their root withers,
they won't produce fruit.
Even when they have children,
I shall put to death the desired offspring of their womb.
[17]My God will reject them

because they haven't listened to him;
they'll become wanderers among the nations.

10 Yisra'el is a wasting vine;
its fruit resembles it.
In accordance with the quantity of its fruit, it multiplied its altars;
in accordance with the goodness of its country, they made good pillars.
2Because their mind was deceitful,
now they are to make restitution;
He himself will break down their altars,
destroy their pillars.
3Because they now say,
'We have no king;
Because we do not live in awe of Yahweh,
the King: what would he do for us?'
4They've spoken things with empty oaths
in solemnizing a pact.
The exercise of authority has flourished like poisonous growth
in the furrows of the field.

Sow for yourselves for faithfulness

5The population of Shomron fear
for the bullock of Bet Aven,
Because its people and its priestlings are mourning over it
whereas they celebrate over its splendour.
Because it's going into exile from it;
6it, too, will be brought to Ashshur,
a gift to the king so he will argue.
Ephrayim will receive shame,
Yisra'el will be shamed by its counsel.
7Shomron – its king is being terminated,
like a twig on the face of water.
8The shrines of Aven will be annihilated,
Yisra'el's wrongdoing.
Thorn and thistle
will grow on their altars.
They will say to the mountains, 'Cover us',
to the hills, 'Fall on us.'

9Since the days of Gib'ah you have done wrong, Yisra'el;
there they stood.
Will battle not overtake them in Gib'ah
because of evildoers?
10When it's my desire and I correct them
peoples will be gathered against them.
When they're disciplined for their double waywardness,
11though Ephrayim was a trained bullock.
It loved threshing,
and I – I passed over its good neck.
I shall drive Ephrayim, Yehudah will plough,
Ya'aqob [Jacob] will harrow for itself.

12Sow for yourselves for faithfulness,
reap in proportion to commitment,
till the tillable ground for yourselves.
It's time for enquiring of Yahweh, until he comes,
and showers faithfulness for you.
13You've ploughed faithlessness, you have reaped evil,
you've eaten deceptive fruit.
Because you've relied on your way,
on the number of your strong men.
14A din will arise against your people,
and all your fortifications will be destroyed.
Like Shalman's destruction of Bet Arbe'l on a day of battle,
when mother smashed on children.
15Like this he is doing to you, Bet-el,

in the face of your bad, bad dealing.
At dawn he's being terminated, being terminated,
Yisra'el's king.

The unfailing nature of a mother's love

11 When Yisra'el was a boy I loved him;
from Misrayim I called my son.
2 I called them;
thus they went from me.
They sacrifice to the Masters,
burn incense to images.
3 I myself taught Ephrayim to walk,
lifted them into my arms.
But they didn't acknowledge
that I healed them.
4 With human cords I would lead them,
with loving ties.
For them I was
someone lifting a baby to the cheek,
and I bent to him so that I might feed him.

5 No, they'll go back to the country of Misrayim,
or Ashshur will be their king.
because they refused to come back.
6 A sword will whirl against its towns,
finish off its gate-bars, consume them because of their counsels.
7 My people are bent on turning back from me;
when they call to the One on High,
he won't lift them up at all.

8 How can I give you up, Ephrayim,
hand you over, Yisra'el?
How can I make you like Admah,
treat you like Tsebo'im?
My spirit turns round within me,
my comfort warms all at once.
9 I shall not act on my angry burning;
I shall not again devastate Ephrayim.
Because I am God and not a human being,
the sacred one among you,
and I shall not come against the town.
10 They will follow Yahweh;
he will roar like a lion.
When he roars,
children will come trembling from the west.
11 They will come trembling like a bird from Misrayim,
like a pigeon from the country of Ashshur,
I shall let them live in their homes (Yahweh's declaration).

Fraud from the womb

12 Ephrayim has surrounded me with lying,
Yisra'el's household with deceit.
(Yehudah still wanders with God,
keeps faith with the sacred ones.)
12 Ephrayim pastures the wind,
pursues the easterly;
Continually it increases deception and destruction;
they solemnize a pact with Ashshur,
and oil is carried to Misrayim.
2 Yahweh will argue with Yehudah,
and attend to Ya'aqob in accordance with his ways;
in accordance with his practices he will give back to him.
3 In the womb he grabbed his brother,
and in his strength he struggled with God.
4 He struggled with the envoy and prevailed;

he cried and sought grace from him.
He would find him at Bet-el,
speak with him there,
[5]Yahweh, God of Armies –
Yahweh is his name.
[6]So you yourself are to turn back to your God;
keep watch on commitment in the exercise of authority,
and wait for your God always.

[7]A trader in whose hand are deceptive scales
loves to defraud.
[8]Ephrayim has said, 'Yes, I've become rich,
I've acquired strength for myself.
In all that I've toiled for they won't find in me
waywardness that amounts to wrongdoing.'

[9]I am Yahweh your God
from the country of Misrayim.
I shall make you live in your tents again,
as in the days of your set occasion.
[10]I spoke to the prophets
and I – I gave many a vision;
by means of the prophets I shall terminate.
[11]Is Gil'ad trouble: yes, emptiness;
in Gilgal did they sacrifice bulls?
Their altars, too,
are like stone heaps [*gallim*] on the furrows of the field.
[12]Ya'aqob fled to the open country of Aram;
Yisra'el served for a wife –
for a wife he kept [sheep].
[13]Through a prophet Yahweh got Yisra'el up from Misrayim,
and through a prophet he was kept.
[14]Ephrayim provoked with great bitterness;
his Lord will leave his bloodshed on him,
give back his reviling to him.

Like the morning cloud

13 When Ephrayim spoke, there was trembling,
when he lifted [his voice] in Yisra'el,
but through the Master he became liable and died.
[2]Now they commit more and more wrongdoing,
and they've made themselves an idol,
Images from their silver in accordance with their insight,
the work of craftsmen, all of it.
With regard to them people are saying,
'Human sacrifices, they kiss bullocks.'
[3]Therefore they will be like the morning cloud,
like the dew that goes early,
Like chaff that whirls from a threshing-floor,
like smoke from a window.
[4]I am Yahweh your God
from the country of Misrayim.
You will not acknowledge a god apart from me;
there's no deliverer except me.
[5]I acknowledged you in the wilderness,
in a country of droughts.
[6]When they pastured, they were full,
when they were full, their attitude became superior;
therefore they put me out of mind.
[7]So I've become like a cougar to them,
like a leopard I shall lurk by the road.
[8]I shall attack them like a bereaved bear,
rip open the cover of their heart.
I shall consume them like a lion;
the animals of the wild will tear them apart.

[9]Your devastation, Yisra'el,
because in me is your help.
[10]Where is your king, then,
so he may deliver you in all your towns,
And your authorities, of whom you said,
'Give me a king and officials'?
[11]I'd give you a king in my anger
and take him in my outburst.

Birth and death

[12]Ephrayim's waywardness is preserved,
his wrongdoings stored up.
[13]When the pains of giving birth come to him,
he'll be a child who isn't smart.
Because at the time he won't stand
at the breach for children.
[14]From She'ol's hand I could redeem them,
from death I could restore them.
Where would be your scourges, death,
where your destruction, She'ol?

Comfort will hide from my eyes,
[15]because he's fruitful among brothers.
An easterly will come, Yahweh's wind,
coming up from the wilderness.
His fountain will dry up,
his spring wither.
That will plunder the treasury,
all the objects held in high regard.
[16]Shomron is liable,
because it's rebelled against its God.
People will fall by the sword,
their babies will be smashed,
their pregnant women torn open.

14 Turn back, Yisra'el,
to Yahweh your God,
because you've fallen through your waywardness.
[2]Take words with you,
and turn back to Yahweh;
Say to him, 'Will you carry it all, the waywardness? –
receive something good: for bulls we'll make up with our lips.
[3]Ashshur isn't to deliver us,
we won't ride on horses.
We will no more say "our God"
to something made by our hands,
because in you the orphan will find compassion.'

[4]I shall heal their turning away, I shall love them freely,
because my anger has turned back from me.
[5]I shall become like dew to Yisra'el;
it will flourish like the lily,
It will strike roots like the Lebanon;
[6]its shoots will grow
Its splendour will be like an olive tree,
its fragrance like the Lebanon.
[7]People who sit in its shade will again bring grain to life,
and flourish like the vine,
its fame like Lebanon wine.

[8]Ephrayim:
'What shall I have to do with idols any more? –
I myself have answered and looked to him.
I myself am like a verdant juniper' –
from me your fruit appears.
[9]Who is smart and discerning about these things,

is discerning and acknowledges them?
Because Yahweh's ways are straight,
and the faithful walk in them,
but rebels collapse by them.

Joel

The first half of Joel [Yo'el] comprises a double description of disaster: a past locust epidemic that is portrayed as past and a military invasion that is portrayed as coming. Possibly one is a figure for the other. The book does not give any concrete indication of the century when the disaster(s) happened. Joel's task is to urge Judah to turn to Yahweh in this situation and to promise that Yahweh will then deliver and restore the country. Beyond this restoration, the second half of the book speaks of an unprecedented pouring out of Yahweh's spirit, which will also be associated with a day of world judgement and a final battle between forces of good and forces of wickedness. The natural and/or military catastrophe is an embodiment of 'Yahweh's day' which will come in its final form in those events.

The disaster

1 Yahweh's word that came to Yo'el ben Petu'el.

2 Listen to this, you elders;
give ear, all you inhabitants of the country.
Has this happened in your days,
or in your ancestors' days?
3 Recount it to your children,
your children to their children,
and their children to the next generation.

4 What was left from the cutter, the locust has eaten;
what was left from the locust, the grub has eaten;
what was left from the grub, the hopper has eaten.
5 Wake up, you drunks, and cry;
howl, all you wine drinkers,
about the new wine, because it's been cut off from your mouth.
6 Because a nation has come up against my country,
numerous, and beyond counting.
Its teeth are a lion's teeth,
it has a lioness's fangs.
7 It's made my vine into desolation,
my fig tree into a stump.
It's stripped its bark and thrown it away;
its branches have turned white.

8 Wail like a girl wrapped in sack
because of the husband of her youth.
9 Offering and libation has been cut off
from Yahweh's house;
The priests have mourned,
Yahweh's ministers.
10 The open country has been destroyed,
the ground has mourned.
Because the grain has been destroyed,
the new wine has withered,
the fresh oil languishes.
11 Farmers, be ashamed,
vinedressers, howl,
Over wheat, over barley,
because the harvest of the field has perished.
12 The vine has withered, the fig tree languishes,
pomegranate, even palm, and apricot.
All the trees of the open country wither,
because joy has withered from humankind.

All you can do is pray

13 Wrap on and lament, priests;
howl, ministers of the altar.
Come, spend the night in sack,
ministers of my God.
Because offering and libation

have been held back from Yahweh's house.
[14]Declare a sacred fast, call an assembly,
gather the elders,
all the inhabitants of the country,
To the house of Yahweh your God,
and cry out to Yahweh.

[15]Ah for the day,
because Yahweh's day is near;
it comes like destruction from Shadday [the 'Destroyer'].
[16]Food is cut off, isn't it,
in front of our eyes,
Rejoicing and celebration
from Yahweh's house.
[17]Seeds have shrivelled under their clods,
storehouses are desolate.
Granaries are torn down,
because grain has withered.
[18]How the animals have groaned,
the herds of cattle have been befuddled.
Because they have no pasture,
even the flocks of sheep suffer punishment.
[19]To you, Yahweh, I call,
because fire has consumed
the pastures in the wilderness.
Flame has burned
all the trees in the open country.
[20]Even the animals of the wild pant for you,
because the canyons of water dry up.
Fire has consumed
the pastures in the wilderness.
2 Blow a horn in Tsiyyon [Zion],
sound out on my sacred mountain.
All the country's inhabitants are to tremble,
because Yahweh's day has come, because it's near,
[2]A day of darkness and gloom,
a day of cloud and murk.

Like dawn spread over the mountains,
a vast and numerous company.
Nothing like it has happened from of old,
and it won't happen again after it,
through the years of generation after generation.
[3]Before it fire has consumed,
after it flame blazes.
Before it the country was like Eden Garden,
but after it, desolate wilderness –
indeed, no survivors have been left to it.

Who knows, he may turn back

[4]Their appearance is like the appearance of horses;
like steeds, so they run.
[5]Like the sound of chariots,
on the tops of the mountains they leap.
Like the sound of a blazing fire
consuming straw,
Like a numerous company
lined up for battle.
[6]Before them, peoples shudder;
all faces have collected a flush.
[7]Like strong men they run,
like men of battle they climb a wall.
They go each of them on his ways,
they don't deviate their paths.
[8]They don't jostle one another;
they go each man on his causeway.

When they fall through the weaponry,
they don't break off.
[9]They rush at the town,
they run at the wall.
They climb on the houses,
through the windows they come in like a robber.

[10]Before it earth has quaked,
heavens have shaken.
Sun and moon have gone dark,
stars have gathered up their brightness.
[11]Yahweh – he has given his voice
before his force.
Because his camp is very vast,
because numerous is the one performing his word.
Because Yahweh's day is great,
very extraordinary – who can endure it?

[12]But even now (Yahweh's declaration),
turn back to me with your whole heart,
with fasting, with crying and with lamenting.
[13]Tear your mind, not your clothes,
and turn back to Yahweh your God,
Because he is gracious and compassionate,
long-tempered and vast in commitment,
and he relents of dealing badly.
[14]Who knows, he may turn back and relent,
and let a blessing remain behind him,
an offering and a libation for Yahweh your God?

[15]Blow the horn in Tsiyyon,
declare a sacred fast, call an assembly.
[16]Gather the people, make the congregation sacred,
collect the elders.
Gather the babies
and those nursing at the breast.
The groom is to go out of his room,
the bride out of her tent.
[17]Between the porch and the altar
the priests, Yahweh's ministers, are to cry.
They're to say, 'Spare your people, Yahweh,
don't give your domain to reviling.
as a byword against them for the nations.
Why should they say among the peoples,
"Where is their God?"'

The years the locust has eaten

[18]So Yahweh became passionate about his country,
and took pity on his people.
[19]Yahweh answered,
and said to his people,
'Here I am, I'm going to send grain to you,
new wine and fresh oil – you'll be full of it.
I shall not ever again give you over
as an object of reviling among the nations.
[20]I shall put the northerner far from you,
thrust him into a dry and desolate country,
His face to the eastern sea,
his rear to the western sea.
His smell will go up, his stench go up,
because he has acted big.

[21]Don't be afraid, earth, celebrate and rejoice,
because Yahweh has acted big.
[22]Don't be afraid, animals of the wild,
because the wilderness pastures are green.

Because the tree has borne its fruit,
fig tree and vine have given their resources.
[23]Members of Tsiyyon, celebrate,
rejoice in Yahweh your God.
Because he's given you
the autumn rain in faithfulness.
He's made rain come down for you,
autumn rain and spring rain as before.
[24]Threshing-floors will be full of grain,
presses will abound in new wine and fresh oil.
[25]I shall make good to you for the years
that the locust and the grub have consumed,
The hopper and the cutter, my big force,
which I sent off against you.
[26]You will eat and eat and be full,
and praise the name of Yahweh your God,
The one who acted in an extraordinary way with you;
my people won't be ashamed permanently, and you will acknowledge it.
[27]Because I will be within Yisra'el,
and I am Yahweh your God.
And there is no other,
and my people will not be ashamed, permanently.

You can't control who receives God's spirit

[28]After that, I shall pour my breath on all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters will prophesy.
Your elderly will have dreams,
your young men will see visions.
[29]I shall also pour my breath
on servants and maidservants in those days.

[30]I shall put portents in the heavens and in the earth,
blood, fire and columns of smoke.
[31]The sun will turn to darkness,
the moon to blood,
Before Yahweh's day comes,
great, extraordinary.
[32]But anyone who calls
in Yahweh's name will escape.
Because on Mount Tsiyyon and in Yerushalaim
there will be an escape group,
As Yahweh has said,
among the survivors whom Yahweh is going to call.

3 Because there, in those days
and at that time,
When I restore the fortunes
of Yehudah and Yerushalaim,
[2]I shall collect all the nations
and get them down to Yehoshaphat ['Yahweh has exercised authority'] Vale.
I shall enter into the exercise of authority with them there
over my people, my domain, Yisra'el,
whom they scattered among the nations.
They shared out my country.
[3]and for my people they cast the lot.
They gave a boy for a whore,
sold a girl for wine and drank it.

[4]Now, what are you in relation to me, Tsor [Tyre] and Tsidon,
and all you regions of Peleshet [Philistia]?
Are you making good to me with your dealings? –
if you're dealing out me,
Swiftly, speedily,
I shall give back your dealings on to your head.
[5]Because it was my silver and my gold you took,
the good things that I held in high regard you brought into your palaces.

[6]Yehudahites and Yerushalaimites you sold to the Yavanites [Greeks],
in order to send them far away from their territory.
[7]Here am I, stirring them up from the place to where you sold them,
and I shall give back your dealings on to your head.
[8]I shall sell your sons and your daughters
into the hand of the Yehudahites,
And they will sell them into captivity
to a far-off nation (because Yahweh has spoken).

Beat your hoes into swords

[9]Call out this among the nations,
declare a sacred battle.
Stir up strong men so they draw near;
all the men of battle are to go up.
[10]Beat your hoes into swords,
your pruning hooks into spears;
The weakling is to say, 'I'm a strong man' –
[11]hurry, come.
All you nations around, collect yourselves,
make your strong men go down there, Yahweh.
[12]The nations are to stir themselves and go up
to Yehoshaphat Vale,
Because there I shall sit to exercise authority
over all the nations around.
[13]Put out the sickle,
because the harvest has ripened.
Come, tread,
because the vat is full.
The presses abound,
because their bad dealing is great.
[14]Hordes, hordes, in Verdict Vale,
because Yahweh's day is near in Verdict Vale.
[15]Sun and moon have gone dark,
stars have gathered up their brightness;
[16]Yahweh roars from Tsiyyon,
gives voice from Yerushalaim.
Heavens and earth tremble,
but Yahweh is a shelter for his people,
a stronghold for the Yisra'elites.
[17]You will acknowledge that I am Yahweh,
your God who dwells on Tsiyyon, my sacred mountain.
Yerushalaim will be sacred;
strangers will no more pass through it.
[18]On that day
the mountains will drop sweet wine,
The hills will run with milk,
all Yehudah's canyons will run with water.
A fountain will go out of Yahweh's house
and water Acacias Wadi.
[19]Misrayim [Egypt] will become a desolation,
Edom will become a wilderness, a desolation,
Because of violence done to the Yehudahites,
in whose country they shed the blood of one free of guilt.
[20]But Yehudah will live permanently,
Yerushalaim for generation after generation.
[21]I shall treat their bloodshed as free of guilt, which I have not treated as free of guilt,
as Yahweh is dwelling on Tsiyyon.

Amos

Yahweh sent Amos from Judah to bring his message to northern Israel (Ephraim) at Bethel, at the southern end of the country. He was a contemporary of Hosea in Ephraim, though they may not have come into contact if Hosea was in the Ephraimite capital, Samaria. Compared with Hosea, Amos pays proportionately more attention to social ills than to religious ills, and he is a gifted communicator. The opening chapters win his audience's attention by lambasting other nations for their war crimes before turning to declare that Ephraim is worse because it had fuller revelation from God. He invites people to come to worship, but then tells them it's an act of rebellion that Yahweh hates. He sings a funeral lament that turns out to be a dirge for the coming demise of the nation itself. He declares that the Day of Yahweh will be bad news, not good news. He tells people how he prayed successfully for Yahweh not to act in judgement but then indicates that he had to stop doing so. He warns people that they cannot escape Yahweh even by trying to hide in She'ol. But he also says that judgement will not be the end.

Nations held responsible

1 The words of Amos, who was among the sheep-breeders from Teqoa, which he saw concerning Yisra'el in the days of
Uzziyyah king of Yehudah and in the days of Yarob'am ben Yo'ash king of Yisra'el, two years before the earthquake.

[2]When Yahweh roars from Tsiyyon [Zion],
gives voice from Yerushalaim,
The shepherds' pastures will mourn,
Carmel's head will wither.

[3]Yahweh has said this:

For three rebellions by Dammeseq [Damascus],
for four I shall not turn it back,
because of their threshing Gil'ad with iron sledges.
[4]I shall send off fire against Haza'el's house,
and it will consume Ben-hadad's citadels.
[5]I shall break Dammeseq's bar,
and I shall cut off inhabitants from Trouble Valley,
A sceptre-holder from Bet-eden,
and the people of Aram will go into exile to Qir (Yahweh has said).

[6]Yahweh has said this:

For three rebellions by Azzah [Gaza],
for four I shall not turn it back,
Because of their exiling a complete exile community,
handing them over to Edom.
[7]I shall send off fire against Azzah's wall,
and it will consume its citadels.
[8]I shall cut off inhabitants from Ashdod,
a sceptre-holder from Ashqelon.
I shall turn back my hand against Eqron;
the remainder of the Pelishtites [Philistines] will perish (the Lord Yahweh has said).

[9]Yahweh has said this:

For three rebellions by Tsor [Tyre],
for four I shall not turn it back,
because of their handing over a complete exile community to Edom;
they were not mindful of the brotherhood pact.
[10]I shall send off fire against Tsor's wall,
and it will consume its fortresses.

Yehudah too

[11]Yahweh has said this:

For three rebellions by Edom,
for four I shall not turn it back,
Because he pursued his brother with a sword,
devastated his compassion.
His anger tore ceaselessly,

his outburst kept watch continually.
[12]I shall send off fire against Teman,
and it will consume Botsrah's citadels.

[13]Yahweh has said this:

For three rebellions by the Ammonites,
for four I shall not turn it back,
Because of their ripping open pregnant women in Gil'ad,
in order to enlarge their territory.
[14]I shall set fire to Rabbah's wall
and it will consume its citadels,
With shouting on a day of battle,
with a hurricane on a stormy day.
[15]Their king will go into exile,
he and his officials together (Yahweh has said).

2 Yahweh has said this:
For three rebellions by Mo'ab,
for four I shall not turn it back,
because of his burning the bones of the king of Edom to lime.
[2]I shall send off fire against Mo'ab,
and it will consume Qeriyyot's citadels.
Mo'ab will die amid a din,
amid shouting and the sound of a horn.
[3]I shall cut off the authority from within it,
and kill all its officials with him (Yahweh has said).

[4]Yahweh has said this:

For three rebellions by Yehudah,
for four I shall not turn it back,
Because of their rejecting Yahweh's instruction
and not keeping his laws.
Their lies led them astray,
which their ancestors followed.
[5]I shall send off fire against Yehudah,
and it will consume Yerushalaim's citadels.

And also Ephrayim

[6]Yahweh has said this:

For three rebellions by Yisra'el,
for four I shall not turn it back,
Because of their selling a faithful person for silver,
a needy person for a pair of boots.
[7]You who trample the head of poor people
into the earth of the ground,
and twist the way of humble people!
An individual and his father go to a girl,
in order to treat my sacred name as ordinary.
[8]On garments given in pledge
they lie down by every altar.
In their God's house they drink
the wine of people who have been defrauded.

[9]And I'm the one who annihilated the Amorite before them,
whose height was like the height of cedars,
and who was as sturdy as oaks.
I annihilated his fruit above
and his roots below.
[10]And I'm the one who took you up
from the country of Misrayim [Egypt].
I enabled you to go through the wilderness for 40 years,
to take possession of the Amorite's country.
[11]I raised up prophets from your children,

consecrated people from your young men.
It is indeed so, isn't it, Yisra'elites (Yahweh's declaration),
[12]but you made the consecrated people drink wine
and you ordered the prophets, 'You will not prophesy.'

[13]There, I'm going to make a split beneath you
as a cart makes a split
when full of its grain.
[14]Flight will perish from the swift,
the strong won't firm up his energy.
The strong man won't save his life,
[15]the one who wields the bow won't stand.
One swift on his feet won't save himself,
one riding a horse won't save his life.
[16]The firmest of mind among the strong men
will flee naked on that day (Yahweh's declaration).

Do accidents happen?

3 Listen to this word which Yahweh has spoken about you, Yisra'elites, about the entire kin-group that I took up from Misrayim:

[2]Only you did I acknowledge
from all earth's kin-groups.
Therefore I shall attend to you
for all your wayward acts.
[3]Do two walk together
unless they've taken counsel?
[4]Does a lion roar in the forest
and it has no prey?
Does a cougar give voice from its abode
unless it has caught something?
[5]Does a bird fall in a trap on the earth
and there's no snare there?
Does a trap come up from the ground
and it hasn't actually caught something?
[6]If a horn sounds in a town,
doesn't the people tremble?
And if something happens to a town,
isn't it Yahweh who's acted?
[7]Because the Lord Yahweh does nothing
except he has revealed his plan
to his servants the prophets.

[8]A lion has roared,
who would not be afraid?
The Lord Yahweh has spoken,
who wouldn't prophesy?

[9]Make it heard in Ashdod's citadels,
and in the citadels in the country of Misrayim.
Say, 'Gather on Shomron's [Samaria's] mountains,
look at the great chaos within it,
the oppressed within it.
[10]They haven't acknowledged acting straight (Yahweh's declaration),
the people who store up violence and destruction in their citadels.

[11]Therefore, the Lord Yahweh has said this:

An adversary, round the country:
he'll pull down your vigour from you,
and your citadels will be plundered.
[12]Yahweh has said this:

As a shepherd rescues
from a lion's mouth
Two shank bones

or the tip of an ear,
So the Yisra'elites will escape,
the people who live in Shomron,
with the leg of a bed or the damask of a couch.

[13]Listen, and testify against Ya'aqob's [Jacob's] household
(a declaration of the Lord Yahweh, God of Armies):
[14]On the day I attend to Yisra'el's rebellions for it,
I shall attend to Bet-el's altars.
The altar's horns will be cut off,
and will fall to the ground.
[15]I shall strike down the winter house
as well as the summer house.
The ivory houses will perish,
the great houses will come to an end (Yahweh's declaration).

But you haven't turned back to me

4 Listen to this word,
you Bashan cows,
You who are on Shomron's mountain,
you who defraud the poor, who crush the needy,
Who say to their husbands,
'Bring something so we can drink.'

[2]The Lord Yahweh has sworn by his sacredness:

There, days are coming upon you
when someone will carry you off with hooks –
yes, the last of you with fish hooks.
[3]Through the breaches you'll go out, each woman straight ahead,
and you'll be thrown out to Harmon (Yahweh's declaration).

[4]Come to Bet-el and rebel –
to Gilgal, multiply the rebelling.
Bring your sacrifices every morning,
your tenths every three days.
[5]Burn your thank-offering of leavened bread,
call out voluntary offerings, make them heard,
because so you love it, Yisra'elites (the Lord Yahweh's declaration).
[6]Even though I – I have given you
emptiness of teeth in all your towns,
Lack of food in all your places,
but you haven't turned back to me (Yahweh's declaration).
[7]Even though I – I have withheld the rain from you
when it was still three months to the harvest.
I'd let it rain on one town
but not let it rain on another town.
One plot would be rained on,
but a plot on which it would not rain would wither.
[8]Two or three towns would wander
to another town to drink water.
But they wouldn't be full,
but you haven't turned back to me (Yahweh's declaration).
[9]I have struck you down with blight and with mildew,
multiplying it on your gardens and your orchards.
The locust would eat your fig trees and olives,
but you haven't turned back to me (Yahweh's declaration).
[10]I sent off an epidemic among you
in the manner of Misrayim,
I killed your young men with the sword,
with your captured horses,
Made the smell of your camps rise, even into your nostrils,
but you haven't turned back to me (Yahweh's declaration).
[11]I overthrew some of you
like the supernatural overthrow of Sedom [Sodom] and Amorah [Gomorrah],
You became like a burning stick pulled out of the fire,

but you haven't turned back to me (Yahweh's declaration).

When authority becomes poisonous

[12]Therefore this is what I shall do to you, Yisra'el;
because I shall do this to you,
get ready to meet your God, Yisra'el.
[13]Because there, one who shapes mountains,
creates wind,
Tells human beings what his thinking is,
makes dawn into darkness,
Treads on earth's high places –
Yahweh, God of Armies, is his name.

5 Listen to this word, which I'm taking up, a lament over you, Yisra'el's household.
[2]She's fallen, she won't get up again,
Miss Yisra'el;
She's left on her land,
there's no one to help her up.

[3]Because the Lord Yahweh has said this:

The town that goes out as a thousand
will have a hundred remaining.
The one that goes out as a hundred
will have ten remaining to Yisra'el's household.

[4]Because Yahweh has said this to Yisra'el's household:

Enquire of me, and live,
[5]don't enquire of Bet-el,
Don't go to Gilgal,
don't cross over to Be'er-sheba.
Because Gilgal is definitely to go into exile,
and Bet-el is to become nothing.
[6]Enquire of Yahweh and live,
so he doesn't break out like fire
On Yoseph's household, and consume,
and there's no one to quench it for Bet-el.

[7]You who turn the exercise of authority to poison
and set down faithfulness on the earth!
[8]He's the one who makes Pleiades and Orion,
turns deep darkness to dawn.
He darkens day into night,
the one who calls the water of the sea,
Pours it out on the face of the earth –
Yahweh is his name –
[9]The one who flashes destruction on the vigorous,
so that destruction comes on the fortification.

[10]They are hostile to the one who reproves in the gateway,
they take offence at the one who speaks with integrity.
[11]Therefore, because you tax the poor person,
take a levy of grain from him:
You've built houses of square stone,
but you won't live in them.
[12]Because I have got to know your many acts of rebellion,
your numerous wrongdoings.
You adversaries of the faithful, takers of a bribe,
who have turned aside the needy in the gateway.

The day of the Lord as bad news

[13]Therefore the person of insight keeps silent at such a time,

because it's a bad time.
[14]Enquire after what is good, not what is bad, in order that you may live;
thus Yahweh, God of Armies, will be with you,
as you've said.
[15]Be hostile to what is bad, be loyal to what is good,
establish the exercise of authority in the gateway.
Perhaps Yahweh, God of Armies, will be gracious
to what remains of Yoseph.
[16]Therefore Yahweh, God of Armies, the Lord, has said this:

In all the squares lamenting,
in all the streets they'll say, 'Oh, oh'.
They'll call the farmhand to mourning,
and for lamenting to the people who know how to keen.
[17]In all the orchards lamenting,
when I pass through the middle of you (Yahweh has said).

[18]Hey, you who wish
for Yahweh's day.
What good really is Yahweh's day to you? –
it will be darkness, not light.
[19]As when someone flees from before a lion
and a bear meets him,
Or he comes home,
leans his hand on a wall,
and a snake bites him.
[20]Yahweh's day will be darkness not light, won't it,
gloom, with no brightness to it.
[21]I've been hostile, I've rejected your festivals;
I don't savour your assemblies.
[22]Even when you offer me burnt offerings,
and your grain offerings, I shall not accept them.
To a fellowship offering of well-fed animals
I shall not look.
[23]Remove from me the noise of your songs;
I shall not listen to the music of your mandolins.
[24]The exercise of authority is to roll like water,
faithfulness like a perennial wadi.
[25]Was it sacrifices and an offering that you presented to me
in the wilderness for 40 years,
household of Yisra'el?

[26]You will carry Sikkut your king,
and Kiyyun, your images, the star of your god,
That which you made for yourselves,
[27]and I shall exile you beyond Dammeseq,
(Yahweh whose name is God of Armies has said).

A warning to people at peace

6 Hey, you people who are at peace on Tsiyyon,
who are confident on Shomron's mountain,
You notables of the first of the nations,
to whom Yisra'el's household come.
[2]Pass over to Kalneh and look,
go from there to Great Hamat,
go down to Gat in Peleshet [Philistia].
Are these better than your kingdoms,
or their territory than your territory,
[3]You who push away the bad day,
but bring near the rule of violence,
[4]You who lie on ivory beds,
lounging on their couches,
Eating lambs from the flock,
bullocks from within the stall,
[5]Making music to the sound of the mandolin like David,
people who have composed for themselves on musical instruments,

[6]Drink with bowls of wine,
anoint themselves with the finest oils,
but haven't got sick at the breaking of Yoseph?

[7]Therefore now:
they will go into exile at the head of the exiles,
and the revelry of the loungers will turn aside.
[8]The Lord Yahweh has sworn by himself (a declaration of Yahweh, God of Armies):

I detest Ya'aqob's majesty,
I'm hostile to its citadels,
I shall deliver up the town and what fills it.
[9]If ten people are left
in one house, they'll die.
[10]If someone's relative lifts him up (the person who burns spices for him)
to take his bones out of the house,
And says to whoever is in the inner parts of the house,
'Is anyone still with you?'
He'll say, 'Hush,
because we're not to mention Yahweh's name.'
[11]Because there, Yahweh is going to order,
and he'll strike down the great house to pieces,
the small house to bits.

[12]Do horses run on a cliff,
or does one plough it with cattle?
Because you've turned the exercise of authority to venom,
faithful fruit to poison,
[13]You who rejoice at No-thing,
who say 'It was by our strength, wasn't it,
that we took Qarnayim for ourselves?'
[14]Because here am I, about to raise up against you,
Yisra'el's household (a declaration of Yahweh, God of Armies) –
A nation, and they'll afflict you
from Lebo Hamat to Wadi Arabah.

I wasn't a prophet

7 The Lord Yahweh showed me this: there, he was forming a locust swarm at the beginning of the growth of the spring crop. There – the spring crop after the king's reaping. [2]When it had finished consuming the grass in the country, I said, 'Lord Yahweh, please pardon, how can Ya'aqob stand, because it's small.' [3]Yahweh relented about this. 'It won't happen', Yahweh said.
[4]The Lord Yahweh showed me this: there, he was calling for an argument by fire. It consumed the Great Deep and it was consuming the plots. [5]I said, 'Lord Yahweh, please spare, how can Ya'aqob stand, because it's small.' [6]Yahweh relented about this. 'It won't happen either', the Lord Yahweh said.
[7]He showed me this: there, the Lord was standing by a lead-weight wall, and in his hand was a lead weight. [8]Yahweh said to me, 'What are you looking at, Amos?' I said, 'A lead weight'. The Lord said, 'Here am I, I'm going to put a lead weight in the middle of my people Yisra'el. I shall not again pass over it any more. [9] Yitshaq's [Isaac's] shrines will be desolate, Yisra'el's sanctuaries will be laid waste. I shall rise against Yarob'am's household with the sword.'

[10]Amatsyah the priest at Bet-el sent to Yarob'am king of Yisra'el to say, 'Amos has conspired against you within Yisra'el's household. The country can't endure all his words. [11]Because Amos has said this: "Yarob'am will die by the sword, Yisra'el will go into exile, exile away from its soil."' [12]But Amatsyah said to Amos, 'Seer, go, flee for your life to the country of Yehudah, eat bread there, prophesy there. [13]Don't prophesy again in Bet-el any more, because it's the king's sanctuary. It's the kingdom's house.'
[14]Amos answered Amatsyah, 'I wasn't a prophet and I wasn't a prophet's son; rather I was a cattleman and a dresser of sycamore figs. [15]But Yahweh took me from following the flock, and Yahweh said to me, "Go, prophesy to my people Yisra'el."
[16]Now, listen to Yahweh's word. You're saying, "You shouldn't prophesy against Yisra'el. You shouldn't preach against Yitshaq's household." [17]Therefore Yahweh has said this: "Your wife will whore in the town. Your sons and your daughters will fall by the sword. Your land will be shared out by measuring line. You yourself will die on unclean land. Yisra'el will go into exile, exile away from its land."'

Amos isn't praying now

8 The Lord Yahweh showed me this: there, a basket of ripe fruit. [2]He said, 'What are you looking at, Amos?' I said, 'A basket of ripe fruit'. Yahweh said to me, 'The ripe time has come for my people Yisra'el. I shall not again pass over it any more.

[3]The palace singers will wail on that day (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh): "He has thrown out many a corpse in every place –
hush!"'

[4]Listen to this, you who trample the needy person,
who make the humble people in the country cease,
[5]Saying, 'When will the new month be over,
so we can sell wheat,
and the sabbath, so we can lay out grain –
Making the barrel measure small but the sheqel big,
falsifying the scales by deceit,
[6]Acquiring the poor people for silver,
the needy person for a pair of boots,
and selling sweepings as grain?'
[7]Yahweh has sworn by the Majesty of Ya'aqob,
'If I ever put out of mind any of their doings . . .'

[8]For this, the earth will shake, won't it,
and everyone who lives in it mourn.
It will all rise like the Ye'or [Nile],
surge and sink like Misrayim's Ye'or.

[9]On that day (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh),
I shall make the sun set at noon,
make the earth dark during daylight.
[10]I shall turn your festivals into mourning,
all your songs into lamenting.
I shall put sack on all hips,
shornness on every head,
I shall make it like the mourning for an only child,
its end a truly bitter day.

You can't get away from God

[11]There, days are coming (a declaration of the Lord Yahweh)
when I shall send famine through the country –
Not famine of bread, not thirst for water,
but rather of hearing Yahweh's words.
[12]People will wander from sea to sea
and roam from north to east,
To seek Yahweh's word,
but they won't find it.
[13]On that day beautiful girls and young men
will faint with thirst.
[14]People who swear by the liability of Shomron
and say, 'As your god lives, Dan',
And 'As the way to Be'er-sheba lives',
will fall and not rise again.

9 I saw the Lord standing by the altar. He said:
Strike down the capitals so the thresholds shake;
break them off on to the head of all of them.
The last of them I shall kill with the sword;
not one of them will flee as a fugitive,
no escapee will survive.
[2]If they dig into She'ol,
from there my hand will get them.
If they go up into the heavens,
I shall get them down.
[3]If they hide on top of Carmel,
from there I shall search them out and get them.
If they conceal themselves from in front of my eyes
at the bottom of the sea,
From there I shall order
the serpent and it will bite them.
[4]If they go into captivity before their enemies,
from there I shall order the sword and it will kill them.
I shall set my eye on them for something bad,

not for something good.

[5]The Lord Yahweh of Armies –
he touches the earth and it melts,
and all the people who live in it mourn.
All of it rises like the Ye'or,
and sinks like Misrayim's Ye'or.
[6]He built his lofts in the heavens
and founded his structure on the earth,
The one who calls the sea's water
and pours it over the face of the earth –
Yahweh is his name.

The day of the Lord as good news again

[7]You're like the Kushites [Sudanese]
to me, Yisra'elites, aren't you (Yahweh's declaration).
I got Yisra'el up from the country of Misrayim, didn't I –
and the Pelishtites from Kaphtor, and the Aramites from Qir?
[8]There, the Lord Yahweh's eyes
are on the kingdom that does wrong;
I annihilate it
from on the face of the earth.
Except that I shall not totally annihilate
Ya'aqob's household (Yahweh's declaration).
[9]Because here I am, I'm going to give an order,
and shake Yisra'el's household among all the nations,
As someone shakes in a sieve,
and no pebble falls to the earth.
[10]All the wrongdoers in my people
will die by the sword,
The people who say, 'It won't reach,
it won't come near us.'

[11]On that day:
I shall raise David's fallen bivouac
and repair its breaches,
I shall raise its ruins
and build it up as in days of old,
[12]In order that they may enter into possession of what remains of Edom,
and all the nations that were called by my name.
(a declaration of Yahweh who is going to do this).

[13]There, days are coming (Yahweh's declaration):
when the ploughman will reach the reaper,
the treader of grapes the one trailing the seed.
The mountains will drop sweet wine,
all the hills will flow.
[14]I shall restore the fortunes of my people Yisra'el;
they'll build up desolate towns and live there.
They'll plant vineyards and drink their wine,
they will make gardens and eat their fruits.
[15]I shall plant them on their land
and they won't uproot again
From on their land
which I have given them (Yahweh your God has said).

Obadiah

Presumably Yahweh gave Obadiah [Obadyah] many other prophecies, but the Judahite community recognized this one as having long-lasting significance. It refers to Edom's involvement in the destruction of Jerusalem, particularly grievous because behind the relationship of Israel and Edom is the relationship between Jacob and Esau as brothers. One might guess that further background is the fact that Edom took over much of the territory Yahweh gave Judah in the centuries that followed.

Who could bring me down to earth?

[1]Obadyah's vision.
The Lord Yahweh has said this about Edom; we have heard a report from Yahweh:

An envoy has been sent out among the nations:
'Rise up – let's rise up against it for battle!'
[2]Here, I'm making you small among the nations;
you're going to be very despised.
[3]The arrogance of your mind has deceived you,
you who dwell in the clefts of the crag, the height of its abode,
Saying within yourself,
'Who could take me down to earth?'
[4]If you go up high like an eagle,
if you put your nest among the stars,
from there I could bring you down (Yahweh's declaration).

[5]If thieves came to you, if robbers came by night
(how you are terminated!)
they would steal what they needed, wouldn't they.
If grape-pickers came to you,
they'd let gleanings remain, wouldn't they.
[6]How Esaw is being ransacked,
its hidden treasures sought out!
[7]All the people you were in pact with
are sending you off to the border.
The people you were in alliance with
are deceiving you, prevailing over you.
The people who eat your bread set a trap beneath you
(it has no understanding).

[8]On that day (Yahweh's declaration):

I shall eliminate the experts from Edom, shan't I,
and understanding from Mount Esaw.
[9]Your strong men will shatter, Teman,
in order that people will be cut off from Mount Esaw through slaughter.
[10]Because of the violence to your brother Ya'aqob [Jacob]
shame will cover you, and you'll be cut off permanently.
[11]On the day you stood aside,
on the day foreigners captured his resources,
When aliens came into his gateways,
and cast lots for Yerushalaim,
you, too, were like one of them.

On gloating and taking advantage

[12]You shouldn't have looked at your brother's day,
the day this alien thing happened to him.
You shouldn't have rejoiced at the Yehudahites
on the day of their perishing.
You shouldn't have talked big
on the day of pressure.
[13]You shouldn't have come into my people's gateway
on the day of their disaster.
You shouldn't have looked, you too, at his bad fortune
on the day of his disaster.

You shouldn't have reached out at his resources
on the day of his disaster.
[14]You shouldn't have stood at the crossroad
to cut down his escapees.
You shouldn't have handed over his survivors
on the day of pressure.
[15]Because Yahweh's day is near against all the nations;
as you did, it will be done to you,
when your dealings come back on your head.

[16]Because as you [Yehudahites] drank
on my sacred mountain,
All the nations will drink continually,
drink and swallow,
and be as if they'd never been.
[17]But on Mount Tsiyyon [Zion] there'll be an escape group,
and it will be sacred.
Ya'aqob's household will dispossess
the people who dispossessed them.
[18]Ya'aqob's household will become a fire,
Yoseph's household a flame,
Esaw's household straw,
and they will burn among them, consume them.
Esaw's household
will have no survivor (because Yahweh has spoken).

[19]The Negeb will possess Mount Esaw,
the Lowland [will possess] the Pelishtites [Philistines].
They will possess the fields of Ephrayim,
the fields of Shomron [Samaria],
and Binyamin [will possess] Gil'ad.
[20]This exile community force belonging to the Yisra'elites
[will possess] what [belongs to] the Kena'anites [Canaanites] as far as Tsarepat.
The exile community from Yerushalaim which is in Sepharad
will possess the towns of the Negeb.
[21]Deliverers will go up on Mount Tsiyyon
to exercise authority over Mount Esaw,
and the kingship will belong to Yahweh.

Jonah

Yahweh used Jonah [Yonah] to promise Ephraim the recovery of territory from the Arameans (2 Kings 14.25) and thus it would not be surprising if he were unenthusiastic about preaching to the Assyrians because he knows that Yahweh will relent of destroying them if they repent. The story about him thus warns prophets and other people about underestimating Yahweh's concern for other nations, even domineering superpowers, and it thus complements Obadiah in illustrating the other side to Yahweh's attitude to oppressive nations. The story is full of humour and irony, which supports the idea that it is a parable rather than a historical story.

The prophet who runs away

1 Yahweh's word came to Yonah ben Amittay: [2]'Set off, go to the great town of Nineveh and call out against it, because their bad dealing has come up before me.' [3]But Yonah set off to flee to Tarshish from before Yahweh. He went down to Yafo [Jaffa], found a ship going to Tarshish, paid its fare and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish from before Yahweh. [4]But Yahweh flung a great wind into the sea, there was a great storm in the sea, and the ship threatened to break up. [5]The sailors were afraid and cried out each of them to his god. They flung the things that were in the ship into the sea to lighten it of them.

Yonah had gone down into the inmost parts of the vessel, lain down and gone to sleep. [6]The captain went to see him and said to him, 'What are you doing, sleeping? Get up, call on your god. Perhaps the god will give a thought to us and we won't perish.'

[7]The men said to each other, 'Come on, let's make lots fall so we can know on whose account this bad fate has come to us.' They made lots fall, and the lot fell on Yonah. [8]They said to him, 'Tell us, please, on whose account this bad fate has come to us. What's your work? Where do you come from? What's your country? What people are you from?' [9]He said to them, 'I'm a Hebrew. I live in awe of Yahweh the God of the heavens, who made the sea and the dry land.'

[10]The men were greatly afraid, and said to him, 'What is this you've done?', when the men knew that he was fleeing from before Yahweh, when he had told them. [11]They said to him, 'What shall we do to you so that the sea quietens down from upon us?' (when the sea was growing stormier). [12]He said to them, 'Lift me up and hurl me into the sea, and the sea will quieten down from upon you, because I acknowledge that it was on my account that this great storm has come upon you.'

How to pray from inside a fish

[13]The men rowed to get back to dry land, but they couldn't, because the sea was growing stormier against them. [14]They called to Yahweh, 'Oh, Yahweh, may we please not perish for this man's life. Don't put upon us the blood of someone free of guilt. Because you, Yahweh – as you wished, you have acted.' [15]They lifted Yonah up and hurled him into the sea; and the sea stopped its raging. [16]The men were in great awe of Yahweh. They offered a sacrifice to Yahweh and made pledges.

[17]Yahweh provided a big fish to swallow Yonah, and Yonah was in the fish's insides three days and three nights.

2 Yonah prayed to Yahweh his God from the fish's insides:

[2]Out of my pressure I called
to Yahweh and he answered me.
When I called for help from She'ol's belly,
you listened to my voice.
[3]You threw me into the deep,
into the heart of the seas.
The river surrounded me;
all your breakers and your waves passed over me.
[4]I myself said, 'I've been driven away
from in front of your eyes.'
Yet I shall again look
towards your sacred palace.
[5]The water overwhelmed me, up to my neck,
the deep surrounded me.
Reed was wrapped round my head
[6]at the roots of the mountains.
I went down into the earth,
its bars were about me permanently.
But you got my life up from the Pit,
Yahweh my God.
[7]When my life was ebbing away from me,
I was mindful of Yahweh.
My plea came to you,
to your sacred palace.
[8]People who keep watch for things that are empty and hollow
forsake their commitment.

[9]But I – with a voice of thanksgiving I will sacrifice to you;
for what I have pledged I shall make good –
deliverance belongs to Yahweh.
[10]Yahweh spoke to the fish, and it vomited Yonah on to the dry land.

The reluctant prophet does as he is told

3 Yahweh's word came to Yonah a second time: [2]'Set off, go to the great town of Nineveh and call out to it the thing that I'm going to speak to you.' [3]Yonah set off and went to Nineveh in accordance with Yahweh's word. Now Nineveh was an extraordinarily great town, three days walk through. [4]Yonah started to go through the town, one day's walk. He called out, 'Forty days more, and Nineveh will be overthrown.' [5]The Ninevites believed God, and called for a fast and put on sack, from the biggest of them to the least of them.

[6]The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he got up from his throne, took off his robe from upon him, covered himself with sack and sat on ash. [7]He got people to cry out in Nineveh, by the decree of the king and his big people: 'Human being and animal (cattle and flock) are not to taste anything. They're not to pasture; they're not to drink water. [8]They're to cover themselves in sack, human being and animal, and call on God strongly. They're to turn, each one from his bad way and from the violence that's in their fists. [9]Who knows, God may turn back and relent, turn back from his anger, and we may not perish.'

[10]God saw their actions, that they turned back from their bad way, and God relented of the bad thing that he had spoken about doing to them. He didn't do it. 4 But it seemed bad to Yonah, a very bad thing. He was enraged.

I knew you'd do that

[2]He prayed to Yahweh: 'Oh, Yahweh, isn't this what I said when I was in my country? That's why I acted previously by fleeing to Tarshish, because I knew that you're a God gracious, compassionate, long-tempered, vast in commitment and relenting about something bad. [3]So now, Yahweh, please take my life from me, because my dying will be good, better than my living.' [4]Yahweh said, 'Was your rage good?'

[5]Yonah went out from the town and sat east of the town. He made a bivouac for himself there and sat under it in the shade until he could see what would happen in the town. [6]Yahweh God provided a qiqayon vine and it grew up over Yonah so as to be a shade over his head to rescue him from what was bad for him. Yonah rejoiced greatly about the qiqayon. [7]But God provided a worm when dawn came up next day and it struck down the qiqayon, and it withered; [8]and when the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun struck down on Yonah's head. He grew faint and asked for his life, that he might die. He said, 'My dying will be good, better than my living.'

[9]God said to Yonah, 'Was your rage good about the qiqayon?' He said, 'It was good, my rage, to the point of death.' [10]Yahweh said, 'You pitied the qiqayon, for which you didn't labour and which you didn't grow, which came into existence overnight and perished overnight. [11]Shouldn't I pity the great town of Nineveh, in which there are more than 120,000 human beings who don't know their right hand from their left, and many animals?'

Micah

Micah [Mikah] was a contemporary of Isaiah who worked in Jerusalem at about the same time and brought a similar message, though he originally came from the country rather than from the capital. Like Isaiah he declares that Yahweh intends to take action against Jerusalem because of the way people with power and resources, and spiritual leaders, take advantage of their position. Like Isaiah he has to deal with people who don't want prophets to say the kind of thing that as a prophet he says. But like Isaiah he also looks beyond the coming disaster to Yahweh's restoring the city. It is he who asks what God requires, and answers the question in a powerful formulation (6.8).

Disaster reaches the very gateways

1 Yahweh's word that came to Mikah the Morashtite in the days of Yotam, Ahaz and Yehizqiyyah, kings of Yehudah, which he beheld concerning Shomron [Samaria] and Yerushalaim.

[2]Listen, peoples, all of you,
heed, earth and what fills it,
So that the Lord Yahweh may be a witness against you,
the Lord from his sacred palace.
[3]Because there – Yahweh is going to come out from his place,
come down and tread on earth's heights.
[4]The mountains will melt beneath him,
the vales split,
Like wax before the fire,
like water propelled down a slope.

[5]All this is for Ya'aqob's [Jacob's] rebellion,
for the household of Yisra'el's wrongdoings.
What is Ya'aqob's rebellion – it's Shomron, isn't it;
and what is Yehudah's great shrine – it's Yerushalaim, isn't it.
[6]I shall make Shomron into a ruin in open country,
plantations for a vineyard.
I shall propel its stones into the ravine,
expose its foundations.
[7]All its images will be smashed,
all its 'gifts' burned in fire.
All its idols I shall make into desolation.
because it collected them from a whore's 'gift',
and they will go back as a whore's 'gift'.

[8]Because of this I shall lament and howl,
I shall go barefoot and stripped.
I shall make lament like the jackals,
mourning like the ostriches.
[9]Because its wound is grave,
because it's come right to Yehudah.
It's reached right to my people's gateway,
right to Yerushalaim.
[10]Don't tell it in Gat, don't cry at all;
in Bet Le'aprah roll in earth [*apar*].
[11]Pass on,
you inhabitants of Shapir, naked in shame;
The inhabitants of Tsa'anan
have not gone out.
Bet Etsel is in lamentation;
it will take its support from you.

[12]Because the inhabitants of Marot
are sick for something good.
Because bad fortune has come down from Yahweh
to Yerushalaim's gateway.
[13]Hitch the chariot to the steed,
inhabitants of Lakish.
It was the beginning of wrongdoing for Miss Tsiyyon [Zion],
because Yisra'el's rebellions were found in you.

[14]Therefore you will give parting gifts
to Moreshet Gat.
The houses of Akzib will be a deception [*akzab*]
to Yisra'el's kings.
[15]'I shall yet bring a dispossessor to you,
inhabitants of Mareshah.
Yisra'el's splendour
will come as far as Adullam.
[16]Shave your head, cut off your hair,
for the children in whom you delighted.
Extend the shaving of your head like an eagle,
because they've gone into exile from you.'

Don't preach?

2 Hey, you people thinking up trouble,
doing something bad on their beds.
At morning light they do it,
because it's in the power of their hand.
[2]They desire fields and steal them –
houses, and take them.
They defraud a man and his household,
an individual and his domain.

[3]Therefore Yahweh has said this:

Here am I, thinking up a bad fate for this kin-group
that you won't move your neck away from.
You won't walk tall,
because it will be a bad time.

[4]On that day,
someone will lift up a poem against you,
he'll wail with a wail, a wailing.
He's saying, 'We are destroyed, destroyed,
he exchanges my people's share.
Aagh, he removes it from me,
he shares out our fields to someone who turns away.'
[5]Therefore there will be no one for you
casting the cord by lot
in Yahweh's congregation.

[6]'Don't preach,' they preach,
'people are not to preach about these things.
Disgrace won't turn away
[7](should it be said, Ya'aqob's household?).
Has Yahweh's temper become short,
are these things his acts?'
My words are good, aren't they,
with someone who walks upright.
[8]But just now my people rises up as an enemy;
you strip the mantle off the front of the coat
From people passing by with confidence,
turning back from battle.
[9]The women among my people –
you drive her out from the household in which she delights.
From her infants
you take my glory permanently.
[10]Set off, go,
because this won't be a place to settle,
On account of defilement that will destroy
with a grave destruction.
[11]If someone were going about
with wind and deceptive falsehood,
'I shall preach to you about wine and about liquor',
he'd be this people's preacher.

Prophets who lead astray

[12]I shall definitely gather Ya'aqob, all of you,
I shall definitely collect what remains of Yisra'el.
I shall put them together like a sheep in a fold;
like a flock in the middle of its pasture,
It will be noisy with people;
[13]one who breaks out in front of them is going up.
They're breaking out, passing through the gateway,
going out through it.
Their king passes through before them,
Yahweh at their head.

3 I said, 'Listen, please, heads of Ya'aqob,
rulers of Yisra'el's household:
It's for you to know how to exercise authority, isn't it,
[2]people who are hostile to what is good and loyal to what is bad,
Who tear the skin from on my people,
their flesh from on their bones,
[3]Who eat my people's flesh
and strip off their skin from on them,
Break up their bones,
cut them up as in a pan,
like meat inside a pot.'
[4]Then they will cry out to Yahweh,
but he will not answer them.
He will hide his face from them at that time,
as they've acted badly in their practices.

[5]Yahweh has said this:

About the prophets who lead my people astray,
who chew with their teeth and call out that things will be well,
But someone who puts nothing in their mouths –
they declare a sacred battle against him.
[6]Therefore there will be night for you, without vision,
darkness for you, without divination.
The sun will set for the prophets,
the day will be dark for them.
[7]The seers will be ashamed,
the diviners confounded.
All of them will cover over their lip,
because there's no answer from God.
[8]But as for me, I'm full of energy, with Yahweh's wind,
and strong authority,
To tell Ya'aqob about its rebellion,
Yisra'el about its wrongdoing.

The new Jerusalem

[9]Listen to this, please,
heads of Ya'aqob's household,
rulers of Yisra'el's household,
You who take offence at the exercise of authority,
and make what is straight crooked,
[10]One who builds Tsiyyon with bloodshed,
Yerushalaim with evil.
[11]Its heads exercise authority for a bribe,
its priests teach for a fee.
Its prophets divine for money,
but lean on Yahweh:
'Yahweh is among us, isn't he,
bad fortune won't come upon us.'
[12]Therefore, on account of you,
Tsiyyon will be a field that is ploughed.
Yerushalaim will become ruins,
the house's mount a great shrine in a forest.

4 But at the end of the time
the mountain of Yahweh's house will be
Established at the head of the mountains,
elevated above the hills.
Peoples will stream to it;
[2]many nations will go and say,
'Come, let's go up to Yahweh's mountain,
to the house of Ya'aqob's God,
So he may teach us in his ways
and we may walk in his paths.'
Because instruction will go out from Tsiyyon,
Yahweh's word from Yerushalaim.
[3]He will decide between many peoples
and issue reproof for numerous nations, even far away.
They'll beat their swords into hoes,
their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation won't take up sword against nation;
they will no more learn about battle.
[4]They will sit, each person
under his vine and under his fig tree,
With no one disturbing –
because the mouth of Yahweh of Armies has spoken.
[5]Because all the peoples walk,
each in the name of its god,
But we ourselves will walk
in the name of Yahweh our God lastingly and permanently.

[6]On that day (Yahweh's declaration):

I shall gather the lame, collect the ones driven out,
and those to whom I've done something bad.
[7]I shall turn the lame into a remainder,
the outcast into a numerous nation.
Yahweh will reign over them on Mount Tsiyyon
from now and permanently.
[8]And you, watchtower of the flock,
citadel, Miss Tsiyyon,
To you will arrive and come
the former rule, the kingship of Miss Yerushalaim.

Is there no king in you?

[9]Now, why do you issue a shout,
is there not a king in you?
Has your counsellor perished,
that writhing has taken strong hold of you like a woman giving birth?
[10]Writhe and scream,
Miss Tsiyyon, like a woman giving birth.
Because you will now go out from the township
and dwell in the open country.
You will come as far as Babel,
but there you will be rescued.
There Yahweh will restore you
from the fist of your enemies.

[11]But now many nations
have gathered against you.
They're saying, 'It shall be profaned,
our eye shall behold Tsiyyon.'
[12]But those people don't know
Yahweh's intentions.
They don't understand his plan,
that he's gathered them like sheaves on the threshing-floor.
[13]Rise up, thresh, Miss Tsiyyon,
because I shall make your horn iron.
I shall make your hoofs copper,

and you will crush many peoples.
They will devote their dishonest gain to Yahweh,
their resources to the Lord of the entire earth.

5 Now, you may form a gang, Miss Gang –
someone has laid siege to us.
They strike down Yisra'el's authority
on the cheek with a club.
[2]But you, Bet-lehem in Ephratah,
small to be among Yehudah's clans,
From you will emerge for me
someone to be a ruler in Yisra'el
whose emerging is of old, of ancient days.
[3]Therefore he will give them up until the time
when the one who is going to give birth has given birth,
And those who are left of his brothers
come back to the Yisra'elites.
[4]He will stand and shepherd with Yahweh's vigour,
in the majesty of the name of Yahweh his God.
They will live, because now he'll be great, as far as the ends of the earth,
[5]and this will mean things are well.
Ashshur, when it comes into our country,
when it treads through our citadels:
We will set up over it seven shepherds,
eight people as leaders.
[6]They will shepherd the country of Ashshur with the sword,
the country of Nimrod with its entrances.
He will rescue us from Ashshur when it comes into our country,
when it treads through our territory.

What God looks for

[7]Ya'aqob's remainder will become,
among many peoples,
Like dew from Yahweh,
like showers on grass,
Which don't wait for people,
don't look to human beings.
[8]Ya'aqob's remainder will become, among the nations,
among many peoples,
Like a lion among the animals in the forest,
like a cougar among the flocks of sheep,
Which, if it passes by, tramples and mauls,
with no one to rescue.
[9]Your hand will rise over your adversaries,
and all your enemies will be cut off.

[10]On that day (Yahweh's declaration):

I shall cut down your horses from among you
and obliterate your chariots.
[11]I shall cut down the towns in your country,
and tear down all your fortresses.
[12]I shall cut down the charms from your hand,
and you will have no chanters.
[13]I shall cut down your images
and your pillars from among you.
You will not bow low any more
to something made by your hands.
[14]I shall uproot your totem poles from among you
and annihilate your towns.
[15]But I shall effect redress in anger and wrath
on the nations that have not listened.

6 Listen, please, to what Yahweh has said:
Get up, argue with the mountains;

the hills must listen to your voice.
[2]Listen to Yahweh's argument, mountains,
enduring ones, earth's foundations.
Because Yahweh has an argument with his people,
with Yisra'el he issues a reproof.
[3]'My people, what have I done to you,
how have I wearied you? – avow against me.
[4]Because I got you up out of the country of Misrayim [Egypt],
redeemed you from a household of servants.
I sent before you
Mosheh [Moses], Aharon [Aaron] and Miryam.
[5]My people, please be mindful
of what Balaq king of Mo'ab counselled,
and what Bil'am [Balaam] ben Be'or avowed with him,
From Acacias as far as Gilgal,
for the sake of acknowledging Yahweh's faithful acts.

[6]By what means shall I meet Yahweh,
bow down to God on High?
Shall I meet him by means of burnt offerings,
bullocks a year old?
[7]Would Yahweh accept thousands of rams,
in myriads of streams of oil?
Should I give my firstborn for my rebellion,
the fruit of my body for my own wrongdoing?
[8]He has told you, people, what is good,
what Yahweh requires from you:
Rather, exercising authority and being loyal to commitment,
and being diffident in how you walk with your God.

Like the gleanings

[9]The voice of Yahweh calls to the town;
awe for your name is good sense.
Listen to the club
and the one who set it [10]still.
'Shall I forget the faithless household,
the faithless storehouses,
the condemned short measure?
[11]Would I be clean with faithless scales,
with a bag of false weights? –
[12]Whose rich people are full of violence,
whose inhabitants speak falsehood,
and their tongue is deceit in their mouths?

[13]So I myself am indeed making you sick in striking you down,
desolating you for your wrongdoings.
[14]You – you will eat but not be full,
with your emptiness inside you.
You'll displace, but not save,
and what you save I shall give to the sword.
[15]You – you'll sow but not harvest;
you – you'll tread olives, but not rub with oil,
and grapes, but not drink wine.
[16]You've kept Omri's laws,
every practice of Ah'ab's household.
You've walked by their policies,
for the sake of my making you a desolation,
Your inhabitants a hissing,
and you will bear the reviling of my people.'

7 Aagh, me, because I've become
like the gatherings of summer fruit,
like the gleanings of the vintage.
There's no cluster to eat,
or early fig that my appetite could fancy.
[2]The committed person has perished from the country,

there's no one upright among the people.
All of them lie in wait for blood;
one person hunts his brother with a net.
[3]Both fists are on what is bad, to do it well:
the official asking, and the authority, with pay,
The big man speaking
his appetite's desire, and they weave it together.
[4]The good one among them is like a briar,
the most upright worse than a thorn hedge.
The day your lookouts described,
the day when you're attended to, is going to come;
now the disarray they described will happen.
[5]Don't believe a neighbour,
don't rely on a friend.
From the one who sleeps in your embrace
guard the opening of your mouth.
[6]Because son acts villainously to father,
daughter rises up against her mother,
Daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;
a person's enemies are the people in his household.
[7]But I myself will look to Yahweh,
I shall wait for my God who delivers me;
my God will listen to me.

Lament, prayer, expectation and worship for the city

[8]Don't rejoice over me, my enemy;
when I've fallen, I'm getting up.
When I sit in darkness,
Yahweh will be my light.
[9]I shall carry Yahweh's wrath
when I've done wrong to him,
Until he gives judgement for me
and exercises authority for me.
He will get me out into the light,
I shall see his faithfulness,
[10]My enemy will see,
and shame will cover it,
The one who says to me,
'Where is he, Yahweh, your God?'
My eyes will look on it;
now it'll be for trampling
like mud in the streets.
[11]A day for building up your walls –
that will be a day when your boundary will be far away.
[12]That day one will come to you
from Ashshur and the towns of Misrayim,
From Misrayim as far as the River,
to sea from sea, to mountain from mountain.
[13]But the earth will become a desolation because of its inhabitants,
as the fruit of their practices.

[14]Pasture your people with your club,
the flock that's your domain,
Dwelling by itself in a forest
in the middle of farmland.
May they pasture in Bashan and Gil'ad
as in days of old,
[15]as in the days when you got out of the country of Misrayim.

'When I show it my wonders, [16]nations will see
and be ashamed of all their strength.
They'll put their hand to their mouth,
their ears will go deaf.
[17]They'll lick earth like a snake,
like things that crawl on the ground.'

May they come trembling out of their strongholds
to Yahweh our God,
may they be in dread and awe of you.
[18]Who is a God like you, one who carries waywardness,
and passes over rebellion for the remainder of his domain.
He doesn't keep strong hold of his anger permanently,
because he delights in commitment;
[19]When he has compassion on us again, he'll
trample on our wayward acts;
he'll throw all our wrongdoings into the depths of the sea.
[20]You will show truthfulness to Ya'aqob,
commitment to Abraham,
as you swore to our ancestors from days of old.

Nahum

One can set Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah alongside Jeremiah, in that they lived a century later than Amos, Hosea and Micah, in the time when Assyria was succeeded by Babylon as the world power. Nahum's vocation was to encourage Jerusalem when it was still under the domination of Assyria with its capital in Nineveh, by promising that Nineveh would be put down. Yahweh's promise through Nahum was fulfilled when Nineveh fell to the Babylonians in 612 bc. But there are few concrete references to Nineveh, so that the promises (or warnings) apply to other great imperial cities such as Babylon – or to Jerusalem itself.

Yahweh the passionate God

1 The pronouncement about Nineveh, the document with the vision of Nahum the Elqoshite.

[2]Yahweh is a God who is passionate and takes redress;
Yahweh takes redress and is a possessor of wrath.
Yahweh takes redress on his adversaries,
maintains it towards his enemies.
[3]Yahweh is long-tempered but big in energy,
and certainly doesn't treat people as free of guilt.
Yahweh – his way is in whirlwind and in storm,
the cloud is the dust from his feet.
[4]He reprimands the sea and withers it,
dries up all the rivers.
Bashan and Carmel languish,
Lebanon's blossom languishes.
[5]Mountains quake because of him,
the hills melt.
The earth lifts from before him,
the world and all the people who live in it.
[6]Before his condemnation, who can stand,
and who can rise against his angry burning? –
His wrath pours out like fire,
and crags shatter because of him.
[7]Yahweh is good, a stronghold on the day of pressure,
and he acknowledges people who take shelter with him.
[8]With a flood passing
he makes an end of [the city's] place,
He pursues his enemies into darkness;
[9]what do you think up for Yahweh?
He makes an end;
pressure doesn't rise twice.
[10]Because they're tangled among thorns,
and drunk as with their drink,
they're consumed like straw that is fully dry.

[11]From you [as a city] has gone out
one who thinks up something bad against Yahweh,
one who counsels wickedness.
[12]Yahweh has said this:

If they are allied and thus are many,
even thus they're cut down and he passes away;
Whereas I afflicted you, I shall afflict you no more.
[13]but now I shall break its yoke from on you,
tear off your shackles.

[14]Yahweh has given an order against you:
nothing more from your name will be sown.
From your gods' house I shall cut off
carved image and cast image.
I shall make your grave,
because you are slight.
[15]There, on the mountains are the feet of a herald,
letting people hear of well-being.
Observe your festival, Yehudah,

make good your pledges.
Because he will no more pass through you:
the scoundrel, all of him, is being cut off.

The empire writes back

2 A shatterer has gone up against you –
guard the ramparts.
Watch the road, strengthen your hips,
firm up your energy all you can.
[2]Because Yahweh is restoring
Ya'aqob's [Jacob's] majesty like Yisra'el's majesty.
Because wasters have wasted them,
devastated their branches.

[3]His strong men's shield is painted red,
the men in the force clad in scarlet.
The chariotry is with flashing fire on the day it's made ready,
the junipers are brandished.
[4]In the streets the chariotry race,
they rush about in the squares,
Their appearance like torches,
they speed like lightning streaks.
[5]Though he calls to mind his august men, they collapse as they go;
they hurry to its wall, the shelter is made ready.
[6]The river gates open, the palace melts;
[7]it's decreed: it's exiled, it's taken up.
Its handmaids lament like the voice of doves,
beating on their chests.
[8]Nineveh was like a pool of water of old,
but they're fleeing.
'Stop, stop',
but no one can turn them.
[9]Plunder silver, plunder gold,
there's no limit to the things prepared,
the splendour from all the things that people hold in high regard.

[10]Emptiness, just emptiness, waste;
the mind melts, the knees knock.
All hips tremble,
the faces of all of them have collected a flush.
[11]Where is the lions' abode,
the pasture for the cougars,
Where the lion walked,
the lioness there,
The lion's cub, with no one disturbing,
[12]the lion tearing enough for its cubs,
And strangling for its lionesses –
it filled its lairs with prey, its abodes with prey?
[13]Here am I towards you (a declaration of Yahweh of Armies):
I shall burn up its chariotry in smoke.
The sword will consume your cougars;
I shall cut off your prey from the earth.
Your envoys' voice
will no more be listened to.
3 Hey, town of bloodshed,
all of it deception,
Full of plunder,
where prey doesn't depart.
[2]The sound of a whip,
the sound of the rumble of a wheel,
A horse galloping,
a chariot jumping,
[3]Cavalry going up, sword flashing,
spear glittering, a multitude run through,
A heap of carcases, no end of the corpses,
people collapse over their corpses.

The invincible falls

[4]Because of the dimensions of the whore's whorings,
the well-favoured expert in charms,
Who sells nations with her whorings,
kin-groups with her charms,
[5]Here am I towards you (a declaration of Yahweh of Armies):
I shall expose your skirts over your face.
I shall show the nations your nakedness,
kingdoms your slighting.
[6]I shall throw abominations over you,
demean you and make a spectacle of you;
[7]All who see you will flee from you
and say, 'Nineveh is destroyed!
Who will mourn for her,
where shall I seek for people to comfort her?'

[8]Are you better than Thebes of Amon,
which was sitting on the Ye'or [Nile],
Water surrounding it,
whose rampart was the sea, its wall made from the sea?
[9]Numerous Kush [Sudan]
and Misrayim [Egypt] without end,
Put and the Lubites
were your help.
[10]Even it was for exile, it went into captivity;
even its babies were smashed at the head of every street.
For its honourable men people threw lots,
and all its big people were bound in chains.
[11]Even you will become drunk, you will be in hiding;
even you will seek a refuge from the enemy.
[12]All your fortresses are fig trees, with the first fruits;
if people shake them, they fall into the mouth of an eater.
[13]There, your company is women within you,
to your enemies they are wide open,
The gateways of your country;
fire is consuming your gate-bars.

[14]Draw siege water for yourself,
strengthen your fortresses,
Tread the clay, trample the mud,
take strong hold of the brick mould.
[15]Fire will consume you there,
the sword will cut you off, consume you like the grasshopper.
Multiply like the grasshopper,
multiply like the locust.
[16]You made your merchants more than the stars in the heavens;
the grasshopper strips and flies.
[17]Your guards are like locusts,
your officials like a pile of grubs,
That settle on walls
on a cold day.
When the sun comes out, they flee;
their place, where they are, isn't known.

[18]Your shepherds have gone to sleep, king of Ashshur;
your august people settle down.
Your people have scattered over the mountains,
and there's no one collecting them.
[19]There's no healing for your break;
your wound is severe.
All who hear the report of you
clap the palm of a hand at you,
Because to whom has bad fortune from you
not passed, continually?

Habakkuk

The bulk of Habakkuk [Habaqquq] takes the form of questions and answers between the prophet and Yahweh. Like other prophets, Habakkuk is horrified at what he sees in Judah and he wants to know what Yahweh intends to do about it. Yahweh declares that he intends to bring the Babylonians to act against Judah. This idea horrifies Habakkuk; Yahweh adds that the Babylonians will get their own comeuppance in due course. The final chapter is a vision of Yahweh's coming to take action in this connection.

Habaqquq protests, Yahweh answers, Habaqquq protests again

1 The pronouncement that Habaqquq the prophet beheld.

[2]How long have I called for help, Yahweh,
and you don't listen?
I cry out to you, 'Violence',
but you don't deliver.
[3]Why do you make me see trouble,
why do you look at oppression?
Destruction and violence are in front of me;
there's been argument, and strife arises.
[4]Therefore instruction ceases,
the exercise of authority never issues.
Because the faithless person encircles the faithful;
therefore the exercise of authority issues deformed.

[5]Watch the nations,
look, and be utterly astounded.
Because I'm going to do something in your days
that you wouldn't believe when it was told.
[6]Because here am I, I'm going to raise up the Kasdites,
the bitter, quick-moving nation,
That goes to the far reaches of the earth,
to possess dwellings that don't belong to it.
[7]It's terrible and fearful;
from itself its authority and its dignity issues.
[8]Its horses are swifter than leopards,
keener than wolves at evening;
Its steeds gallop;
its steeds come from afar.
They fly like an eagle hastening to devour;
[9]all of it comes for violence.
The thrust of their faces is forwards;
it gathers captives like sand.
[10]It derides kings,
rulers are fun to it.
It makes fun of every fortress,
it fortifies earth and captures it.
[11]Then the wind sweeps on and passes through,
and it becomes guilty, because its energy is its god.

[12]You are from of old, Yahweh, are you not;
my God, my sacredness, you don't die.
Yahweh, you've made it an authority;
my crag, you have founded it to reprove.
[13]Your eyes are too pure to watch bad dealing,
you cannot look at oppression.
Why do you look at people who break faith – stay still,
when the faithless person swallows one who is more faithful than him?
[14]You made humanity like the fish in the sea,
like moving things that have no ruler.
[15]He's got all of it up with a hook,
he drags it away in his net,
Gathers it in his trawl;
that's why he rejoices and celebrates.

[16]That's why he sacrifices to his net,
burns incense to his trawl.
Because through them his share is rich,
his food luxuriant.
[17]Is he therefore to empty his net
and continually to kill nations,
not pity?

Yahweh answers again

2 On my watch I shall take my stand,
station myself at my post.
I shall look to see what he'll speak through me,
what I shall say back to the reproof that comes to me.
[2]Yahweh answered me:

Write the vision, make it plain on tablets,
in order that someone who reads it out can run with it.
[3]Because there's yet a vision about a set time,
it testifies about the end, and it won't deceive.
If it's slow, wait for it,
because it will definitely come, it won't lag.
[4]There, his appetite within him
is swollen, not upright,
whereas the faithful person will live by his truthfulness.
[5]How much more does wine betray
the arrogant man.
He won't abide,
one who's let his appetite be as wide as She'ol.
The one who is like death,
but he isn't full,
The one who gathers to himself all the nations,
collects to himself all the peoples.
[6]These people, all of them,
will raise a poem about him, won't they,
mocking, conundrums, about him.
Hey, one who accumulates what's not his – how long,
one who makes debts heavy for himself?
[7]Your creditors will suddenly arise, won't they,
the people who make you tremble will wake up,
and you will turn into plunder for them.
[8]Because you're one who despoiled many nations,
all that's left of the peoples will despoil you,
On account of the human bloodshed and the violence against the country,
the township and all the people who live in it.

[9]Hey, one who makes dishonest gain,
a bad thing for his household,
To set his nest on high,
to escape from the fist of bad fortune.
[10]You've counselled shame for your household,
cutting off many peoples and doing wrong to yourself.
[11]Because a stone will cry out from a wall,
and the beam from the wood will answer it.

[12]Hey, one who builds a town through bloodshed
who establishes a township through evil
[13](there, it's from Yahweh of Armies, isn't it?),
And peoples laboured for the fire,
nations toiled for emptiness.
[14]Because the earth will be full
so as to acknowledge Yahweh's splendour,
as the water covers over the sea.

The confrontation

[15]Hey, one who makes his neighbour drink,

pouring out your wrath and your drunken anger,
in order to look at their naked bodies.
[16]You're getting full of slighting rather than of splendour;
drink, and show your foreskin, you too.
The chalice in Yahweh's right hand
will come round to you,
with slighting in place of your splendour.

[17]Because your violence to Lebanon will cover you,
your destruction of animals, which terrifies them,
On account of human bloodshed and violence to the earth,
the township and all who live in it.
[18]What use is a carved image when its carver has shaped it,
an image, which teaches falsehood,
When the one who shaped it relies on it,
in making dumb non-entities?

[19]Hey, one who says to wood, 'Wake up',
'Get up', to dumb stone,
so it may teach.
There, it's cased in gold and silver,
but there isn't any breath within it.
[20]But Yahweh is in his sacred palace –
be silent before him, all the earth.

3 A plea by Habaqquq the prophet; on 'Laments'.

[2]Yahweh, I've heard a report of you,
I am in awe, Yahweh, of your action.
Within the years, bring it to life;
within the years, cause it to be acknowledged;
in the turmoil, be mindful of compassion.

[3]God comes from Teman,
the sacred one from Mount Pa'ran. *(Rise)*
His majesty has covered the heavens,
his praise has filled the earth.
[4]His brightness comes like dawn,
its rays from his hand,
and there is the hiding place of his vigour.
[5]Before him epidemic comes,
plague comes out at his feet.
[6]He has stood and shaken the earth;
he has looked, and agitated nations.
Ancient mountains have shattered,
age-old hills sunk down.
The age-old ways are his,
[7]in place of the trouble that I have seen.
Kushan's tents shake,
the dwellings of Midyan's country.

A vision that God must and will turn to reality

[8]Are you wrathful at the Rivers, Yahweh,
is your anger at the Rivers,
is your wrath at the Sea,
When you mount on your horses,
your chariots that bring deliverance?
[9]You totally bare your bow;
your clubs are sworn, by your word. *(Rise)*
With the Rivers you split the earth;
[10]when they've seen you, mountains writhe.
A torrent of water has passed by,
the Deep has given its voice.
The sun has raised its hands in the height,
[11]the moon has stood on high.
Your arrows go to give light,
the flash of your spear to give brightness.

[12]In condemnation you stride the earth,
in anger you trample nations.
[13]You have gone out for the deliverance of your people,
for the deliverance of your anointed.
You have shattered the head of the faithless household,
laying it bare, foundation to neck. *(Rise)*
[14]You have pierced his head with his clubs
when his strong men were storming out,
To scatter me in their exultation,
like consuming a humble man in hiding.
[15]You have made your way through the sea with your horses,
with a stirring of much water.

[16]I heard and my insides quaked,
at the sound my lips quivered.
Rot comes into my bones;
in my place I tremble,
While I settle for the day of pressure,
for the people who invade us to go up.

[17]Because the fig tree may not bud,
and there may be no produce on the vines,
The product of the olive may deceive,
and the fields may not produce food,
Someone may cut off the flock from the fold
and there may be no cattle in the stalls:
[18]Yet I shall exult in Yahweh,
rejoice in the God who delivers me.
[19]The Lord Yahweh is my resource,
he makes my feet like the deer's,
enables me to tread on the high places.
The leader's; with strings.

Zephaniah

The introduction to Zephaniah [Tsephanyah] makes him contemporary with the early years of Jeremiah's activity, when King Josiah engaged in a reform of Judah's religious life that for a while undid the apostasy of his grandfather Manasseh. The nature of the charges that Zephaniah issues indicates that any reform process is only partly under way. The threat of Yahweh's Day thus hangs over Jerusalem, but it also hangs over the world. And the possibility of restoration holds for Jerusalem, and for the rest of the world. His distinctive declaration to Jerusalem in this connection is that Yahweh is 'within you'.

A people that needs to change

1 Yahweh's word that came to Tsephanyah ben Kushi, son of Gedalyah son of Amaryah son of Hizqiyyah, in the days of
Yoshiyyahu ben Amon, king of Yehudah.

2 I shall totally gather up everything
from on the face of the ground (Yahweh's declaration).
3 I shall gather up human beings and animals;
I shall gather up the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea,
and the things that make the faithless collapse.
I shall cut off humanity
from on the face of the ground (Yahweh's declaration).

4 I shall stretch out my hand against Yehudah,
and against all the inhabitants of Yerushalaim.
I shall cut off from this place
the remainder of the Master,
the names of the priestlings with the priests,
5 The people who bow low on the roofs
to the army in the heavens,
Who bow low, who swear, to Yahweh
and swear by Malkam,
6 Who turn away from following Yahweh
and don't seek Yahweh nor enquire of him.

7 Silence before the Lord Yahweh,
because Yahweh's day is coming near.
Because Yahweh has prepared a sacrifice,
made sacred the people he called.
8 On the day of Yahweh's sacrifice
I shall attend to the officials,
To the king's sons,
and to all the people wearing foreign clothing.
9 I shall attend to all the people who leap on the threshold
on that day,
Who fill their lord's house
with violence and deceit.

10 On that day there will be (Yahweh's declaration)
the sound of an outcry from the Fish Gate
A howl from the Mishneh,
a big breaking from the hills.
11 Howl, you who live in the Maktesh,
because the entire trading people has perished,
all those who weigh out silver have been cut off.
12 At that time
I shall search Yerushalaim with lamps.
I shall attend to the people
who are relaxing on their lees,
Who are saying to themselves,
'Yahweh won't do something good and he won't do something bad.'
13 Their resources will be for plundering,
their houses will be for desolation.
They will build houses but not live [there],
plant vineyards but not drink their wine.

Yahweh's day

[14]Yahweh's great day is coming near,
coming near very quickly.
The sound of Yahweh's day is bitter;
the strong man is going to shriek there.
[15]That day will be a day of outburst,
a day of pressure and distress,
A day of desolation and devastation,
a day of darkness and gloom,
A day of cloud and shadow,
[16]a day of horn blast and shout,
Against the fortified towns,
and against the lofty corner towers.
[17]I shall bring pressure to the people, they will walk like the blind,
because they've done wrong to Yahweh.
Their blood will be poured out like earth,
their marrow like faeces.
[18]Neither their silver nor their gold
will be able to rescue them.
On the day of Yahweh's outburst,
in his passionate fire,
The entire country will be consumed,
because he will make an end, yes, how terrible,
of all the people who live in the country.

2 Pile together, pile it,
nation that isn't wanted,
[2]Before the decree's birth,
the day that passes like chaff,
Before Yahweh's angry blazing
doesn't come upon you,
Before Yahweh's angry day
doesn't come upon you.
[3]Seek Yahweh, all you humble people in the country,
who have implemented his ruling.
Seek faithfulness, seek lowliness;
perhaps you can hide on Yahweh's angry day.

Where to look

[4]Because Azzah [Gaza] will become abandoned,
Ashqelon a desolation.
Ashdod will be dispossessed at midday,
Eqron uprooted.
[5]Hey, you people who live in the region by the sea,
the nation of Keretites!
Yahweh's word is against you,
Kena'an [Canaan], country of the Pelishtites [Philistines]!
I shall obliterate you, without inhabitant.
[6]The region by the sea will become abodes,
shepherds' cisterns, pens for flocks.
[7]It will be a region
for the remainder of Yehudah's household.
On these they will pasture;
in Ashqelon's houses they'll lie down in the evening.
Because Yahweh their God will attend to them,
and restore their fortunes.
[8]I have heard Mo'ab's reviling,
the insults of Ammon,
Who have reviled my people,
talked big over their territory.
[9]Therefore, as I live
(a declaration of Yahweh of Armies, Yisra'el's God),
Mo'ab will become like Sedom [Sodom],
the Ammonites like Amorah [Gomorrah]:
The domain of chickweed and a salt-pit,
desolation permanently.

The remainder of my people will plunder them
and what is left of my nation will have them as a domain.
[10]This is what they'll have instead of their majesty,
because they reviled and talked big
at the people belonging to Yahweh of Armies.
[11]Yahweh will be fearsome against them,
because he's reducing all earth's gods.
All the nations' shores will bow down to him,
each from its place.
[12]You Kushites [Sudanese], too:
run through by my sword.
[13]And he'll stretch out his hand against the north,
and obliterate Ashshur.
He'll make Nineveh a desolation,
dry like the wilderness.
[14]Flocks will lie down in the middle of it,
every creature in the nation.
Both jackdaw and owl will lodge in its pillars,
the sound will sing in the windows.
Waste will be on the threshold,
because the cedar is stripped.
[15]This is the exultant town,
one that sits in confidence,
Saying to itself,
'I'm the one, there is no other.'
Aagh, it's become a desolation,
a lair for creatures.
Everyone who passes by it hisses
and shakes his hand.

Wait for me

3 Hey, rebellious and defiled one,
oppressive town!
[2]It hasn't listened to a voice,
it hasn't accepted correction.
It hasn't relied on Yahweh,
it hasn't come near to its God.
[3]Its officials within it
are roaring lions.
Its authorities are wolves at evening;
they don't gnaw until morning.
[4]Its prophets are arrogant, people who break faith;
its priests treat what's sacred as ordinary, they violate instruction.
[5]Yahweh is faithful within it;
he doesn't do evil.
Morning by morning he gives his ruling,
at daybreak he doesn't fail,
but the evildoer doesn't acknowledge shame.

[6]I am cutting off nations, their corner towers are becoming desolate;
I am wasting their streets, so that no one passes through.
Their towns are standing without people,
with no inhabitant.
[7]I said, 'You'll surely be in awe of me,
you'll accept correction.'
Then its abode wouldn't be cut off,
all that I attended to for it.
On the contrary, they've been up early
and made all their deeds devastating.

[8]Therefore wait for me (Yahweh's declaration),
for the day when I rise as a witness.
Because it's my ruling to gather nations,
for me to collect kingdoms,
To pour out on them my condemnation,
all my angry blazing.

Because in my passionate fire
the entire earth will be consumed.
[9]Because then I shall transform for the peoples
purified speech,
So that all of them call on Yahweh's name,
so that they serve him shoulder to shoulder.
[10]From beyond Kush's rivers my suppliants,
my scattered community, will bring my offering.

God among us

[11]On that day,
you [Yerushalaim] won't be ashamed of all your deeds,
with which you've rebelled against me.
Because then I shall remove from within you
the people exulting in your majesty.
You'll no more be very superior
on my sacred mountain.

[12]I shall leave remaining within you
a humble, poor people,
and they will find shelter in Yahweh's name.
[13]The remainder of Yisra'el won't do wrong,
and won't speak lies.
There won't be found in their mouth
a deceitful tongue.
Because they are the ones who will pasture and lie down,
with no one disturbing.

[14]Resound, Miss Tsiyyon [Zion],
shout, Yisra'el.
Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
Miss Yerushalaim.
[15]Yahweh is turning aside the rulings about you,
he's turning back your enemy.
Yahweh, Yisra'el's King, is within you;
you needn't be afraid of bad things any more.
[16]On that day it will be said to Yerushalaim:

Don't be afraid, Tsiyyon;
your hands shouldn't droop.
[17]Yahweh your God is within you,
a strong man who delivers.
He'll celebrate over you with rejoicing,
he'll hold his peace in his love,
he'll be glad over you with resounding.
[18]The people who grieve on account of the set occasions –
I'm gathering them from you;
upon you they've been a burden, a reviling.
[19]Here am I, I'm going to deal with all your oppressors
at that time.
I shall deliver the lame,
collect the ones driven out.
I shall make them an object of praise and renown
whose shame was in the entire earth.

[20]At that time I shall bring you –
yes, at the time I shall collect you.
Because I shall make you an object of renown and praise
among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes before your eyes (Yahweh has said).

Haggai

On conquering Babylon, Cyrus the king of Persia permitted and encouraged Judahites who had been taken into exile there to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. In the short term the work miscarried, and Haggai [Haggay], with whom Zechariah was contemporary, was involved in encouraging the people to retake up the work again and complete it, in 520–516. It was apparently his vital role in connection with this vital event that led to the preserving of his prophecies concerning it. The story, with an account of the role of Haggai and Zechariah, appears in Ezra 1—6.

Concerning remodelling priorities

1 In the second year of Dareyavesh [Darius] the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, Yahweh's word came
by means of Haggay the prophet to Zerubbabel ben She'alti'el governor of Yehudah and to Yehoshua ben Yehotsadaq the
big priest: [2]'Yahweh of Armies has said this: "This people has said, 'The time hasn't come, the time for building Yahweh's
house.'"'
[3]Yahweh's word came by means of Haggay the prophet: [4]'Is it the time for you yourselves to live in your panelled houses, and
this house lies waste? [5]So now Yahweh of Armies has said this: "Apply your mind to your ways. [6]You've sown much but brought
in little. You eat but without having enough. You drink but without getting drunk. You dress but without a person getting warm.
And the people who earn wages earn them for a purse with holes."
[7]Yahweh of Armies has said this: "Apply your mind to your ways. [8]Go up to the highland, bring wood and build the house, and
I shall accept it and find honour", Yahweh has said. [9]"You looked for much, but there – little. You brought it home, and I'd blow
on it. On account of what (a declaration of Yahweh of Armies)? On account of my house that lies waste, and you're running each
person to his own house. [10]That's why above you the heavens have withheld dew, and the earth has withheld its produce, [11]and
I've called for drought on the earth, on the mountains, on the grain, on the new wine, on the fresh oil, on all that the ground
produces, on human beings, on animals and on all the labour of your fists."'
[12]Zerubbabel ben She'alti'el, Yehoshua ben Yehotsadaq the big priest and all the remainder of the people listened to the voice
of Yahweh their God, and because of Haggay the prophet, as Yahweh their God sent him. So the people were in awe of Yahweh,
[13]and Haggay, Yahweh's envoy in Yahweh's work, said to the people, 'I am with you (Yahweh's declaration).'

A new splendour

[14]So Yahweh aroused the spirit of Zerubbabel ben She'alti'el governor of Yehudah, the spirit of Yehoshua ben Yehotsadaq the
big priest, and the spirit of all the remainder of the people, and they came and did work on the house of Yahweh of Armies, their
God, [15a]on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth.
[15b]In the second year of Dareyavesh the king,
2 in the seventh, on the twenty-first of the month, Yahweh's word came by means of Haggay the prophet: [2]'Say, please, to
Zerubbabel ben She'alti'el governor of Yehudah, and to Yehoshua ben Yehotsadaq the big priest, and to the remainder of the
people: [3]"Who among you remains who saw this house in its former splendour? How do you see it now? In comparison with it,
it's just nothing in your eyes, isn't it.
[4]But now, be strong, Zerubbabel (Yahweh's declaration), be strong, Yehoshua ben Yehotsadaq, big priest, be strong, all you
people of the country (Yahweh's declaration). Act, because I am with you (a declaration of Yahweh of Armies), [5]the thing that I
solemnized with you when you got out of Misrayim [Egypt]. My spirit stays among you. Don't be afraid." [6]Because Yahweh of
Armies has said this: "Once more, shortly, I'm going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. [7]I shall shake all
the nations, and the things held in high regard belonging to all the nations will come. I shall fill this house with splendour
(Yahweh of Armies has said). [8]Mine is the silver and mine is the gold (a declaration of Yahweh of Armies). [9]The splendour of
this later house will be greater than the earlier one (Yahweh of Armies has said). In this place I shall give you well-being (a
declaration of Yahweh of Armies)."'

A renewed promise

[10]On the twenty-fourth of the ninth in the second year of Dareyavesh, Yahweh's word came to Haggay the prophet. [11]Yahweh
of Armies said this: 'Ask the priests for instruction, please: [12]"If someone carries sacred meat in the fold of his garment and
touches bread or stew or wine or oil or any other food with the fold, does it become sacred?"' The priests answered, 'No'.
[13]Haggay said, 'If someone taboo because of a body touches any of these, does it become taboo?' The priests answered, 'It
becomes taboo.' [14]Haggay responded, 'So is this people, so is this nation before me (Yahweh's declaration) and so is the action of
their hands. What they present there is taboo.
[15]But now, apply your mind, please, from this day and onwards. Before the setting of stone on stone in Yahweh's palace,
[16]from when these things happened, someone came to a 20-measure heap, and there'd be 10; someone came to the wine vat to
skim off 50 measures, there'd be 20. [17]I struck you down with blight, with mildew and with hail, in all the action of your hands,
but you were not with me (Yahweh's declaration). [18]Apply your mind, please, from this day and onwards, from the twenty-fourth
day of the ninth, from the day when Yahweh's palace was founded. Apply your mind: [19]is there still seed in the barn? Whereas
until now the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate and the olive tree have not borne, from this day I shall bless.'

[20]Yahweh's word came a second time to Haggay on the twenty-fourth of the month. [21]'Say to Zerubbabel governor of Yehudah: "I'm going to shake the heavens and the earth, [22]overturn the throne of the kingdoms, destroy the strength of the nations' kingdoms, and overturn chariotry and its drivers. Horses and their riders will come down, each by his brother's sword.

[23]On that day (a declaration of Yahweh of Armies), I shall take you, Zerubbabel ben She'alti'el my servant (Yahweh's declaration), and make you like a signet, because I've chosen you (a declaration of Yahweh of Armies)."'

Zechariah

Zechariah [Zekaryah] was a contemporary of Haggai, associated with him in the story of the rebuilding of the temple in Ezra 1—6. While Haggai was the bad cop who confronted the people about their failure, Zechariah was the good cop who encouraged them with Yahweh's promises in chapters 1—8, a series of visions and exhortations. Zechariah 9—14 comprises a series of prophecies without concrete indications of a context.

A world at peace

1 In the eighth month in the second year of Dareyavesh [Darius], Yahweh's word came to Zekaryah ben Berekyah, son of Iddo, the prophet. [2]'Yahweh felt a great fury with your ancestors. [3]You're to say to them, "Yahweh of Armies has said this: 'Turn back to me (a declaration of Yahweh of Armies) and I shall turn back to you (Yahweh of Armies has said). [4]Don't become like your ancestors, to whom the earlier prophets called out, "Yahweh of Armies has said this: 'Turn back, please, from your bad ways and from your bad practices'", but they didn't listen or heed me (Yahweh's declaration). [5]Your ancestors: where are they? The prophets: do they live permanently? [6]Yet my words and my laws that I ordered my servants the prophets: they overtook your ancestors, didn't they, and they turned back and said, "As Yahweh of Armies schemed to do to us in accordance with our ways and with our practices, so he has done with us."'"'

[7]On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month (i.e. the month of Shebat) in the second year of Dareyavesh, Yahweh's word came to Zekaryah ben Berekyah, son of Iddo:

[8]I saw by night: there, a man riding on a red horse. He was standing among myrtle trees that were in the deep. Behind him were red, brown and white horses. [9]I said, 'What are these, my lord?' The envoy who was speaking with me said, 'I'll show you what those are.' [10]The man who was standing among the myrtle trees answered, 'These are ones that Yahweh sent to go round in the earth.'

[11]They answered Yahweh's envoy who was standing among the myrtle trees, 'We've been going round in the earth. There, the entire earth is living quiet.'

Too peaceful

[12]Yahweh's envoy answered, 'Yahweh of Armies, how long will you not have compassion on Yerushalaim and on Yehudah's towns, which you've been condemning these 70 years?' [13]Yahweh answered the envoy who was speaking with me with good words, comforting words.

[14]The envoy who was speaking with me said to me, 'Call out: "Yahweh of Armies has said this: 'I have felt a great passion for Yerushalaim and for Tsiyyon [Zion], [15]and I – I have been feeling a great fury with the nations that are peaceful, because I was a bit furious, but they helped it become bad fortune.' [16]Therefore Yahweh has said this: 'I'm turning back to Yerushalaim in compassion. My house will be built up in it (a declaration of Yahweh of Armies), and a cord will be stretched over Yerushalaim.'" [17]Call out further: "Yahweh of Armies has said this: 'My towns will again flow with good things. Yahweh will again comfort Tsiyyon and again choose Yerushalaim.'"'

[18]I lifted my eyes and looked: there, four horns. [19]I said to the envoy who was speaking with me, 'What are these?' He said to me, 'These are the horns that scattered Yehudah, Yisra'el and Yerushalaim.' [20]And Yahweh showed me four smiths. [21]I said, 'What are these coming to do?' He said, 'These are the horns that scattered Yehudah to such an extent that no one lifted his head. But these have come to disturb them by throwing down the horns of the nations that lifted a horn against the country of Yehudah, to scatter it.'

You can't measure Yerushalaim

2 I lifted my eyes and looked: there, a man, with a measuring line in his hand. [2]I said, 'Where are you going?' He said to me, 'To measure Yerushalaim, to see exactly what is its breadth and its length'. [3]But there, the envoy who was speaking with me was going out, and another envoy was going out to meet him. [4]He said to him, 'Run, speak to that young man: "Yerushalaim will be inhabited as unwalled villages because of the number of people and animals within it. [5]And I myself shall be for it (Yahweh's declaration) a wall of fire round, and I shall be splendour within it."'

[6]'Hey, hey, flee from the northern country (Yahweh's declaration), because I'm scattering you like the four winds of the heavens (Yahweh's declaration).' [7]Hey, Tsiyyon, escape, you who live in Miss Babel. [8]Because Yahweh of Armies has said this (after splendour sent me) regarding the nations who plundered you: the one touching you was touching the apple of his eye. [9]'Because here am I, I'm going to shake my hand against them. They will become spoil for their servants.' And you will acknowledge that Yahweh of Armies sent me. [10]'Resound, rejoice, Miss Tsiyyon, because here am I – I'm coming to dwell within you (Yahweh's declaration). [11]Many nations will attach themselves to Yahweh on that day and will become my people, and I shall dwell within you.'

And you will acknowledge that Yahweh sent me to you. [12]And Yahweh will have Yehudah as his domain on the sacred ground, and will again choose Yerushalaim.

[13]Hush, all flesh, before Yahweh, because he has roused himself from his sacred abode.

Guilt is not the end

3 He showed me Yehoshua the big priest standing before Yahweh's envoy, and the adversary standing at his right to act as his adversary. [2]Yahweh said to the adversary, 'Yahweh reprimand you, adversary, Yahweh who chose Yerushalaim reprimand you. Isn't this a burning stick snatched from the fire?' [3]Yehoshua was wearing filthy clothes as he was standing before the envoy.
[4]He avowed to the beings who were standing before him, 'Take the filthy clothes off him', and he said to him, 'Look: I've made your waywardness pass on from you, and you may wear fine robes. [5]And I've said, "They should put a pure turban on his head."' They put the pure turban on his head and dressed him in clothes as Yahweh's envoy was standing by.
[6]Yahweh's envoy testified against Yehoshua: [7]'Yahweh of Armies has said this: "If you walk in my ways and keep my charge, you yourself will both judge my house and also keep watch on my courtyards, and I shall give you movement among these who are standing in attendance. [8]Listen, please, Yehoshua, senior priest, you and your fellows who are sitting before you, because they are people who constitute a sign. Because here am I, I'm going to bring my servant, Branch. [9]Because here's the stone that I've put before Yehoshua. On one stone are seven eyes. Here am I, I'm going to make its engraving (a declaration of Yahweh of Armies), and I shall remove this country's waywardness in one day.
[10]On that day (a declaration of Yahweh of Armies) you will call, each person his neighbour, under his vine and under his fig tree."'

A candelabrum and a promise

4 The envoy who was speaking with me came back and woke me up like someone who wakes up from his sleep. [2]He said to me, 'What are you looking at?' I said, 'I looked, and there – a candelabrum of gold, all of it, with its bowl on top of it, and its seven lamps on it, seven spouts each for the lamps that were on top of it, [3]and two olive trees by it, one to the right of the bowl and one to its left.' [4]I avowed to the envoy who was speaking with me, 'What are these, my lord?' [5]The envoy who was speaking with me answered me, 'Don't you know what these are?' I said, 'No, my lord'. [6]He answered me . . .

'This is Yahweh's word to Zerubbabel: "Not by resources, not by energy, but by my spirit", Yahweh of Armies has said. [7]Who are you, big mountain, before Zerubbabel? Into flatland. He will take out the top stone, with shouts of "Grace, grace to it!"'

[8]Yahweh's word came to me: [9]'Zerubbabel's hands have founded this house and his hands will finish it off.' And you will acknowledge that Yahweh of Armies sent me to you. [10]Because who despises the day of little things? They will rejoice when they see the metal stone in Zerubbabel's hand.
. . . 'These seven are Yahweh's eyes ranging through the entire earth.' [11]I avowed to him, 'What are these two olive trees on the right of the candelabrum and on its left?' [12]And I avowed to him a second time, 'What are the two ears [of grain] of the olive trees that pour out gold from themselves by means of the two gold pipes?' [13]He said to me, 'Don't you know what these are?' I said, 'No, my lord'. [14]He said, 'These are the two sons of fresh oil who stand by the Lord of the entire earth.'

A flying scroll and a flying container

5 I again lifted my eyes and looked – there, a flying scroll. [2]He said to me, 'What are you looking at?' I said, 'I'm looking at a flying scroll. Its length is ten metres and its width five metres.' [3]He said to me, 'This is the vow that's going out over the face of the entire country. Because everyone who steals (from this side, according to it) has gone free of guilt, and everyone who swears (from the other side, according to it) has gone free of guilt. [4]I'm causing it to go out (a declaration of Yahweh of Armies) and it will come into the thief's house and the house of the person who swears by my name for falsehood. It will lodge inside his house and consume it, both its timbers and its stones.'
[5]The envoy who spoke with me went out and said to me, 'Lift up your eyes, please, and look. What's this going out?' [6]I said, 'What is it?' He said, 'This is the barrel that's going out.' And he said, 'This is their appearance in the entire country.' [7]And there, a lead disc lifted, and it was a woman sitting inside the barrel. [8]He said, 'This is Faithlessness.' He thrust her inside the container and thrust the lead disc to its mouth.
[9]I lifted my eyes and looked, and there – two women going out with wind in their wings (they had wings like a stork's wings). They carried the barrel between the earth and the heavens. [10]I said to the envoy who was speaking with me, 'Where are they making the container go?' [11]He said to me, 'To build it a house in the country of Shin'ar, which will be established, and it will be settled down there on its established place.'

Settling Yahweh's spirit and making crowns

6 I lifted my eyes again and looked, and there – four chariots going out from between two mountains; the mountains were mountains of copper. [2]In the first chariot the horses were red, in the second chariot the horses were black, [3]in the third chariot the horses were white, in the fourth chariot the horses were dappled, strong.
[4]I avowed to the envoy who was speaking with me, 'What are these, my lord?' [5]The envoy answered me, 'These are the four winds of the heavens, going out after standing by the Lord of the entire earth.' [6]The one where the black horses are – they were going out to the northern country. The white left after them. The dappled went out to the southern country. [7]So the strong went out. When they sought to go, so as to go about through the earth, he said, 'Go, go about through the earth.' So they went about through the earth. [8]He cried out to me and spoke to me: 'Look, the ones going out to the northern country have settled my spirit in the northern country.'

[9]Yahweh's word came to me: [10]'Receive from the exile community, from Helday, from Tobiyyah and from Yeda'yah, and you yourself are to come on that day, to come to the house of Yo'shiyyah ben Tsephanyah, when they've come from Babel: [11]you're to receive gold and silver and make crowns and put them on the head of Yehoshua ben Yehotsadaq the big priest, [12]and say to him, "Yahweh of Armies has said this: 'There is the man whose name is Branch. From his place he will branch out and build Yahweh's palace. [13]He's the one who'll build Yahweh's palace. He's the one who'll put on majesty, and sit and rule on his throne. A priest will be by his throne, and there'll be peaceful counsel between the two of them. [14]For Helem, for Tobiyyah, for Yeda'yah and for Hen ben Tsephanyah, the crowns will be a memorial in Yahweh's palace. [15]Distant people will come and build in Yahweh's palace, and you will acknowledge that Yahweh of Armies sent me to you. It will happen if you really do listen to the voice of Yahweh your God.'"'

Who are you fasting for?

7 In the fourth year of Dareyavesh the king, Yahweh's word came to Zekaryah, on the fourth of the ninth month, in Kislev. [2]Bet-el Sar-ezer and Regem Melek and his men sent to seek Yahweh's goodwill [3]by saying to the priests who were at the house of Yahweh of Armies and to the prophets, 'Should I cry in the fifth month, consecrating myself, as I have done these how many years?'

[4]A word from Yahweh of Armies came to me: [5]'Say to all the people of the country and to the priests, "When you fasted and lamented in the fifth and in the seventh even these 70 years, did you really fast for me? [6]When you eat and when you drink, it's you who eat and you who drink, isn't it. [7]They're the words that Yahweh called out by means of the earlier prophets, aren't they, when Yerushalaim was peopled and peaceful, and its towns round it, and the Negeb and the Lowland were peopled?"'

[8]Yahweh's word came to Zekaryah: [9]'Yahweh of Armies has said this: "Exercise truthful authority, exercise commitment and compassion each person with his brother. [10]Don't oppress widow and orphan, alien and humble. Don't think up bad dealings each person against his brother in his mind." [11]But they refused to heed and presented a defiant shoulder. They stopped their ears from listening. [12]They made their mind concrete so as not to listen to the instruction and the words that Yahweh of Armies sent by his spirit by means of the earlier prophets, and great wrath came from Yahweh of Armies. [13]As he called but they didn't listen, "so they'll call and I shall not listen", Yahweh of Armies said. [14]"And I blasted them away to all the nations that they hadn't known. The country was desolate behind them from anyone passing through or coming back. They made a country that was held in high regard into a desolation."'

I will make you a blessing

8 A word from Yahweh of Armies came. [2]'Yahweh of Armies has said this: "I feel a great passion for Tsiyyon. I feel a fierce passion for it." [3]Yahweh has said this: "I'm coming back to Tsiyyon and I shall dwell within Yerushalaim. Yerushalaim will be called 'Truthful Town', and the mountain of Yahweh of Armies 'Sacred Mountain'."

[4]Yahweh of Armies has said this: "Old men and old women will again sit in Yerushalaim's squares, each with his cane in his hand because of the great number of his days. [5]The town's squares will be full of boys and girls having fun in its squares."

[6]Yahweh of Armies has said this: "Because it will be fantastic in the eyes of the remainder of this people in those days, will it also be fantastic in my eyes (a declaration of Yahweh of Armies)?"

[7]Yahweh of Armies has said this: "Here am I, I'm going to deliver my people from the eastern country and from the western country, [8]and bring them, and they will dwell within Yerushalaim. They will be a people for me and I shall be God for them, in truth and faithfulness."

[9]Yahweh of Armies has said this: "Your hands are to be strong, you who are listening to these words in these days from the mouth of the prophets who were on the day when the house of Yahweh of Armies was founded, for building the palace. [10]Because before those days there were no wages for a human being and there were no wages for an animal. For anyone going out or coming in, there was no peace from the adversary. I set all human beings one against his neighbour. [11]But now I'm not acting towards the remainder of this people as in earlier days (a declaration of Yahweh of Armies), [12]because the sowing will be in peace, the vine will give its fruit, the earth will give its produce, the heavens will give their dew, and I shall let the remainder of this people have all these things as a domain. [13]As you became a slighting among the nations, Yehudah's household and Yisra'el's household, so I shall deliver you and you will become a blessing. Don't be afraid. Your hands are to be strong."

Make me a blessing

[14]Because Yahweh of Armies has said this: "As I schemed to do something bad to you when your ancestors infuriated me (Yahweh of Armies said) and didn't relent, [15]so I have again schemed in these days to do good to Yerushalaim and to Yehudah's household. Don't be afraid. [16]These are the things that you're to do. Speak the truth each to his neighbour. Exercise authority with truthful authority that makes for peace in your gateways. [17]Don't think up something bad in your mind each person against his neighbour. Don't love a false oath. Because all these are things to which I'm hostile (Yahweh's declaration)."'

[18]The word of Yahweh of Armies came to me. [19]'Yahweh of Armies has said this: "The fast of the fourth, the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth will become for Yehudah's household celebration and rejoicing, good set occasions. So love truthfulness and peace."

[20]Yahweh of Armies has said this: "Peoples and inhabitants of many towns will yet come, [21]and the inhabitants of one will go to one another saying, 'Let's go, let's go to seek Yahweh's goodwill and seek Yahweh of Armies. I myself intend to go, yes.' [22]Many peoples will come, numerous nations, to seek Yahweh of Armies in Yerushalaim and to seek Yahweh's goodwill."

[23]Yahweh of Armies has said this: “In those days, when ten people from all the nations’ tongues will take hold, they’ll take hold of the hem of a Yehudahite individual’s coat, saying ‘We want to go with you, because we’ve heard that God is with you.’”’

The king on a donkey

9 A pronouncement.
Yahweh’s word against the country of Hadrak,
and Dammeseq [Damascus] its place of settling.
Because people’s eye will be towards Yahweh,
all Yisra’el’s clans.
[2]Hamat, too, which borders on it;
Tsor [Tyre], and Tsidon because it’s very smart.
[3]Tsor has built itself a stronghold,
it has heaped up silver like earth,
Gold like the mud in the streets;
[4]there, the Lord Yahweh will dispossess it.
He’ll strike down its resources at sea;
it will be consumed by fire, itself.
[5]Ashqelon will see and be afraid,
Azzah [Gaza] will writhe much,
and Eqron, because its reliance will have withered.
King will perish from Azzah,
Ashqelon won’t be inhabited.
[6]A mongrel will live in Ashdod;
I shall cut off the majesty of the Pelishtites [Philistines].
[7]But I shall remove the blood it has shed from its mouth,
and its abominations from between its teeth.
What remains of it, too, will belong to our God,
and become like a clan in Yehudah,
while Eqron will be like the Yebusites.
[8]I shall camp for my house as a garrison
against anyone passing through or coming back.
No oppressor will pass through against them again,
because now I shall have looked with my eyes.

[9]Celebrate greatly, Miss Tsiyyon;
shout, Miss Yerushalaim.
There, your king will come to you;
he’ll be faithful and one who finds deliverance,
Humble and riding on a donkey,
on an ass, the child of a she-ass.
[10]I shall cut off chariotry from Ephrayim
and horse from Yerushalaim.
The bow of battle will be cut off;
he will speak of peace to the nations.
His rule will be from sea to sea,
from the River to the ends of the earth.

Crown jewels glittering on his land

[11]Yes, you [Yerushalaim], by the blood of your pact:
I’m sending off your captives.
From the pit where there’s no water,
[12]get back to the fortress, hopeful prisoners.
Yes, today I’m going to announce:
I shall give back double to you.
[13]Because I’m directing Yehudah for myself as a bow,
I’m loading Ephrayim.
I shall arouse your sons, Tsiyyon,
against your sons, Yavan [Greece],
and make you like a strong man’s sword.

[14]Yahweh – he’ll appear over them,
his arrow will go out like lightning.
The Lord God will sound on the horn
and go in southern hurricanes.
[15]Yahweh of Armies will shield over them;

sling stones will consume and tread down.
They will drink, make a noise as with wine,
be full like a bowl, like the altar's corners.
[16]Yahweh our God will deliver them
on that day, like a flock, his people.
Because they are crown jewels glittering on his land,
[17]because how good they are and how beautiful they are.
Grain will make the young men flourish,
new wine the young women.
10 Ask for rain from Yahweh
at the time of the spring rain;
Yahweh is the one who sends lightning flashes,
gives them a downpour of rain,
growth in the fields for each one.

[2]Because the effigies have spoken trouble,
the diviners have beheld falsehood.
They speak lying dreams,
they comfort with hollowness.
Therefore people have strayed like a flock,
they suffer because there's no shepherd.
[3]Against the shepherds my anger has blazed,
I shall attend to the big guys.

Because Yahweh of Armies is attending to his flock,
Yehudah's household.
He will make them
like his majestic horse in battle.
[4]From it cornerstone, from it tent peg,
from it battle bow,
From it will go out
every overseer, together.
[5]They'll be like strong men,
trampling the mud of the streets, in battle.
They'll do battle, because Yahweh will be with them;
they'll shame the people riding horses.

Yehudah's household become strong men

[6]'So I shall make Yehudah's household strong men,
and I shall deliver Yoseph's household.
I shall restore them, because I've had compassion on them;
they'll be as if I had not rejected them.
Because I am Yahweh,
their God, and I shall answer them.
[7]Ephrayim will be a veritable strong man;
their heart will rejoice as with wine.
Their children will see and rejoice;
their heart will be joyful in Yahweh.
[8]I shall whistle to them and gather them,
because I have redeemed them.
They will become many, as they were many,
[9]though I sowed them among the nations.
In far-off places they will be mindful of me;
they will live with their children, and come back.
[10]I shall bring them back from the country of Misrayim [Egypt],
collect them from Ashshur.
Though I bring them to the country of Gil'ad and Lebanon,
room won't be found for them.
[11]He will pass through the confining sea,
he will strike down the sea of waves.
All the Ye'or's [Nile's] deeps will dry up,
and the majesty of Ashshur will be put down.
Misrayim's club will pass away,
[12]and I shall make them strong men through Yahweh,
and in his name they'll go about (Yahweh's declaration).'
11 Open your doors, Lebanon,

so fire can consume your cedars.
[2]Howl, junipers, because the cedar is falling,
when the august are being destroyed.
Howl, Bashan oaks,
because the fortified forest is going down.
[3]The sound of the shepherds' howling,
because their eminence is destroyed.
The sound of the lions' roar,
because Yarden's [Jordan's] majesty is destroyed.

Lying, neglectful, loathsome and stupid shepherds

[4]Yahweh my God said this: 'Tend the flock to be killed, [5]whose acquirers will kill them and won't be liable, whose sellers will say, "Yahweh be blessed! I shall be rich", and whose shepherds won't have pity on them. [6]Because I shall no more have pity on the country's inhabitants (Yahweh's declaration). There, I'm going to make people vulnerable, each to his neighbour's hand and to his king's hand. They will crush the country, and I shall not rescue it from their hand.'
[7]So I pastured the sheep to be killed, therefore the lowliest of the flock. I got myself two staffs, I called one 'Beauty', and the other I called 'Binders', and I pastured the sheep. [8]I disposed of the three shepherds in one month. With my whole being I lost patience with them, and with their whole being they loathed me, too. [9]So I said, 'I shall not pasture you. The one who dies may die and the one who gets disposed of may get disposed of, and the ones who remain, each may eat the flesh of her neighbour.'
[10]I got my staff 'Beauty' and broke it, contravening my pact that I had solemnized with all the peoples. [11]So it was contravened on that day, and the lowliest of the sheep, who were keeping watch towards me, thus acknowledged that it was Yahweh's word.
[12]I said to them, 'If it's good in your eyes, give me my pay; if not, withhold it.' They weighed out my pay, 30 silver pieces.
[13]Yahweh said to me, 'Throw it to the potter' (the worthy magnificence that I was worth to them). So I took the 30 silver pieces and threw them to the potter in Yahweh's house. [14]And I broke my second staff, 'Binders', to contravene the brotherhood between Yehudah and Yisra'el.
[15]Yahweh said to me again, 'Get yourself the implements of a stupid shepherd. [16]Because here I am, I'm going to raise up a shepherd in the country who won't attend to the ones who are disposed of or seek the young one or heal the injured or sustain the one who stands firm, but will eat the flesh of the fat one and tear off their hoofs.

[17]Hey, non-entity shepherds,
abandoning the flock:
A sword on your arm
and on your right eye!
May his arm quite wither,
his right eye go quite blind!'

A chalice that causes reeling

12 A pronouncement. Yahweh's word concerning Yisra'el.

A declaration of Yahweh,
the one who stretched out the heavens,
Who founded the earth,
who shaped the spirit of humanity within it.
[2]'There, I'm going to make Yerushalaim a chalice that causes reeling to all the peoples around. It will also be against Yehudah during the siege against Yerushalaim.
[3]On that day, I shall make Yerushalaim a stone hard to lift for all the peoples. All who lift it will seriously injure themselves when all the nations of the earth gather against it.
[4]On that day (Yahweh's declaration), I shall strike down every horse with panic and its rider with madness. Over Yehudah's household I shall open my eyes, but every horse belonging to the peoples I shall strike with blindness. [5]Yehudah's clans will say to themselves, "Yerushalaim's inhabitants are my strength, through Yahweh of Armies, their God."
[6]On that day, I shall make Yehudah's clans like a firepot among trees, like a fiery torch among sheaves. They will consume all the peoples around, to the right and the left. And Yerushalaim will again live in its place, in Yerushalaim." [7]Yahweh will deliver Yehudah's tents first, so that the glory of David's household and the glory of Yerushalaim's population will not be greater than Yehudah.'
[8]On that day Yahweh will shield over Yerushalaim's population. Someone among them who is liable to collapse will be like David on that day, and David's household will be like gods, like Yahweh's envoy going before them.
[9]'On that day I shall seek to annihilate all the nations that come against Yerushalaim, [10]but I shall pour out on David's household and on Yerushalaim's population a spirit of grace and of prayers for grace. They will look to me concerning someone they've thrust through, and they will lament over him with the lamentation for an only son, and express distress for him like the distress over a firstborn.

The sword against the shepherd

[11]On that day the lamentation in Yerushalaim will be great, like the lamentation for Hadad-rimmon in Megiddo Valley. [12]The

country will lament, kin-group by kin-group by itself, the kin-group of David's household by itself and their women by themselves, the kin-group of Natan's household by itself and their women by themselves, [13]the kin-group of Levi's household by itself and their women by themselves, the kin-group of the Shim'ites by itself and their women by themselves, [14]all the remaining kin-groups kin-group by kin-group by itself and their women by themselves.

13 On that day there will be a fountain opened for David's household and Yerushalaim's inhabitants, for purification and for cleansing.

[2]And on that day (a declaration of Yahweh of Armies) I shall cut off the names of the images from the country. They won't be mentioned again. Also the prophets and the defiled spirit I shall cause to pass away from the country. [3]When someone prophesies again, his father and his mother, who brought him to birth, will say, "You will not live, because you've spoken falsehood in Yahweh's name." His father and his mother, who brought him to birth, will thrust him through when he prophesies.

[4]On that day the prophets will be ashamed, each one, of his vision when he prophesies. They won't wear a garment of hair so as to deceive. [5]He will say, "I'm not a prophet, I'm a man who works the ground, because a man acquired me from my youth." [6]If someone says to him, "What are these wounds between your hands?" he will say, "I was wounded in my friends' house."'

[7]'Sword, rouse yourself against my shepherd,
against a man who is my envoy (a declaration of Yahweh of Armies).
Strike down my shepherd, the flock is to scatter;
I shall turn back my hand against the little ones.
[8]In all the country (Yahweh's declaration)
two parts in it will be cut off, will perish.
A third will be left in it.
[9]but I shall bring the third into the fire.
I shall smelt them as one smelts silver,
test them as one tests gold.
It will call in my name
and I myself shall answer it,
I shall have said, "It is my people",
and it will say, "Yahweh is my God."'

Yahweh stands on the Mount of Olives

14 There, a day of Yahweh is coming, and your spoil [Yerushalaim] will be shared out within you. [2]I shall gather all the nations to Yerushalaim for battle. The town will be captured, the houses will be plundered, the women will be ravished and half the town will go out into exile. But the rest of the people will not be cut off from the town, [3]and Yahweh will go out and do battle against those nations, as he does battle on a day of engagement.

[4]On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives which faces Yerushalaim to the east. The Mount of Olives will split in half from east to west, a very big ravine; half of the mountain will move away northward, half of it southward. [5]You people will flee by the ravine between my mountains, because the ravine between the mountains will reach to Atsal. You will flee as you fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziyah king of Yehudah. But Yahweh my God will come – all the sacred ones will be with you.

[6]On that day there won't be light from the glorious ones; they will dwindle. [7]There'll be one day (it is known to Yahweh), not day and not night; at evening time it will be light.

[8]On that day living water will go out from Yerushalaim, half of it to the eastern sea, half of it to the western sea. It will happen in summer and in winter. [9]Yahweh will be king over all the earth.

No more trader in Yahweh's house

On that day Yahweh will be one and his name one. [10]The entire country will turn round [and be] like the steppe, from Geba to Rimmon south of Yerushalaim, but it [Yerushalaim] will rise up and stay in its place, from the Binyamin Gate to the place of the First Gate, to the Corner Gate, and from Hananel's Tower to the king's winepresses. [11]People will live in it, and 'devoting' will not happen any more. Yerushalaim will live in confidence.

[12]But this will be the epidemic that Yahweh will impose on all the peoples that made war against Yerushalaim: making someone's flesh waste away while he stands on his feet, his eyes waste away in their sockets, and his tongue waste away in their mouth.

[13]On that day a great panic from Yahweh will come upon them. They'll take hold, each person, of his neighbour's hand, and his hand will rise against his neighbour's hand. [14]Yehudah, too, will do battle at Yerushalaim. The resources of all the nations around will be gathered – gold and silver and clothing, a great quantity.

[15]Like this epidemic, so will be the epidemic affecting horse, mule, camel, donkey and every animal that will be in those camps. [16]But everyone who is left from all the nations that come against Yerushalaim will go up year by year to bow low to the King, Yahweh of Armies, and to observe the Sukkot Festival. [17]Whichever does not go up from the kin-groups of the earth to Yerushalaim to bow low to the King, Yahweh of Armies, there'll be no rain on them. [18]If Misrayim's kin-group doesn't go up and doesn't come, there'll be none on them; there'll be the epidemic that Yahweh imposes on the nations that don't go up to observe the Sukkot Festival. [19]This will be [the penalty for] the wrongdoing of Misrayim and the wrongdoing of all the nations that don't go up to observe the Sukkot Festival.

[20]On that day, upon a horse's bells will be 'Sacred to Yahweh'. The pots in Yahweh's house will be like the basins before the

altar. [21]Every pot in Yerushalaim and Yehudah will be sacred to Yahweh of Armies. All the people who offer sacrifice will come and take some of them and cook in them. There'll be no more trader in the house of Yahweh of Armies on that day.

Malachi

The location of Malachi [Mal'aki] in the Old Testament invites us to infer that it belongs, with Haggai and Zechariah, in the period after exiled Judahites have been free to return to Jerusalem. The temple is functioning, so it presupposes the completion of their work, while the variety of problems it seeks to handle then fit with the pressures of the subsequent time of Ezra and Nehemiah. It proceeds mostly by means of a to-and-fro argument in which Yahweh or the prophet confronts the community over a series of issues. Its ending with the prospect of Yahweh sending a new Elijah or the old Elijah recommissioned, to herald Yahweh's Day, makes it an appropriate close to the Prophets, and its ending the Old Testament as a whole (in the Christian ordering of the Old Testament) makes for a deft transition to the New Testament.

Easy-going priests

1 A pronouncement. Yahweh's word to Yisra'el by means of Mal'aki.

[2]'I've been loyal to you', Yahweh said. But you say, 'How have you been loyal to us?' 'Esaw was Ya'aqob's [Jacob's] brother, wasn't he (Yahweh's declaration). But I was loyal to Ya'aqob [3]and I was hostile to Esaw. I'm making his mountains a desolation, his domain to belong to wilderness jackals.' [4]Because Edom says, 'We've been crushed, but we'll build the wastes again', Yahweh of Armies has said this: 'Those people may build, but I myself will tear down.' They will be called 'Faithless Territory' and 'the people Yahweh has condemned permanently'. [5]Your own eyes will see it. You yourselves will say, 'Yahweh is great, beyond Yisra'el's territory.'

[6]'"A son honours his father, a servant his lord. If I'm a father, where's the honour for me? If I'm a Lord, where's the awe for me?" Yahweh of Armies said to you, priests who disdain my name. You say, "How have we disdained your name?" [7]You're presenting defiled food on my altar. You say, "How have we defiled you?" By your saying, "Yahweh's table can be disdained." [8]When you bring up something blind for sacrifice, there's nothing bad. When you bring up something lame or sick, there's nothing bad. Present it to your governor, please. Will he accept you? Will he have regard to you? (Yahweh of Armies has said).' [9]Now, please seek Yahweh's goodwill so that he shows favour to us. This has come from your hand. Will he have regard to any of you? (Yahweh of Armies has said).

[10]'Who indeed is there among you who'll shut the doors, and not light a fire on my altar to no end! I find no delight in you (Yahweh of Armies has said) and I shall not accept an offering from your hand.

A priest's lips keep watch on knowledge

[11]Because from the sun's rising to its setting my name is great among the nations and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering, because my name is great among the nations (Yahweh of Armies has said). [12]But you're treating it as ordinary when you say, "The Lord's table is defiled, and its fruit, its food, can be disdained", [13]or say, "This is a weariness", and blow it off (Yahweh of Armies has said), or bring something stolen or lame or sick, and bring it as the offering. Should I accept it from your hand (Yahweh has said)? [14]Cursed is the cheat when there's a male in his flock but he pledges and sacrifices to the Lord something devastated. Because I am a great king (Yahweh of Armies has said) and my name is held in awe among the nations.

2 So now to you priests, this order. [2]If you don't listen and don't receive it into your mind to give honour to my name (Yahweh of Armies has said), I shall send off a curse among you. I shall curse your blessings. Indeed, I have cursed it, because you don't receive it into your mind. [3]Here am I, I'm going to reprimand your seed. I'm going to spread faeces on your faces, the faeces from your festival sacrifice. Someone will carry you out to it. [4]And you will acknowledge that I have sent off this order to you so that my pact with Levi might exist (Yahweh of Armies has said). [5]My pact with him was life and well-being, and I gave them to him, with awe. He was in awe of me. He was in dread of my name.

[6]True instruction was in his mouth;
evil wasn't found on his lips.
In well-being and in uprightness he walked with me,
and he turned many back from waywardness.
[7]Because a priest's lips keep watch on knowledge;
people seek instruction from his mouth,
because he's an envoy of Yahweh of Armies.
[8]But you've turned aside from the way. You've made many people collapse through your instruction. You've devastated Levi's pact (Yahweh of Armies has said). [9]I myself in turn am making you shameful and low to the entire people, on account of the fact that you don't keep watch on my ways but you show regard in the instruction.'

A broader neglected covenant

[10]We all of us have one father, don't we. One God created us, didn't he. Why do we break faith, each with his brother, in treating our ancestors' pact as ordinary? [11]Yehudah has broken faith. An offence has been committed in Yisra'el and in Yerushalaim, because Yehudah has treated as ordinary what is sacred to Yahweh, to which he is loyal, and has married the

daughter of a strange god. [12]May Yahweh cut off the person who does this (anyone who arises and anyone who responds) from Ya'aqob's tents, even one who presents an offering to Yahweh of Armies.

[13]And you do this second thing, covering Yahweh's altar with tears, crying and wailing because he's no longer regarding the offering or receiving it with acceptance from your hand, [14]and you've said, 'On account of what?' On account of the fact that Yahweh is a witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you've broken faith, when she was your partner and your covenanted woman. [15]Didn't One make us, and isn't the remainder of the spirit his? And what is the One seeking? Godly offspring. So you will guard yourself in your spirit. Someone is not to break faith with the wife of your youth. [16]When he's hostile so as to divorce (Yahweh the God of Yisra'el has said), he makes violence a cover over his clothing (Yahweh of Armies has said). So you're to keep watch for yourself in your spirit and not break faith.

[17]You've wearied Yahweh with your words. You've said, 'How have we wearied him?' When you say, 'Everyone who does something bad is good in Yahweh's eyes. In them he takes delight.' Or 'Where is the God who exercises authority?'

3 'Here am I, I'm going to send my envoy, and he'll clear the way before me.' Suddenly there will come to his palace the Lord for whom you are looking.

A full and frank exchange of views

[1b]So the envoy of the pact whom you want – there, he's coming (Yahweh of Armies has said). [2]But who's going to endure the day of his coming? Who's going to stand when he appears? Because he'll be like a smelter's fire or like launderer's soap. [3]He'll sit smelting and purifying silver. He'll purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver, and they'll be Yahweh's, people who take up an offering in faithfulness. [4]The offering of Yehudah and Yerushalaim will please Yahweh as in the days gone by, in former years.

[5]'So I shall come near to you to exercise authority and be an eager witness against the diviners, the adulterers, the people who swear falsely, the people who defraud the employee of his wages, the widow and orphan, and those who turn aside the resident and who are not in awe of me (Yahweh of Armies has said). [6]Because I am Yahweh, I haven't changed, and you're Ya'aqob's descendants, you haven't come to an end. [7]Given that from your ancestors' days you've turned aside from my laws and not kept them: come back to me and I'll come back to you (Yahweh of Armies has said).

You'll say, "How shall we come back?" [8]Does a person cheat God? Because you're cheating me. You'll say, "How have we cheated you?" In tithe and contribution. [9]You're subjected to a curse, and you're cheating me – the nation, all of it. [10]Bring the entire tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and test me by this, please (Yahweh of Armies has said), if I don't open the heavens' floodgates and empty out blessing on you until there's no need. [11]I'll reprimand the devourer for you, and it won't destroy the fruit of the ground for you, and the vine in the open country won't miscarry for you (Yahweh of Armies has said). [12]All the nations will count you fortunate, because you'll be a delightful land (Yahweh of Armies has said).

A faithful sun with healing in its rays

[13]You've made your words strong against me (Yahweh has said). You'll say, "What have we spoken to ourselves against you?" [14]You've said, "Serving God is empty in results. What was the gain when we kept his charge and walked in gloom before Yahweh of Armies? [15]So now we count the arrogant fortunate. The people who act in faithlessness have both been built up and have also tested God and escaped."'

[16]Then the people who were in awe of Yahweh talked, each with his neighbour, and Yahweh heeded and listened, and a remembrance scroll was written before him regarding the people who were in awe of Yahweh and who esteemed his name. [17]'For me they will be a special possession (Yahweh of Armies has said) for the day that I'm preparing. I shall have pity on them as someone has pity on his son who serves him. [18]You'll again see the difference between the faithful and the faithless, between the one who serves God over against the one who has not served him.

4 Because there – the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all the people who act in faithlessness will be stubble, and the day that's coming will burn them up (Yahweh of Armies has said) so that it doesn't leave them root or branch. [2]But there will rise for you who are in awe of my name a faithful sun with healing in its rays. You'll go out and jump like well-fed bullocks. [3]You'll trample the faithless, because they'll be ashes under the soles of your feet, on that day that I'm making (Yahweh of Armies has said).

[4]Be mindful of Mosheh [Moses] my servant's instruction, which I ordered him for all Yisra'el at Horeb, laws and rulings. [5]There, I'm sending you Eliyyah [Elijah] the prophet before the coming of the great and awe-inspiring day of Yahweh. [6]He will turn back the mind of parents to children and the mind of children to parents, so that I don't come and strike down the country with "devoting".'

An Old Testament Glossary

Abaddon
One of the Old Testament's words for the place where dead people are, like She'ol. The ordinary word is similar to a Hebrew word meaning 'perish', which may well not be a coincidence. Indeed, the verb can suggest 'destroy', and people might make a link with the fact that death does mean that our bodies decay. But the texts do not make anything of this. The word is simply a name.

affirmation
In the context of expressions such as 'affirmation chest' or 'affirmation dwelling', affirmation refers to the things Yahweh has affirmed as his expectations of Yisra'el (Israel) – namely, the Ten Commandments.

affirmation chest
The 'affirmation chest' is a box a bit more than a metre long, a bit more than half a metre wide and high. The King James Bible (KJV) refers to it as an 'ark', but the word means a box, though it is only occasionally used to refer to chests used for other purposes. It is the *affirmation* chest because it contains the stone tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments, key expectations God affirmed in connection with establishing the Sinai covenant. It is regularly kept in the sanctuary, but there is a sense in which it symbolizes God's presence (given that Yisra'el (Israel) has no images to do so), and in that capacity the Israelites sometimes carry it with them. It is sometimes referred to as the pact chest, with the same meaning.

altar
A structure for offering a sacrifice (the Hebrew word for altar comes from the word for sacrifice), made of earth or stone. An altar might be relatively small, like a table, and the person making the offering would stand in front of it. Or it might be higher and larger, like a platform, and the person making the offering would climb on to it.

Amorites
A term for one of the original ethnic groups in Kena'an (Canaan), though also used to refer to the people of that country as a whole. Genesis 15.16 and 21 illustrates the two uses of the word in close proximity. Indeed, outside the Old Testament 'Amorites' refers to a people living over a much wider area of Mesopotamia. 'Amorites' is thus a little like the word 'America', which commonly refers to the USA but can denote a much broader area of the continent of which the USA is part.

ancestral heads
The heads of the (very) extended families within the 12 clans of Yisra'el (Israel), a family unit rather larger than the household.

Aram, Aramaic, Arameans, Aramites
In the period to which Genesis refers, the Arameans (or Aramites) were a people living in Syria and northern Mesopotamia. Aram later became the name for a more defined political entity in Syria, Ephrayim's (Ephraim's) big north-eastern neighbour; English translations then often refer to it as Syria. The Aramaic language, a sister language of Hebrew somewhat in the way Spanish is a sister language of Portuguese or Italian, became the international language of the Middle East. Parts of Ezra, Jeremiah and Daniel are in Aramaic, and it was the everyday language of Palestine in Jesus' day.

Asherah, Ashtar
The word is used both to signify the name of a deity and the name of an aid to worship (the two meanings come close together in 1 Kings 14—15). In Kena'anite (Canaanite) religion and elsewhere, strictly Asherah was a particular goddess, but the name came to be used in the plural as a general term for a goddess. As a word for an aid to worship, it denotes something that can be 'erected', 'planted' and 'burned', which suggests a tree-like column or pillar that represented and suggested the presence of the deity.

Ashshur (Assyria)
The first great Middle Eastern superpower, the Assyrians spread their empire westward into Syria-Palestine in the eighth century BC, the time of Amos and Isaiah. They first made Ephrayim (Ephraim) part of their empire; then when Ephraim kept trying to assert independence, they invaded Ephraim, destroyed its capital at Shomron (Samaria), transported its people and settled people from other parts of their empire in their place. They also invaded Yehudah (Judah) and devastated much of the country, but did not take Jerusalem. Prophets such as Amos and Isaiah describe how Yahweh was thus using Ashshur (Assyria) as a means of disciplining Yisra'el (Israel).

assistant
These are the *netinim*, people who played a support role in the temple. Etymologically their name implies they are people who were 'given', dedicated to the service of God, or given to the priests and Levites as their assistants in fulfilling menial tasks. The people of Gibeon (Josh. 9.27) are not called *netinim*, but the role ascribed to them as water carriers and woodchoppers for the sanctuary conveys an idea of these assistants' work. The assistants came to be treated as among the Levites.

authority
People such as Eli, Samuel, Samuel's sons and the kings 'exercise authority' over Yisra'el (Israel) and for Israel. The Hebrew word for someone who exercises such authority, *shopet*, is traditionally translated 'judge', but such leadership is wider than this. In the book called Judges, these leaders are people who have no official position like the later kings, but who arise and exercise initiative in a way that brings the people deliverance from the trouble they get into. It is a king's job to exercise authority in

accordance with faithfulness to God and people.

awe
Hebrew uses the same words for being afraid of someone fearful and for respecting someone whom it's appropriate to revere. Occasionally it's hard to be sure which sort of attitude is designated by the word. I have used 'awe' where the context implies the second sort of attitude, which also implies submission and obedience. In the wisdom books, awe is seem as a key aspect of a relationship with God, of crucial importance to understanding God and life. Awe for God has been described as the Old Testament expression for spirituality.

Azazel
The word comes only in the expression 'for Azazel' in Leviticus 16; it might be a deserted and/or rocky place or it might be a demonic power.

Babel (Babylon)
A minor power in the context of Yisra'el's (Israel's) early history, in the time of Jeremiah they took over the position of superpower from Ashshur (Assyria) and kept that for nearly a century until conquered by Paras (Persia). Prophets such as Jeremiah describe how Yahweh was using them as a means of disciplining Yehudah (Judah). Their creation stories, law codes and more philosophical writings help us understand aspects of the Old Testament's equivalent writings, while their astrological religion also forms background to aspects of polemic in the Prophets.

Beliyya'al
A personification of death, which swallows (*bala*); the word became a term for Satan.

brother
The Hebrew word can refer to blood relatives in a broader sense than the English word – both male and female.

cistern
A term that can denote the grave as the place where dead people are (see She'ol).

commitment
The word corresponds to the Hebrew word *hesed*, which translations render by means of expressions such as 'steadfast love' or 'loving kindness' or 'goodness'. It is the Old Testament equivalent of the special word for love in the New Testament, the word *agapē*. The Old Testament uses this word to refer to an extraordinary act whereby someone pledges himself or herself to someone else in some act of generosity, allegiance or grace when there is no prior relationship between them and therefore no reason why they should do so. Thus in Joshua 2, Rahab appropriately speaks of her protection of the Israelite spies as an act of commitment. It can also refer to a similar extraordinary act that takes place when there is a relationship between people, but one party has let the other party down and therefore has no right to expect any faithfulness from the other party. If the party that has been let down continues being faithful, they are showing this kind of commitment. In their response to Rahab, the Israelite spies declare that they will relate to her in this way.

cry, cry out
In describing the Israelites' response when they are oppressed by enemies, Judges uses the word that the Old Testament uses to describe Abel's blood crying out to God, the outcry of the people of Sodom under their oppression, the Israelites' crying out in Misrayim (Egypt) and the outcry of people who are unfairly treated within Yisra'el (Israel) in later centuries. It denotes an urgent cry that presses God for deliverance, a cry that God can be relied on to hear even when people deserve to be having the experience that is assailing them.

cubit
Half a yard or just under half a metre (I usually translate cubit measurements into metres).

day of the Lord
The oldest occurrence of the expression 'the day of the Lord', 'Yahweh's day', comes in Amos 5, which indicates that people saw it as a time when Yahweh would bring great blessing on them. Amos declares that the opposite is the case. Henceforth the expression always has sinister connotations. Yahweh's day is a day when Yahweh acts in decisive fashion. It doesn't happen just once; there are various occasions that the Old Testament describes as Yahweh's day, such as Jerusalem's fall in 587 BC and Babel's (Babylon's) fall in 539. In Isaiah, Sennacherib's devastation of Yehudah (Judah) was such an embodiment of Yahweh's day (22.5).

decontamination
A sacrifice that removes the taboo that comes from contravening Yahweh's rulings for life.

deliver, deliverance, deliverer
In the Old Testament, modern translations often use the words 'save', 'saviour' and 'salvation', but this gives a misleading impression. In Christian usage, these words commonly refer to our personal relationship with God and to the enjoyment of heaven. The Old Testament does speak of our personal relationship with God, but it does not use this group of words in that connection. They refer rather to God's practical intervention to get Yisra'el (Israel) or the individual out of a mess of some kind, such as false accusations by individuals within the community or invasion by enemies.

devote, devotion
Devoting something to God means giving it over to God irrevocably. Translations use words such as 'annihilated' or 'destroyed', and that is often the implication, but it does not convey the word's distinctive point. You could devote land, or an animal such as a

donkey, and in effect Hannah will devote Samuel; the donkey or the human being then belongs to God and is committed to God's service. In effect the Israelites devoted many Kena'anites (Canaanites) to God's service in this way; they became people who chopped wood and drew water for the altar, its offerings and the rites of the sanctuary. Devoting people to God by killing them as a kind of sacrifice was a practice known from other peoples, which Yisra'el (Israel) takes over on its own initiative, but which God validates. Israel knows this is how war works in its world and it assumes it is to operate the same way, and God goes along with that.

disciples of the prophets
Literally, these are the 'sons of the prophets'. The books of 1 and 2 Kings mention communities of such prophets in various places in Ephrayim (Ephraim) in the time of Elijah and Elisha. They lived together and apparently made their services available to people who needed guidance from God on some matter. They would be dependent on donations from people who sought their help in this way; the stories indicate that this made them vulnerable to poverty.

Edom, Edomites
Edom is Yehudah's (Judah's) south-eastern neighbour, occupying an area to the south-east of the Dead Sea. As Yisra'el (Israel) traces its ancestry back to Jacob, it traces Edom's ancestry back to Jacob's brother Esau. The Old Testament critiques Edom in particular for its inclination to take advantage of Judah's vulnerability and its support of the Babylonians when they captured Jerusalem. Subsequently the Edomites occupied considerable parts of southern Judah.

effigies
The Hebrew word for these is *teraphim*. In 1 Samuel 15.33 the text presupposes a link between the *teraphim* and divination, which involves techniques (like those of astrology) for trying to discover things about the future so that we can make sensible decisions or safeguard against trouble that might come. One form of divination involves consulting the dead. The effigies would be images of family members who had passed (a little like family photographs), whom people would seek to consult on the assumption that they might now know things that their relatives who were still alive could not know. Yisra'el (Israel) was not supposed to be involved in such procedures because it was expected to rely more directly on God for guidance.

envoy
A supernatural agent through whom God may appear and work in the world. Standard English translations refer to them as 'angels', but this is inclined to suggest ethereal figures with wings, wearing diaphanous white dresses. Envoys are human-like figures; hence it possible to give them hospitality without realizing this is who they are (Heb. 13). And they have no wings; hence their need of a stairway or ramp between heaven and earth (Gen. 28). They appear in order to act or speak on God's behalf, and so fully represent God that they can speak as if they *are* God (Gen. 22). They thus bring the reality of God's presence, action and voice, without bringing such a real presence that it would electrocute mere mortals or shatter their hearing.

ephod
In some passages the Old Testament implies that an ephod is a kind of vest worn by a priest, but in some passages it at least incorporated something that contained the Urim and Tummim.

Ephrayim (Ephraim)
After the reign of David and Solomon, the nation of Yisra'el (Israel) split into two. Most of the 12 Israelite clans set up an independent state in the north, separate from Yehudah (Judah) and Jerusalem and from the line of David. Because this was the bigger of the two states, politically it kept the name Israel, which is confusing because Israel is still the name of the people as a whole as the people of God. In the Prophets, it is sometimes difficult to tell whether 'Israel' refers to the people of God as a whole or just to the northern state. But sometimes the state is referred to by the name of Ephraim as one of its dominant clans, so I use this term to refer to that northern state, to try to reduce the confusion.

evil
The Old Testament uses this word in a similar fashion to the way English uses the word 'bad' – it can refer both to the bad things that people do and the bad things that happen to us, both to morally bad actions and to bad experiences. Sometimes prophets use the word with both connotations in the same context, pointing towards the fact that bad things often happen because people do bad things – though Jeremiah knows that this is not invariably so. Like other prophets, he can thus speak of God doing evil in the sense of bringing calamity to people.

exile
At the end of the seventh century Babel (Babylon) became the major power in Yehudah's (Judah's) world but Judah was inclined to rebel against its authority. As part of a successful campaign to get Judah to submit properly to its authority, in 597 and in 587 BC the Babylonians transported many people from Jerusalem to Babylon. They made a special point of transporting people in leadership positions, such as members of the royal family and the court, priests and prophets (Ezekiel was one of them). These people were thus compelled to live in Babylonia for the next 50 years or so. Through the same period, people back in Judah were also under Babylonian authority. So they were not physically in exile but they were also living *in* the exile as a period of time. A number of books in the Old Testament indicate that one of the issues they are handling is the pressure this experience brings to people.

expiation
A key concern in Exodus and Leviticus is keeping the sanctuary pure. While God may be able to tolerate a small amount of impurity there (as we can tolerate a small amount of dirt), if the place people have made as a home for God becomes too much affected by things that are alien, then God can hardly carry on living there. So it is important to deal with impurity that comes on the sanctuary through the infringement of taboos. One way of conceiving this is to speak in terms of atonement (at-one-ment), which suggests the healing of a relationship. Another is to speak of propitiation, which suggests the mollifying of someone who

was angry. In contrast, expiation relates to the thing that has caused the problem rather than to the person. It suggests the removal or wiping away of a stain. Of course the removal of the stain does mean that the threat to the relationship is gone and it is now possible for God to be in easy relationship with the people; in this sense expiation and at-one-ment are closely related. On the other hand, 'propitiation' is a more questionable idea in connection with Leviticus; while it does imply that God is offended by people and unwilling to associate with them, it does not speak of God being angry with them because of their offences.

faithfulness
In English Bibles this Hebrew word (*tsedaqah*) is usually translated 'righteousness', but it denotes a particular slant on what we might mean by righteousness. It means doing the right thing by the people with whom one is in a relationship, the members of one's community. Thus it is really closer to 'faithfulness' than 'righteousness'.

faithlessness
A word for sin that suggests the opposite of faithfulness, an attitude to God and to other people that expresses a contempt for what right relationships deserve.

flatbread
Bread made without being yeasted and allowed to rise.

Greece
In 336 BC Greek forces under Alexander the Great took control of the Parsite (Persian) Empire, but after Alexander's death in 333 his empire split up. The largest part, to the north and east of Palestine, was ruled by one of his generals, Seleucus, and his successors. Yehudah (Judah) was under its control for much of the next two centuries, though it was at the extreme south-western border of this empire and sometimes came under the control of the Ptolemaic Empire in Misrayim (Egypt) (ruled by successors of another of Alexander's officers).

Hebrew
Oddly, whereas this word became the term for the language of the Jewish people, it seems not to be an ethnic term in the Old Testament. Hebrews is not the same as Israelites. While Abraham can be designated a Hebrew (Gen. 14.13) and the Israelites might be termed Hebrews, they were not the only Hebrews. Other languages have related words, and all seem to be more sociological terms than ethnic ones, a little like the word 'gypsy'. They suggest people who do not belong to a regular recognized political community. In the New Testament, the Hebrews are Hebrew-speaking Jews as opposed to Greek-speaking Jews. So it's confusing to refer to Old Testament Israelites as 'Hebrews'.

hierodule
A type of temple servant, possibly involved in sexual rites.

Jew
The word is a shortened version of the word *yehudi*, which thus denotes a member of the clan or province of Yehudah (Judah). As Judah became the heart of Yisra'el (Israel) in the Second Temple period, *yehudim* or 'Jews' became a term for all members of the people of Israel and became a regular term for members of a religious community rather than members of an ethnic group. But this usage mostly belongs to post-Old Testament times, and in the Old Testament the word *yehudim* or 'Jews' would exclude most Israelites. So it's confusing to refer to Old Testament Israelites as 'Jews'.

Kasdites
People from an area within Babylonia who came to rule Babylonia, so that it became a term for Babylonians in general (also sometimes for their expert advisers); an alternative form of the word is Kaldites (hence the traditional English term Chaldeans).

Kena'an, Kena'anites (Canaan, Canaanites)
As the biblical terms for the land of Yisra'el (Israel) as a whole and for its indigenous peoples, 'Canaanites' is not so much the name for a particular ethnic group as a shorthand term for all the peoples native to the land. See also Amorites.

leader
The book of Judges is named after the leaders whose stories appear in the book. The traditional term is 'judge', so that they are people who also give their name to the period of time between Joshua and Saul, the 'Judges Period'. But these 'judges' do not usually operate in connection with sorting out legal cases, and 'leaders' gives more the right idea concerning their role. They are people who have no official position like the later kings, but who arise and exercise initiative in a way that brings the clans deliverance from the trouble the clans get into.

Levites
Within the clan of Levi, the descendants of Aaron are the priests, the people who have specific responsibilities in connection with offering the community's sacrifices and helping individuals to offer their sacrifices by performing some aspects of the offering such as the sprinkling of the animal's blood. The other Levites fulfil a support and administrative role in the temple and are also involved in teaching the people and in other aspects of leading worship.

Livyatan (Leviathan)
A sea monster who is an embodiment or symbol of tumultuous power asserted against God and the world

Maday and Paras, Parsites (Media and Persia, Medo-Persia, Persians)
Media lies between Mesopotamia and Persia. In the 550s Cyrus the Great gained control of Media and also of Persia, and turned Medo-Persia into the third Middle Eastern superpower. Cyrus took control of the Babylonian Empire in 539 BC, which opened up the possibility of Judahites returning from Babel (Babylon) after the exile. Yehudah (Judah) and surrounding peoples such as

Shomron (Samaria), Ammon and Ashdod were then Persian provinces or colonies. The Persians stayed in power for two centuries until defeated by Greece.

Master, Masters
The word *ba'al* is an ordinary Hebrew word for a master or lord or owner, but the word is also used to describe a Kena'anite (Canaanite) god. It is thus parallel to the word 'Lord' as used to describe Yahweh. Further, in effect 'Master' can be a proper name, like 'Lord'. To make the difference clear, the Old Testament generally uses 'Master' for a foreign god and 'Lord' for the real God, Yahweh. Like other ancient peoples, the Canaanites acknowledged a number of gods, and strictly the Master was simply one of them, though he was one of the most prominent. In addition, a title such as 'The Master of Pe'or' suggests that the Master was believed to be manifest and known in different ways and different places. The Old Testament also uses the plural 'Masters' to refer to Canaanite gods in general.

Misrayim, Misrayimites (Egypt, Egyptians)
The major regional power to the south of Kena'an (Canaan) and the country where Jacob's family had found refuge, where they ended up as serfs, and from which the Israelites then needed to escape. In Moses' time Egypt controlled Canaan; in subsequent centuries it was sometimes a threat to Yisra'el (Israel), sometimes a potential ally.

name
The name of someone stands for the person. The Old Testament talks of the temple as a place where God's name dwells. It's one of the ways it handles the paradox involved in speaking of the temple as a place where God lives. It knows this is a nonsense: how could a building contain the God who could not be contained by the entire heavens, no matter how far you could travel across them? Yet Yisra'el (Israel) knows that God does in some sense dwell in the temple. They know they can talk with God when they go there; they are aware that they can talk with God anywhere, but there is a special guarantee of this in the temple. They know they can make offerings there and that God will receive them (supposing they are made in good faith). One way they try to square the circle in speaking of the presence of God in the temple is therefore to speak of God's name being present there, because the name sums up the person. Uttering the name of someone you know brings home his or her reality to you; it's almost as if the person is there. When you say someone's name, there is a sense in which you conjure up the person. When people murmur 'Jesus, Jesus' in their prayer, it brings home the reality of Jesus' presence. Likewise, when Israel proclaimed the name Yahweh in worship, it brought home the reality of Yahweh's presence.

non-entity
A pejorative term, especially for gods other than Yahweh; it resembles the word for God but also a word for 'useless'.

Paras, Parsites (Persia, Persians)
See under Maday and Paras.

peace
The Hebrew word *shalom* can suggest peace after there has been conflict, but it often points to a richer notion, of fullness of life. The KJV sometimes translates it 'welfare', and modern translations use words such as 'well-being' or 'prosperity'. It suggests that everything is going well for you.

Pelishtites (Philistines)
The Philistines were people who came from across the Mediterranean to settle in Kena'an (Canaan) at the same time as the Israelites were establishing themselves in Canaan, so that the two peoples formed an accidental pincer-movement on the existing inhabitants of the country and became each other's rivals for control of the area.

Pesah
A festival in spring commemorating the exodus (commonly rendered in English as Passover).

purification, purification offering, purify
A major concern of the Torah is dealing with the taboo that can come on people and places through the effect of something that is alien to who God is, such as contact with death. There is nothing wrong with being involved in burying someone, but you have to give the taint of death time to dissipate or have it removed before coming into God's presence. A purification rite can bring that about.

Rahab (not the woman Rahab in Joshua)
Another name for the creature also called Livyatan (Leviathan).

Reed Sea
Literally 'sea of rushes'; the word is the one that came in Exodus 2 where Miriam left Moses in the reeds by the Nile. It might be one of the northern arms of what we call the Red Sea, either side of Sinai, or it might be an area of marshy lakes within Sinai.

remainder
The Prophets warn that Yahweh's chastisement will mean Yisra'el (Israel) (and other peoples) being cut down so that the 'remainder' of them, what 'remains', the 'remnant', will be small. But at least some remainder of Israel will survive – so the idea of a 'remainder' can become a sign of hope. It can also become a challenge – the few that remain are challenged to become a faithful remainder, a faithful remnant.

reside, resident
Verb and noun refer to someone living in a country other than their own, who therefore cannot own land.

restore, restorer
A restorer is a person who is in a position to take action on behalf of someone within his extended family who is in need in order to restore the situation to what it should be. The word overlaps with expressions such as next-of-kin, guardian and redeemer. 'Next-of-kin' indicates the family context that 'restorer' presupposes. 'Guardian' indicates that the restorer is in a position to be concerned for the person's protection and defence. 'Redeemer' indicates having resources that the restorer is prepared to expend on the person's behalf. The Old Testament uses the term to refer to God's relationship with Yisra'el (Israel) as well as to the action of a human person in relation to another, so it implies that Israel belongs to God's family and that God acts on its behalf in the way a restorer does.

rise
This term (*selah*) comes at the end of a number of lines in the Psalms (and in Habakkuk). We do not know what it refers to.

scaliness
A skin condition traditionally translated 'leprosy' and carrying a taboo.

secondary wife
Translations use the word 'concubine' to describe people such as Abimelek's mother and the Levite's wife, but the term used of them does not suggest that they were not properly married. Being a secondary wife rather means that a woman has a different status from that of other wives. It perhaps implies that her son had fewer or no inheritance rights. It may be that a wealthy or powerful man could have several wives with full rights and several secondary wives, or just one of each, or just the former, or even just a secondary wife.

Shabu'ot
'Weeks', a harvest festival in May or June (commonly transliterated as Shavu'ot, and rendered in English as Pentecost).

Shadday
El Shadday (or simply Shadday) is a name for God that the Old Testament especially associates with the time when the name Yahweh would not have been known and with people who would not have known that name. Thus it comes in Genesis and it is used in connection with non-Israelites such as Balaam and Job. We do not know the meaning of the name. There are similar-looking words that mean destruction and breast and – in a sister language of Hebrew – mountain, so it could originally have meant destructive God or nourishing God or mountain-like God, but we have little evidence that people made any of those connections in the Old Testament. The Greek translation of the Old Testament often rendered it 'Almighty', and this also became the convention in English translations. But the significance of the word is rather that it indicates that we are talking about the true God but talking about this God in a way that people who do not know the name Yahweh could use.

The Shameful King
The Kena'anite (Canaanite) god whose name means 'the king' whose name is altered in Hebrew by combining it with the word for 'shameful'.

She'ol
The most frequent of the Hebrew names for the place where we go when we die (see also Abaddon, and the comments on Job. In the New Testament it is called Hades. It is not a place of punishment or suffering but simply a resting place for everyone, a kind of non-physical analogue to the tomb as the resting place for our bodies.

sheqel
About half an ounce or ten grams.

Shomron (Samaria)
The city of Samaria was the capital of Ephrayim (Ephraim); it fell to the Assyrians in 722 BC. Many people were then transported there by the Assyrians. Samaria later became the name of the Babylonian and Parsite (Persian) province in the area, and for a while its governor had authority over Yehudah (Judah). In the Second Temple period the Judahites were thus ethnically, politically and religiously suspicious of the Samarians. But many of the Samarians were actually more conservative than the Judahites; as their Scriptures they accepted only the Torah.

soul
'Soul' in the English Bible usually represents Hebrew *nephesh* or Greek *psuche*. It can denote the inner person distinguishable and separable from the body but not independent of it; or the inner being of the whole person, their heart or deeply felt emotions; or the whole person comprising physical body plus divine breath; or the life of the person ('her soul was departing'). It does not mean the real person for which the body is a dispensable outward shell.

spirit
The Hebrew word for spirit is also the word for breath and for wind, and the Old Testament sometimes implies a link between these. Spirit suggests dynamic power; God's spirit suggests God's dynamic power. The wind in its forcefulness with its capacity to fell mighty trees is an embodiment of the powerful spirit of God. Breath is essential to life; where there is no breath, there is no life. And life comes from God. So human breath and even animal breath is an offshoot of God's breath.

Sukkot
The word means Shelters and refers to the festival in September/October that marks the end of the harvest and also commemorates the way the Israelites had to live in makeshift shelters on the way from Misrayim (Egypt) to Kena'an (Canaan) (commonly rendered in English as Tabernacles or Booths).

taboo
I use the word ‘taboo’ to render the Hebrew word often translated ‘impure’ or ‘unclean’, because the Hebrew word suggests a positive quality rather than the absence of purity. There are certain things that are mysterious, extraordinary, perplexing and a bit worrying. Among these are menstruation and childbirth, because they suggest both death and life. These are opposites, and God is the God of life and not of death, yet menstruation (with its association of blood and life) and giving birth (which is both life-giving and very dangerous) bring them into close connection. So contact with them makes people taboo; they cannot go into God’s presence until they are purified (see purification).

talent
About 40 kilograms or 90 pounds.

trespass
A term to describe sin or wrongdoing. It suggests the idea that in varying ways people owe it to one another to respect the rights that the other person has. So married people owe each other faithfulness, and unfaithfulness involves failure to respect that right. Unfaithfulness to Yahweh by serving other gods has similar implications; it fails to respect Yahweh’s right to allegiance and trust. Devoting to God the plunder from a war means that someone who appropriates some of the plunder fails to respect God’s right to it (1 Chron. 2.7). For a king to act as if he was a priest involves similar failure (2 Chron. 26.16).

Tsiyyon (Zion)
The word is an alternative name for the city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem is more a political name; other peoples would refer to the city as ‘Jerusalem’. Zion is more a religious name, a designation of the city that focuses on its being the place where Yahweh dwells and is worshipped.

Urim and Tummim
The Old Testament never describes the nature of these, but they were somehow means of God’s guiding Yisra’el (Israel). It seems they were something like two rocks that had marks on them signifying yes and no. You could ask God a question and if you got two yeses or two nos, God’s answer was clear; if you got a mixed message, that meant God was not answering.

Yah
Either an earlier version of the name of God, of which Yahweh is then an elaboration (cf. the story in Exod. 3), or an abbreviation of the longer name.

Yahweh
In most English Bibles, the word ‘LORD’ often comes in all capitals like that, as does also sometimes the word ‘GOD’ in similar format. These actually represent the name of God, Yahweh. In later Old Testament times, Israelites stopped using the name Yahweh and started to refer to Yahweh as ‘the Lord’. There may be two reasons. They wanted other people to recognize that Yahweh was the one true God, but this strange foreign-sounding name could give the impression that Yahweh was just Yisra’el’s (Israel’s) tribal god. A term such as ‘the Lord’ was one anyone could recognize. In addition, they did not want to fall foul of the warning in the Ten Commandments about misusing Yahweh’s name. Translations into other languages then followed suit and substituted an expression such as ‘the Lord’ for the name Yahweh. The downsides are that this obscures the fact that God wanted to be known by name, that often the text refers to Yahweh and not some other (so-called) god or lord, and that the practice gives the impression that God is much more ‘lordly’ and patriarchal than actually God is. (The form ‘Jehovah’ is not a real word but a mixture of the consonants of ‘Yahweh’ and the vowels of that word for ‘Lord’, to remind people in reading Scripture that they should say ‘the Lord’, not the actual name.)

Yahweh of Armies
This title for God usually appears in English Bibles as ‘the LORD of Hosts’, but it is a more puzzling expression than that implies. The word for LORD is actually the name of God, Yahweh, and the word for Hosts is the regular Hebrew word for armies; it is the word that appears on the back of an Israeli military vehicle. So more literally the expression means ‘Yahweh [of] Armies’, which is just as odd in Hebrew as ‘Goldingay of Armies’ would be. Yet in general terms its likely implication is clear; it suggests that Yahweh is the embodiment of or controller of all war-making power, in heaven or on earth.

Yahweh’s day
See day of the Lord.

Yehudah (Judah)
One of the 12 sons of Jacob, then the clan that traces its ancestry to him, then the dominant clan in the southern of the two states after the time of Solomon. Later, as a Parsite (Persian) province or colony, it was known in Aramaic as Yehud. Later still, the Roman province known as Judea also included much of the area of Ephrayim (Ephraim)/Shomron (Samaria). In the context of the Old Testament, it’s thus less confusing to refer to Judah and to Judahites, not Judeans.

Yisra’el (Israel)
Originally, ‘Israel’ was the new name God gave Abraham’s grandson, Jacob. His 12 sons were then forefathers of the 12 clans that comprise the people Israel. In the time of Saul and David these 12 clans became more of a political entity. So Israel was both the people of God and a nation or state like other nations or states. After Solomon’s day, this state split into two separate states, Ephrayim (Ephraim) and Yehudah (Judah). Because Ephraim was far the bigger, it often continued to be referred to as Israel. So if one is thinking of the people of God, Judah is part of Israel. If one is thinking politically, Judah is not part of Israel. Once Ephraim has gone out of existence, then for practical purposes Judah *is* Israel, as the people of God.

THE NEW TESTAMENT FOR EVERYONE

TOM WRIGHT

Preface to the New Testament for Everyone

The first thing that happened in the life of the church was *translation*. On the Day of Pentecost, God's powerful wind swept through Jesus' followers, filling them, like the sails of a great ocean-going sailing ship, so that they could take God's good news to the ends of the earth. And they found themselves speaking other languages, so that everyone in the crowd could understand.

Part of the point of Jesus' message, after all, is that it's about God coming to people where they are, not sitting back sternly and waiting for them to come to him. Not for nothing does John call Jesus 'the *word* of God'. There's no point speaking a word that nobody can understand.

So, right from the start, they translated. Sometimes it happened, as at Pentecost, by the direct action of the holy spirit. Mostly, though, it was through people eagerly turning the message into other languages. Much of the time, Jesus himself spoke Aramaic, an updated dialect of Hebrew, but the gospels are written in Greek. Greek was everybody's second language at the time, a bit like English in many parts of our world today. So, since the message was designed to be good news for everyone, not just native speakers of one language, it was important to translate it. Once begun, the process continued.

It took fifteen hundred years for the whole Bible to appear in English, but once that had happened – particularly through the work of one of my lifelong heroes, William Tyndale (d. 1536) – the idea caught on quickly. Several translations appeared during the sixteenth century, culminating in the King James ('Authorized') Version at the start of the seventeenth. And in the twentieth century, too, there have been several new English versions. Some have been quite strict translations, almost word for word; others have been paraphrases, trying to convey the message in a looser, less formal way.

Two questions, then: is this new version really a translation, or a paraphrase? And why do we need yet another one?

It's a translation, not a paraphrase. I have tried to stick closely to the original. But, as with all translations, even within closely related modern European languages, there are always going to be places where you simply can't do it word by word. To do so would be 'correct' at one level and deeply incorrect at another. There is no 'safe' option: all translation is risky, but it's a risk we have to take.

This is particularly so when the language in question is, in the technical sense, 'dead'. Nobody today speaks first-century Greek, so we can't simply phone a native speaker and ask what they mean by a particular phrase. Even if we could do so, there's no guarantee that the person we called would necessarily understand all that a New Testament writer has put into a word, phrase or sentence. The New Testament, after all, is telling a story which is deeply rooted in the ancient scriptures of Israel. Often its key technical terms mean something more like their equivalents in Hebrew than their regular usage in secular, non-Christian Greek.

Greek often goes quite easily into English, but not always. A couple of examples may help, one about little words and one about big ones.

Greek often uses little words to join sentences together; English often makes do with punctuation. (That last sentence is a good example: I could have written '*but* English often makes do with punctuation', but the semicolon does the job more elegantly.) St Paul, in particular, uses the little word *gar* a great deal to connect his sentences, and English versions often translate it as 'for' in the sense of 'because'. But people today don't often use the word 'for' in that way. It sounds formal and stilted, especially if you repeat it over and over as Paul does. People don't say it much in conversation, and a lot of the New Testament is more like conversation than like a great literary work. So, on various occasions, I have done it differently. 'If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live,' writes Paul in Romans 8.13–14 in the NRSV translation, '*for* all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.' I decided, instead of that 'for', to put in the colloquial English 'you see': 'all who are led by the spirit of God, *you see*, are God's children.' Or, sometimes, I have linked the two points by asking a question, and answering it: 'there is no condemnation for those who are in the Messiah, Jesus! *Why not? Because* the law of the spirit of life in the Messiah, Jesus, released you from the law of sin and death' (Romans 8.1–2). That 'Why not? Because . . . ' is how I'd say it, if I were Paul giving a lecture.

Or take the bigger words. Some of the great New Testament words are like ships loaded with several different kinds of cargo, and we simply haven't got words that can carry all that freight today. Thus, for instance, the English word 'righteousness' has been a technical term in theology for many years, and has often been used to translate the Greek *dikaiosynē*. But for many English speakers today it means *self*-righteousness: it's become a proud, 'churchy' sort of word. So what are the alternatives? We simply haven't got them. We want a word that can pack 'justice', 'covenant faithfulness', and 'right standing or relationship' all into the same hold, and can set off, with this cargo safely on board, to sail around the world. There isn't such a word. So I have done my best to bring out the different flavour which *dikaiosynē* seems to carry in this or that passage. I have done the same with *Christos*: most translations simply say 'Christ', but most modern English speakers assume that that word is simply a proper name (as though 'Jesus' were Jesus' 'Christian' name and 'Christ' were his 'surname'). For all sorts of reasons, I disagree; so I have experimented not only with 'Messiah' (which is what the word literally means) but sometimes, too, with 'King'. These experiments are risky. But they also present a glorious opportunity.

It's an opportunity (here is the answer to the second question, why yet another translation?) because translating the New Testament is something that, in fact, each generation ought to be doing. This is a special, peculiar and exciting point about the very nature of Christian faith. Just as Jesus taught us to pray for our *daily* bread, our bread for each day, we can never simply live on yesterday's bread, on the interpretations and translations of previous generations. To be sure, we can and must learn from those who have gone before us in the faith. But they themselves would tell us that living faith requires that we do business with God for ourselves. Inherited spiritual capital may help to get you started, but you need to do fresh work for yourself, to think things through, to struggle and pray and ponder and try things out. And a new translation, as carefully faithful as it ought to be but also as open to new possibilities as it needs to be, is a key tool for that larger task.

There are two ways to use a tool like this. First, it's good to read right through chapters, sections and entire books at a single sitting. The 'books' which make up the New Testament weren't written to be read in ten-verse sections at a time; imagine what would happen if you tried to listen to a symphony that way, or to read a novel at the rate of a single page once a week. I hope this present translation will make it easier for people to do this, to feel the flow and pull, the energy and power, of large chunks at a time.

But, second, it's always worth sitting down with a short passage and studying it intensely, trying to work out precisely what is meant by each sentence, each phrase, each word. And for that (even if you know Greek itself, but especially if you don't) you should always have at least two English translations open in front of you. No one translation – certainly not this one – will be able to give you everything which was there in the Greek. But I hope this one will take its place as one of the two or three that will help the next generation to do its own homework, to acquire its own first-hand, rather than second-hand, understanding of what the New Testament said in its own world, and what it urgently wants to say in ours.

That sense of urgency, indeed, has pushed me into a less formal and academic, and a more deliberately energetic, style. Most of the New Testament isn't 'great literature' in terms of the high standards of the day. Mark's gospel is more like a revolutionary tract; Paul's letters, though capable of poetic brilliance, often seem to reflect the kind of animated discussion you might have after a lecture in a crowded room. Again, it has seemed to me more important to convey that sense of excitement than to imitate the more formal, somewhat stately English prose we know from the traditions of the King James or Revised Standard Versions, good in their way though they have been.

This has affected all kinds of decisions: for instance, how to reproduce Jesus' discussions and debates. We simply don't say, in today's English, 'Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard"'. As with a novel, we'd be much more likely to say, '"Go and tell John", replied Jesus, "what you've seen and heard."' So that's what I've done. I think it makes quite a difference as to how we hear, and feel, the whole story.

In particular, this translation was made originally in order to accompany a series of 'guides' or popular commentaries on the New Testament. This series (*Matthew for Everyone* and the rest) was itself designed for people who would never normally read a 'biblical commentary', but who just wanted some help to get into the text for themselves. People like that might well have been confused if I'd always been saying 'Well, the RSV says this, the NIV says that, but I'm telling you something different.' I wanted to comment on a text without having to make that kind of remark all the time. Equally, as with all translations ever made, I have taken a particular view on point after point of interpretation, and my understanding of the many controversial passages in the New Testament shows up, naturally enough, in the translation as well.

A couple of final comments. First, all translations of the New Testament depend on other people's work in producing editions of the Greek New Testament from the literally thousands of manuscripts that have survived from the first few centuries. From time to time, I have had to make tricky decisions about which text to follow, but in a work of this sort I haven't wanted to distract the reader by inserting notes saying, 'other ancient authorities say . . .' For that you will have to look elsewhere. In the same way, sometimes whole verses were added to biblical manuscripts, often by scribes who remembered (say) the equivalent passage in Mark to the one they were transcribing from Matthew, or vice versa. Thus, for instance, Matthew 6.15 has crept into some manuscripts of Mark 11, creating an extra verse (26). Modern editions leave these 'extra' verses out, because they aren't there in the best and earliest manuscripts. But occasionally this means that the verse-numbering has to skip, since the numbering was done several centuries ago before these much better manuscripts turned up. Again, translations which include footnotes will make this clear. There are two extra 'endings' for Mark's gospel. They are not found in the best manuscripts. Most likely the original version was damaged; this often happened to scrolls. (Some think Mark intended to stop with 16.8, but I consider this less likely.) Then, some time later, two copyists decided to add 'endings' to round the story off, and these found their way into the manuscript tradition. The shorter of the two endings (printed in double square brackets) doesn't have a verse number. The second is known as Mark 16.9–20.

Finally, I have tried to use gender-neutral language throughout when referring to human beings. Sometimes this has been, to put it mildly, quite difficult. I have often had to use what some people regard as an ugly and ungrammatical form, saying 'they' rather than 'he or she'. This is a classic example of what happens when a language is going through a time of change. That can't be helped. Indeed, it is because languages are constantly changing that we regularly need fresh translations.

My hope and prayer for this book is that many people will discover through it just how exciting and relevant the New Testament really is. If it helps the church as a whole, and individuals within it, to be refreshed in their faith and reinvigorated to take forward God's mission in tomorrow's world, I will be delighted. I have had the amazing privilege of spending the best years of my life studying and teaching the New Testament in both church circles and academic settings, and I hope that this translation will enable that work to reach a wider audience.

I am extremely grateful to my friends and publishers at SPCK in London, especially Simon Kingston and Joanna Moriarty, who commissioned the For Everyone series in the first place and have provided constant encouragement all the way through. And I am very grateful to HarperOne in San Francisco, especially Mickey Maudlin and Mark Tauber, for their publishing this translation in the USA. If only all working relationships could be as happy. I owe a special, enormous debt of gratitude to Dr Michael Lakey of Ripon College Cuddesdon who, in the last stages before publication, has worked through the whole text with a meticulous eye, a theologian's heart, and a grammarian's delight in the precise nuance of language. He has not only rescued me from a few howlers but gently suggested numerous excellent emendations. The mistakes that remain are my own, some of them the result of my not taking his advice.

Finally, in connection with my constant attempt to write clear, brisk English, I should also mention my beloved wife and children. They have regularly stopped me from using long, fuzzy words where short, sharp ones would do instead. This version of the New Testament is dedicated to them in gratitude and love.

Introduction to the New Testament for Everyone

We call them 'books', but the twenty-seven writings that make up the 'New Testament' are much shorter than most 'books' in our world. The longest are about the same length as a short modern paperback; the shortest would struggle to fill a single page in a magazine. But in the first-century world a 'book' usually meant a scroll, a roll of parchment with a stick attached at either end, usually written on one side only. Such 'books' had to be fairly short to avoid getting too bulky; the longest of the New Testament books included about as much as a long scroll could hold.

The early followers of Jesus saw the books that were written about him, and the writings of the first generation or so of his followers, as the indispensable framework for understanding who Jesus really was, what he had achieved in launching God's kingdom 'on earth as in heaven', and what they were called to be and to do as a result. These early writings mattered, in other words, because Jesus matters. He had claimed to be renewing God's covenant ('testament') with Israel, and through Israel with the whole creation; the early Christians believed he had indeed done so. Hence 'new covenant' or 'new testament'. These books are central to all Christian understanding and living because of the centrality of the Jesus to whom they bear witness.

These books offer, in particular, a framework for understanding what the word 'God' itself actually means. At the heart of the New Testament, glimpsed in story, poetry and vision, is the sense that with Jesus, and with his powerful spirit, the one God who had created the world had made himself known in a new way by rescuing that world. This one God was known in worship, but was to be known too in understanding, in thinking things through with the 'renewed mind', as Paul puts it (see Romans 12.2). The writers of these books wanted their hearers (the books were written to be read out loud) not only to think new thoughts about these key topics but *to think in a whole new way*, a way which combined rigorous intellectual engagement with the disciplined imagination of the artist and the praying heart of the believer.

We may suspect that this combination was as challenging to the early Christians as it is for many today. But, they might have said, come into the house by whichever door is the most natural for you, and these books will draw you into the other rooms as well. And the 'house' with these doors, and these rooms, is the home of the one true God, where we all are invited as honoured guests; guests who then discover they are part of the family. The New Testament is designed to issue that invitation, to offer that welcome, and to explain what it all means.

The gospels

For many people, the most natural starting point will be one or other of the four gospels, the books which stand at the head of the New Testament. These offer 'the story of Jesus'; but like all good stories they are much more than just a string of events. For a start, they tell the story of Jesus *as the fulfilment of the ancient story of Israel.* Matthew begins with the genealogy that runs from Abraham to David, from David to the exile in Babylon, and then from David to the Messiah who would save his people and, thereby, the whole world. Mark opens with the prophecies of Isaiah and Malachi that look ahead to the one God renewing the covenant at last; Luke, with a personal story that echoes the books of Samuel, introducing John the Baptist as the one who summed up the Old Covenant dispensation and ushered in the New. John opens with a clear echo of Genesis 1.1 ('in the beginning'): this is the start of the new creation itself.

But there's more. The four gospels also tell the story of Jesus as the story of how the dark forces of evil, active in the wider world, seemed to converge onto a point when Jesus was announcing God's kingdom. Herod the Great, and his son Herod Antipas, loom up threateningly; the populist pressure group called the 'Pharisees' are constantly trying to catch Jesus out and accuse him; tormented souls shriek at him, sneering aristocrats mock him, his own followers misunderstand him and one of them ends up betraying him to the authorities. The Roman governor sums it all up, sending Jesus to his undeserved death. The gospel writers see all this as part of the point: evil gathers itself together and does its worst to Jesus, so that, when he dies under its weight, evil itself loses its ultimate power. That is why, then, the story of Jesus' resurrection from the dead, coming at the conclusion of all four gospels, is not simply a strange 'happy ending' after the crucifixion. It is the launching of God's new creation. This is, indeed, the underlying message of the whole 'New Testament': Israel's God has acted in and through Jesus to renew the covenant with Israel and so to open the way for new creation to be born.

That is why, ultimately, the four gospels demand to be read as the story of *how God became King*. ('What?' people ask. 'Is God not already King?' 'Yes,' answer the gospels, 'but his role has been usurped by the power of evil, and this is the story of how he overcame evil and won back his rightful rule.') They tell the story of Jesus announcing that 'the time is fulfilled' for God's kingdom to appear on earth as in heaven, a reference to scriptural prophecies, especially in the book of Daniel. They also portray Jesus as constantly redefining what that 'kingdom' would look like, through stories and acted symbols, especially healings and celebrations with the 'wrong' kind of people: a very different 'kingdom', then, from the national and military revolution many of his contemporaries were expecting. Throughout, Jesus was talking about 'God's kingdom' *to explain what he himself was doing*, and the four gospel writers put the picture together, particularly through their allusions to Israel's scriptures: this, they are saying, is what it looked like when *Israel's God came back in person to rescue his people and the world.*

The four gospels are thus many-layered stories, which can be read simply to find out 'what happened' but also, in more depth, to discover 'what it meant'. There is no agreement about their date. Many think Mark was the first to be written; it is certainly the shortest, and has a clipped, punchy style, getting straight to the point. Matthew's more leisurely presentation, taking the time to lay out Jesus' public career and teaching in a way which evokes more explicitly the great traditions of Israel, particularly the law of Moses, shows Jesus as the Emmanuel, the God-with-us person, fulfilling every aspect of the scriptural promises up to and including his elevation, as Israel's Messiah, to sovereignty over the whole world. Luke sets Jesus within the wider world of the non-Jewish nations: the story of Israel now fulfilled for the sake of the world. John's breathtaking vision of new creation focuses on Jesus as the true 'Temple', the place where heaven and earth come together, through which his followers are themselves commissioned to be heaven-and-earth people, animated by the new breath of the spirit.

All four gospels, finally, are written in such a way as to show how the movement of Jesus' followers began, and why it must take a certain shape. The mission, the unity, the prayerfulness and the obedience of the church all begin with Jesus' call to the first

disciples. They, like the ancient Israelites through the events of the exodus, will discover who they really are through Jesus' own Passover, his final meal which interprets in advance his death and resurrection. The gospels thus invite their readers not just to look back at far-off events – though it matters that those events were unique and unrepeatable – but also to live within the story as it moves forward, or, perhaps better, to allow this story to live in fresh ways in and through them.

The letters

Letters, an obvious substitute for personal presence, mattered more in the ancient world than in today's world of telephones and email. A letter written in, say, Ephesus might take a week to arrive in Corinth by sea, or a month if sent overland, so a writer like Paul would plan thoughtfully what to say. Some of his letters may have been written in a hurry, but in many cases, above all in Romans, it looks as though he has mapped it out carefully and taken pains with the structure and balance.

The letters written by Paul and others were not, however, designed to be systematic presentations of all that the early Christians believed. Not even Romans, Paul's most 'systematic' letter, is like that. The letters cover many topics, but they aim to meet particular needs and challenges and to warn of specific problems and difficulties. In particular, they are regularly attempting, not to close off further thought but to teach the hearers *how to think for themselves* as spirit-led, Jesus-focused communities. No letter could possibly cover everything the writer might have wanted to say; Paul and the others wanted people to take what had been written and to work things out from there. Paul urged his hearers to 'grow up in their thinking'; to be 'transformed by the renewing of the mind'. The letters were an aid to that, not a substitute for it.

There are thirteen letters ascribed to Paul. There is no agreement as to whether he wrote them all, but most would say that the disputed ones come at least from sources close to him. It is actually quite easy to fit the letters (except the 'Pastorals', that is, the two letters to Timothy and the one to Titus) into the narrative of Acts. Thus, if the Pastorals were written by Paul they must reflect a further journey or journeys after the conclusion of Acts, and we must also suppose that Paul had changed his style and tone somewhat.

Paul's letters are, in fact, the only parts of the New Testament which we may date reasonably securely. In my judgment, Galatians is the earliest, written most likely in AD 48; 1 and 2 Thessalonians are written around 50, with 1 Corinthians following in 52–53 and then the 'prison letters' being written from Ephesus in 53–54 (Philippians, Colossians and Philemon, with Ephesians being a circular written to many churches in the region of western Turkey). Then, after Paul's release, he writes 2 Corinthians – the most painful of his letters – while on his way to Corinth for the last time; then, as he is leaving Greece for his journey to Jerusalem and then Rome, he writes Romans. Other schemes are possible but this one has the merit of simplicity and coherence.

The main themes of Paul's letters, and indeed all the other letters in the New Testament, focus on Jesus himself: Jesus as the embodiment of Israel's God, returning to rescue his people and the world; Jesus as Israel's Messiah, summing up in himself the covenantal obedience of Israel from Abraham onwards; Jesus whose death and resurrection form the fulcrum of all history, opening up a new world in which the evil powers have been defeated so that idolatrous and sinful humans can be rescued from their grip; Jesus whose spirit animates the believer and the whole church in the present and will breathe new life into dead bodies at the final resurrection. Jesus, in other words, as the inaugurator of the 'new covenant' (2 Corinthians 3).

Galilee, Samaria and Judaea in the first century AD

Matthew

All four gospels are emphatically Jewish in tone and content, but Matthew's is the most obviously so. The book is structured around five blocks of Jesus' teaching, corresponding to the five books of Moses. The early chapters have Jesus re-enacting the exodus from Egypt; the closing chapters highlight Jesus' death at Passover. The book opens with a genealogy from Abraham to the Messiah, and closes with a scene echoing Daniel's picture of the enthroned son of man. Matthew repeatedly draws attention to the way in which events concerning Jesus fulfil biblical promises. At every turn he insists that Jesus is what Israel had been waiting for – even though this fulfilment turned out to be shocking.

The genealogy itself tells the whole story, for those with eyes to see. Matthew organizes it into three sequences of fourteen generations, from Abraham to David, David to the Babylonian exile, and the exile to Jesus. Abraham is the founder of the family through whom the one God would rescue the world; David is the king who is promised an heir to rule the world; the Babylonian exile is the point at which, in line with the covenantal warnings in Deuteronomy, the world seems to have won and the promise to be lost for ever. But God's faithfulness continues, and the Messiah is the one who will save his people from their sins. He inaugurates the seventh 'seven', the Jubilee of forgiveness. But the Messiah is not simply the long fulfilment of Israel's promises. He is also 'Emmanuel', 'God with us'.

The story unfolds as Jesus embodies Israel's history, going into Egypt as a baby and then returning, and then, in his baptism, re-enacting the crossing of the Red Sea and the Jordan. In his wilderness temptations, he succeeds where ancient Israel had failed. All this prepares us for Jesus' opening announcement of God's kingdom arriving on earth as in heaven, and his enactment of this, throughout the story, in powerful deeds of healing, in his feasting with tax-collectors and sinners, and in his refashioning of the kingdom-hope in sermon and parable. The five great blocks of teaching open with the Sermon on the Mount (chapters 5—7) and continue with the instructions to the disciples (chapter 10), the parables of seeds and sowing (chapter 13) and the further instructions for his followers' communal life (chapter 18), before the last block mirrors the first in its length (chapters 23—25), looking ahead with warnings and promises to the forthcoming destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple and the rescue and vindication of Jesus' followers.

Throughout the story the question of who Jesus really is, and how exactly he will bring God's kingdom, is never far away. It reaches a central climax with Peter's confession that Jesus is 'the Messiah, the son of the living God', and with the transfiguration. But Matthew leads the eye relentlessly towards the final events of Jesus' dramatic entry into Jerusalem, his action in the Temple, the Last Supper, and the arrest, trial and crucifixion. Matthew makes it clear that these events all interpret one another, and together point to the long-awaited act of divine and messianic rescue: the forces of evil do their worst and are defeated. Texts from the Psalms, Isaiah, Daniel and elsewhere are drawn together to say that this is the ultimate saving act promised all along. The resurrection of Jesus is then the beginning of an entirely new phase of history for the people of God, as Jesus commissions his followers to announce the good news to the whole world.

Jesus' genealogy

1 The book of the family tree of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.
[2]Abraham became the father of Isaac, Isaac of Jacob, Jacob of Judah and his brothers, [3]Judah of Peres and Zara (by Tamar), Peres of Esrom, Esrom of Aram, [4]Aram of Aminadab, Aminadab of Naason, Naason of Salmon, [5]Salmon of Boaz (by Rahab), Boaz of Obed (by Ruth), Obed of Jesse, [6]and Jesse of David the king.

David was the father of Solomon (by the wife of Uriah), [7]Solomon of Rehoboam, Rehoboam of Abijah, Abijah of Asaph, [8]Asaph of Jehosaphat, Jehosaphat of Joram, Joram of Uzziah, [9]Uzziah of Joatham, Joatham of Ahaz, Ahaz of Hezekiah, [10]Hezekiah of Manasseh, Manasseh of Amoz, Amoz of Josiah, [11]Josiah of Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the exile in Babylon.

[12]After the Babylonian exile, Jeconiah became the father of Salathiel, Salathiel of Zerubbabel, [13]Zerubbabel of Abioud, Abioud of Eliakim, Eliakim of Azor, [14]Azor of Sadok, Sadok of Achim, Achim of Elioud, [15]Elioud of Eleazar, Eleazar of Matthan, Matthan of Jacob, [16]and Jacob of Joseph the husband of Mary, from whom was born Jesus, who is called 'Messiah'.

[17]So all the generations from Abraham to David add up to fourteen; from David to the Babylonian exile, fourteen generations; and from the Babylonian exile to the Messiah, fourteen generations.

The birth of Jesus

[18]This was how the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place. His mother, Mary, was engaged to Joseph; but before they came together she turned out to be pregnant – by the holy spirit. [19]Joseph, her husband-to-be, was an upright man. He didn't want to make a public example of her. So he decided to set the marriage aside privately. [20]But, while he was considering this, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to him in a dream.

'Joseph, son of David,' the angel said, 'don't be afraid to get married to Mary. The child she is carrying is from the holy spirit. [21]She is going to have a son. You are to give him the name Jesus; he is the one who will save his people from their sins.'

[22]All this happened so that what the Lord said through the prophet might be fulfilled: [23]'Look: the virgin is pregnant, and will have a son, and they shall give him the name Emmanuel,' – which means, in translation, 'God with us'.

[24]When Joseph woke up from his sleep he did what the Lord's angel had told him to. He married his wife, [25]but he didn't have sexual relations with her until after the birth of her son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

The Magi visit Jesus

2 When Jesus was born, in Bethlehem of Judaea, at the time when Herod was king, some wise and learned men came to Jerusal
from the East.
[2]‘Where is the one’, they asked, ‘who has been born to be king of the Jews? We have seen his star rising in the East, and we
have come to worship him.’
[3]When King Herod heard this, he was very disturbed, and the whole of Jerusalem was as well. [4]He called together all the chief
priests and scribes of the people, and enquired from them where the Messiah was to be born.
[5]‘In Bethlehem of Judaea,’ they replied. ‘That’s what it says in the prophet:

[6]You, Bethlehem, in Judah’s land
are not the least of Judah’s princes;
from out of you will come the ruler
who will shepherd Israel my people.’

[7]Then Herod called the wise men to him in secret. He found out from them precisely when the star had appeared. [8]Then he sent
them to Bethlehem.
‘Off you go,’ he said, ‘and make a thorough search for the child. When you find him, report back to me, so that I can come and
worship him too.’
[9]When they heard what the king said, they set off. There was the star, the one they had seen rising in the East, going ahead of
them! It went and stood still over the place where the child was. [10]When they saw the star, they were beside themselves with joy
and excitement. [11]They went into the house and saw the child, with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him.
They opened their treasure-chests, and gave him presents: gold, frankincense and myrrh.
[12]They were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod. So they returned to their own country by a different route.

Travels to Egypt

[13]After the Magi had gone, suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream.
‘Get up,’ he said, ‘and take the child, and his mother, and hurry off to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to hunt
for the child, to kill him.’
[14]So he got up and took the child and his mother by night, and went off to Egypt. [15]He stayed there until the death of Herod.
This happened to fulfil what the Lord said through the prophet:

Out of Egypt I called my son.

[16]When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the Magi, he flew into a towering rage. He dispatched people to kill all the boys
in Bethlehem, and in all its surrounding districts, from two years old and under, according to the time the Magi had told him.
[17]That was when the word that came through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

[18]There was heard a voice in Rama,
crying and loud lamentation.
Rachel is weeping for her children,
and will not let anyone comfort her,
because they are no more.

[19]After the death of Herod, suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt.
[20]‘Get up,’ he said, ‘and take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel. Those who wanted to kill the child are dead.’
[21]So he got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel.
[22]But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judaea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go back there. After being
advised in a dream, he went off to the region of Galilee. [23]When he got there, he settled in a town called Nazareth. This was to
fulfil what the prophet had spoken:

He shall be called a Nazorean.

The preaching of John the Baptist

3 In those days John the Baptist appeared. He was preaching in the Judaean wilderness.
[2]‘Repent!’ he was saying. ‘The kingdom of heaven is coming!’
[3]John, you see, is the person spoken of by Isaiah the prophet, when he said,

The voice of someone shouting in the desert:
‘Prepare the route that the Lord will take,
straighten out his paths!’

[4]John himself had clothing made from camel’s hair, and a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey.
[5]Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and the whole area around the Jordan, were going off to him. [6]They were being baptized by him in the
river Jordan, confessing their sins.
[7]He saw several Pharisees and Sadducees coming to be baptized by him.

‘You brood of vipers!’ he said to them. ‘Who warned you to escape from the coming wrath? [8]You’d better prove your repentance by bearing the right sort of fruit! [9]And you needn’t start thinking to yourselves, “We have Abraham as our father.” Let me tell you, God is quite capable of raising up children for Abraham from these stones! [10]The axe is already taking aim at the root of the tree. Every tree that doesn’t produce good fruit is to be cut down and thrown into the fire.’

Jesus’ baptism

[11]‘I am baptizing you with water, for repentance,’ John continued. ‘But the one who is coming behind me is more powerful than me! I’m not even worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the holy spirit and fire! [12]He’s got his shovel in his hand, ready to clear out his barn, and gather all his corn into the granary. But he’ll burn up the chaff with a fire that will never go out.’
[13]Then Jesus arrived at the Jordan from Galilee, and came to John to be baptized by him.
[14]John tried to stop him.
‘I ought to be baptized by you,’ he said, ‘and are you going to come to me?’
[15]‘This is how it’s got to be right now,’ said Jesus. ‘This is the right way for us to complete God’s whole saving plan.’
So John consented, [16]and Jesus was baptized. All at once, as he came up out of the water, suddenly the heavens were opened, and he saw God’s spirit coming down like a dove and landing on him.
[17]Then there came a voice out of the heavens.
‘This is my son, my beloved one,’ said the voice. ‘I am delighted with him.’

Temptation in the wilderness

4 Then Jesus was led out into the wilderness by the spirit to be tested by the devil. [2]He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and at the end of it was famished. [3]Then the tempter approached him.
‘If you really are God’s son,’ he said, ‘tell these stones to become bread!’
[4]‘The Bible says’, replied Jesus, ‘that it takes more than bread to keep you alive. You actually live on every word that comes out of God’s mouth.’
[5]Then the devil took him off to the holy city, and stood him on a pinnacle of the Temple.
[6]‘If you really are God’s son,’ he said, ‘throw yourself down. The Bible does say, after all, that “God will give his angels a command about you”; and “they will carry you in their hands, so that you won’t hurt your foot against a stone.”’
[7]‘But the Bible also says’, replied Jesus, ‘that you mustn’t put the Lord your God to the test!’
[8]Then the devil took him off again, this time to a very high mountain. There he showed him all the magnificent kingdoms of the world.
[9]‘I’ll give the whole lot to you,’ he said, ‘if you will fall down and worship me.’
[10]‘Get out of it, satan!’ replied Jesus. ‘The Bible says, “Worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone!”’
[11]Then the devil left him, and angels came and looked after him.

Announcing the kingdom

[12]When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he went off to Galilee. [13]He left Nazareth, and went to live at Capernaum, a small town by the sea in the region of Zebulon and Naphtali. [14]This happened so that the word spoken through Isaiah the prophet might come true:

[15]The land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtali,
the road by the sea, beyond the Jordan,
Galilee, land of the nations:
[16]the people who sat in the dark saw a great light;
light dawned on those who sat in the shadowy land of death.

[17]From that time on Jesus began to make his proclamation.
‘Repent!’ he would say. ‘The kingdom of heaven is arriving!’

Jesus calls the disciples

[18]As Jesus was walking beside the sea of Galilee he saw two brothers, Simon (also called Peter) and Andrew his brother. They were fishermen, and were casting nets into the sea.
[19]‘Follow me!’ said Jesus. ‘I’ll make you fish for people!’
[20]Straight away they abandoned their nets and followed him.
[21]He went on further, and saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother. They were in the boat, mending their nets, with Zebedee their father. He called them. [22]At once they left the boat, and their father, and followed him.
[23]He went on through the whole of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, healing every disease and every illness among the people.
[24]Word about him went out around the whole of Syria. They brought to him all the people tormented with various kinds of diseases and ailments, demon-possessed people, epileptics, and paralytics, and he healed them. [25]Large crowds followed him from Galilee, the Ten Towns, Jerusalem, Judaea and beyond the Jordan.

The Beatitudes

5 When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the hillside, and sat down. His disciples came to him. [2]He took a deep breath, and began his teaching:

[3]‘Blessings on the poor in spirit! The kingdom of heaven is yours.

[4]‘Blessings on the mourners! You’re going to be comforted.

[5]‘Blessings on the meek! You’re going to inherit the earth.

[6]‘Blessings on people who hunger and thirst for God’s justice! You’re going to be satisfied.

[7]‘Blessings on the merciful! You’ll receive mercy yourselves.

[8]‘Blessings on the pure in heart! You will see God.

[9]‘Blessings on the peacemakers! You’ll be called God’s children.

[10]‘Blessings on people who are persecuted because of God’s way! The kingdom of heaven belongs to you.

[11]‘Blessings on you, when people slander you and persecute you, and say all kinds of wicked things about you falsely because of me! [12]Celebrate and rejoice: there’s a great reward for you in heaven. That’s how they persecuted the prophets who went before you.’

Fulfilling the law

[13]‘You’re the salt of the earth! But if the salt becomes tasteless, how is it going to get salty again? It’s no good for anything. You might as well throw it out and walk all over it.

[14]‘You’re the light of the world! A city can’t be hidden if it’s on top of a hill. [15]People don’t light a lamp and put it under a bucket; they put it on a lampstand. Then it gives light to everybody in the house. [16]That’s how you must shine your light in front of people! Then they will see what wonderful things you do, and they’ll give glory to your father in heaven.

[17]‘Don’t suppose that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I didn’t come to destroy them; I came to fulfil them! [18]I’m telling you the truth: until heaven and earth disappear, not one stroke, not one dot, is going to disappear from the law, until it’s all come true. [19]So anyone who relaxes a single one of these commandments, even the little ones, and teaches that to people, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But anyone who does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

[20]‘Yes, let me tell you: unless your covenant behaviour is far superior to that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get in to the kingdom of heaven.’

On murder and reconciliation

[21]‘You heard that it was said to the ancient people, “You shall not murder”; and anyone who commits murder shall be liable to judgment. [22]But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; anyone who uses foul and abusive language will be liable to the lawcourt; and anyone who says, “You fool”, will be liable to the fires of Gehenna.

[23]‘So, if you are coming to the altar with your gift, and there you remember that your brother has a grievance against you, [24]leave your gift right there in front of the altar, and go first and be reconciled to your brother. Then come back and offer your gift. [25]Make friends with your opponent quickly, while you are with him in the street, in case your opponent hands you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you find yourself being thrown into jail. [26]I’m telling you the truth: you won’t get out until you’ve paid every last copper coin.’

On adultery and oaths

[27]‘You heard’, Jesus continued, ‘that it was said, “You shall not commit adultery.” [28]But I say to you: everyone who gazes at a woman in order to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. [29]If your right eye trips you up, tear it out and throw it away. Yes: it’s better for you to have one part of your body destroyed than for the whole body to be thrown into Gehenna. [30]And if your right hand trips you up, cut it off and throw it away. Yes: it’s better for you to have one part of your body destroyed than for your whole body to go into Gehenna.

[31]‘It was also said, “If someone divorces his wife, he should give her a legal document to prove it.” [32]But I say to you: everyone who divorces his wife, unless it’s in connection with immorality, makes her commit adultery; and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

[33]‘Again, you heard that it was said to the people long ago: “You shall not swear falsely, but you shall give to the Lord what you promised under oath.” [34]But I say to you: don’t swear at all! Don’t swear by heaven (it’s God’s throne!); [35]don’t swear by the earth (it’s God’s footstool!); don’t swear by Jerusalem (it’s the city of the great king!); [36]don’t swear by your head (you can’t make one hair of it turn white or black!). [37]When you’re talking, say “Yes” when you mean Yes, and “No” when you mean No. Anything more than that comes from the evil one.’

Loving your enemies

[38]‘You heard that it was said, “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.” [39]But I say to you: don’t use violence to resist evil! Instead, when someone hits you on the right cheek, turn the other one towards him. [40]When someone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your cloak, too. [41]And when someone forces you to go one mile, go a second one with him. [42]Give to anyone who asks you, and don’t refuse someone who wants to borrow from you.

43‘You heard that it was said, “Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.” 44But I tell you: love your enemies! Pray for people who persecute you! 45That way, you’ll be children of your father in heaven! After all, he makes his sun rise on bad and good alike, and sends rain both on the upright and on the unjust. 46Look at it like this: if you love those who love you, do you expect a special reward? Even tax-collectors do that, don’t they? 47And if you only greet your own family, what’s so special about that? Even Gentiles do that, don’t they? 48Well then: you must be perfect, just as your heavenly father is perfect.’

Piety in secret

6 ‘When you are practising your piety, mind you don’t do it with an eye on the audience! Otherwise, you won’t have any reward from your father in heaven.
2‘So when you give money to the poor, don’t sound a trumpet in front of you. That’s what people do when they’re just play-acting, in the synagogues and the streets. They do it so that people will be impressed at them. I’m telling you the truth: they’ve received their reward in full. 3No: when you give money, don’t let your left hand have any idea what your right hand is up to. 4That way, your giving will be in secret. And your father, who sees in secret, will repay you.
5‘When you pray, you mustn’t be like the play-actors. They love to pray standing in the synagogues and on street corners, so that people will notice them. I’m telling you the truth: they have received their reward in full. 6No: when you pray, go into your own room, shut the door, and pray to your father who is there in secret. And your father, who sees in secret, will repay you.’

The Lord’s Prayer

7‘When you pray, don’t pile up a jumbled heap of words! That’s what the Gentiles do. They reckon that the more they say, the more likely they are to be heard. 8So don’t be like them. You see, your father knows what you need before you ask him.
9‘So this is how you should pray:

Our father in heaven,
may your name be honoured.
10May your kingdom come.
May your will be done,
as in heaven, so on earth.
11Give us today the bread we need now;
12and forgive us the things we owe,
as we too have forgiven what was owed to us.
13Don’t bring us into the great trial,
but rescue us from evil.

14‘Yes: if you forgive people the wrong they have done, your heavenly father will forgive you as well. 15But if you don’t forgive people, neither will your heavenly father forgive you what you have done wrong.’

On fasting and lasting treasure

16‘When you fast, don’t be gloomy like the play-actors. They make their faces quite unrecognizable, so that everyone can see they’re fasting. I’m telling you the truth: they have received their reward in full. 17No: when you fast, tidy your hair and beard the way you normally do, and wash your face, 18so that others won’t notice you’re fasting – except your father, privately. Then your father, who sees in private, will repay you.
19‘Don’t store up treasure on earth. Moths and rust will eat it away, and robbers will break in and steal it. 20No: store up for yourselves treasure in heaven! Moths and rust don’t eat it away there, and no robbers break in and steal it. 21Show me your treasure, and I’ll show you where your heart is.
22‘The eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is honest and clear, your whole body will be full of light. 23But if your eye is evil, your whole body is in the dark. So, if the light within you turns out to be darkness, darkness doesn’t come any darker than that.
24‘Nobody can serve two masters. Otherwise, they will either hate the first and love the second, or be devoted to the first and despise the second. You can’t serve both God and wealth.’

Do not worry

25‘So let me tell you: don’t worry about your life – what to eat, what to drink; don’t worry about your body – what to wear. There’s more to life than food! There’s more to the body than a suit of clothes! 26Have a good look at the birds in the sky. They don’t plant seeds, they don’t bring in the harvest, they don’t store things in barns – and your father in heaven feeds them! Think how different you are from them! 27Can any of you add fifteen inches to your height just by worrying about it?
28‘And why worry about what to wear? Take a tip from the lilies in the countryside. They don’t work; they don’t weave; 29but, let me tell you, not even Solomon in all his finery was dressed as well as one of these. 30So if God gives that sort of clothing even to the grass in the field, which is here today and on the bonfire tomorrow, isn’t he far more likely to clothe you too, you little-faith lot?
31‘So don’t worry away with your “What’ll we eat?” and “What’ll we drink?” and “What’ll we wear?” 32Those are all the kinds

of things the Gentiles fuss about, and your heavenly father knows you need them all. [33]Instead, make your top priority God's
kingdom and his way of life, and all these things will be given to you as well.
[34]'So don't worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow can worry about itself. One day's trouble at a time is quite enough.'

On judging others

7 'Don't judge people, and you won't be judged yourself. [2]You'll be judged, you see, by the judgment you use to judge others!
You'll be measured by the measuring-rod you use to measure others! [3]Why do you stare at the splinter in your neighbour's
eye, but ignore the plank in your own? [4]How can you say to your neighbour, "Here – let me get that splinter out of your eye,"
when you've got the plank in your own? [5]You're just play-acting! First take the plank out of your own eye, and then you'll see
clearly enough to take the splinter out of your neighbour's eye.
[6]'Don't give holy things to dogs. Don't throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they will trample them under their feet – and then
turn round and attack you!'

On prayer

[7]'Ask and it will be given to you! Search and you will find! Knock and the door will be opened for you! [8]Everyone who asks
receives; everyone who searches finds; everyone who knocks will have the door opened. [9]Don't you see? Supposing your son
asks you for bread – which of you is going to give him a stone? [10]Or if he asks for a fish – which of you is going to give him a
serpent? [11]Well then: if you know how to give good gifts to your children, evil as you are, how much more will your father in
heaven give good things to those who ask him!
[12]'So whatever you want people to do to you, do just that to them. Yes; this is what the law and the prophets are all about.'

The two ways

[13]'Go in by the narrow gate. The gate that leads to destruction, you see, is nice and wide, and the road going there has plenty of
room. Lots of people go that way. [14]But the gate leading to life is narrow, and the road going there is a tight squeeze. Not many
people find their way through.
[15]'Watch out for false prophets. They will come to you dressed like sheep, but inside they are hungry wolves. [16]You'll be able
to tell them by the fruit they bear: you don't find grapes growing on thorn-bushes, do you, or figs on thistles? [17]Well, in the same
way, good trees produce good fruit, and bad trees produce bad fruit. [18]Actually, good trees *can't* produce bad fruit, nor can bad
ones produce good fruit! [19]Every tree that doesn't produce good fruit is cut down and thrown on the fire. [20]So: you must recognize
them by their fruits.
[21]'Not everyone who says to me, "Master, Master" will enter the kingdom of heaven; only people who do the will of my father
in heaven. [22]On that day lots of people will say to me, "Master, Master – we prophesied in your name, didn't we? We cast out
demons in your name! We performed lots of powerful deeds in your name!"
[23]'Then I will have to say to them, '"I never knew you! You're a bunch of evildoers – go away from me!"'

True obedience

[24]'So, then, everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.
[25]Heavy rain fell; floods rose up; the winds blew and beat on that house. It didn't fall, because it was founded on the rock. [26]And
everyone who hears these words of mine and doesn't do them – they will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand.
[27]Heavy rain fell; floods rose up; the winds blew and battered the house – and down it fell! It fell with a great crash.'
[28]And so it was, when Jesus finished these words, that the crowds were astonished at his teaching. [29]He was teaching them, you
see, on his own authority, not like their scribes used to do.

Two healings

8 When Jesus came down from the hillside, large crowds followed him. [2]Suddenly someone with a virulent skin disease
approached, and knelt down in front of him.
'Master,' he said, 'if you want, you can make me clean!'
[3]Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him.
'I do want to,' he said. 'Be clean!'
At once his disease was cured.
[4]'Take care', Jesus said to him, 'that you don't say anything to anyone. Instead, go and show yourself to the priest, and make
the offering which Moses commanded. That will be a proof to them.'
[5]Jesus went into Capernaum. A centurion came up and pleaded with him.
[6]'Master,' he said, 'my servant is lying at home, paralysed. He's in a very bad state.'
[7]'I'll come and make him better,' said Jesus.
[8]'Master,' replied the centurion, 'I don't deserve to have you come under my roof! Just say the word, and my servant will be
healed. [9]I know what authority's all about, you know – I've got soldiers answering to me, and I can say to one of them, "Go!" and
he goes, and to another one, "Come here!" and he comes, and I can say, "Do this," to my slave, and he does it!'

[10]Jesus was fair amazed when he heard this.
'I'm telling you the truth,' he said to the people who were following. 'I haven't found faith like this – not even in Israel! [11]Let me tell you this: lots of people will come from East and West and join the great party of celebration with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. [12]But the children of the kingdom will be thrown into outer darkness, where people will weep and gnash their teeth.'
[13]Then he turned to the centurion.
'Go home,' he said. 'Let it be for you as you believed.'
And his servant was healed at that very moment.

On following Jesus

[14]Jesus went into Peter's house. There he saw Peter's mother-in-law laid low with a fever. [15]He touched her hand. The fever left her, and she got up and waited on him.
[16]When evening came, they brought to him many people who were possessed by demons. He cast out the spirits with a word of command, and healed everyone who was sick. [17]This happened so that the word spoken by Isaiah the prophet might come true:

He himself took our weaknesses
and bore our diseases.

[18]When Jesus saw the crowd all around him, he told them to go across to the other side of the lake. [19]A scribe came up and spoke to him.
'Teacher,' he said, 'I will follow you wherever you go!'
[20]Foxes have their dens,' replied Jesus, 'and the birds in the sky have their nests. But the son of man has nowhere he can lay his head.'
[21]'Master,' said another of his disciples, 'let me first go and see to my father's funeral.'
[22]'Follow me!' replied Jesus. 'And leave the dead to bury their own dead.'

The calming of the storm

[23]So Jesus got into the boat, and his disciples followed him. [24]All of a sudden a great storm blew up on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves. Jesus, however, was asleep. [25]They came and woke him up.
'Help! Master! Rescue us!' they shouted. 'We're done for!'
[26]'Why are you so scared, you little-faith lot?' he replied.
Then he got up and told the wind and the sea to behave themselves, and there was a great calm. [27]They were all astonished.
'What sort of man is this,' they said, 'that the winds and the sea do what he says?'

The healing of the demoniacs

[28]So he went across to the other side, to the region of the Gadarenes. Two demon-possessed men met him, coming out of the tombs. They were very violent and made it impossible for anyone to go along that road.
[29]'What is it with us and you, son of God?' they yelled. 'Have you come here to torture us ahead of the time?'
[30]Some way off from where they were there was a large herd of pigs feeding.
[31]'If you cast us out,' the demons begged Jesus, 'send us into the herd of pigs!'
[32]'Off you go, then!' said Jesus.
So the demons went out of the men and into the pigs. Then and there the entire herd rushed down the steep slope into the lake, and were drowned in the water.
[33]The herdsmen took to their heels. They went off to the town and told the whole tale, including the bit about the demon-possessed men. [34]So the whole town came out to see Jesus for themselves. When they saw him, they begged him to leave their district.

The healing of the paralytic

9 Jesus got into the boat, and crossed back over to his own town.
[2]Some people brought to him a paralysed man lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralysed man, 'Cheer up, my son! Your sins are forgiven!'
[3]'This fellow's blaspheming!' said some of the scribes to themselves.
[4]Jesus read their thoughts. 'Why let all this wickedness fester in your hearts?' he said. [5]'Which is easier: to say, "Your sins are forgiven", or to say, "Get up and walk"? [6]But, to let you know that the son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins' – he spoke to the paralysed man – 'Get up, pick up your bed, and go home!'
[7]And he got up, and went away to his home. [8]When the crowds saw it they were frightened, and praised God for giving authority like this to humans.

The call of Matthew

[9]As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax-office.
'Follow me!' he said to him. And he rose up and followed him.
[10]When he was at home, sitting down to a meal, there were lots of tax-collectors and sinners there who had come to have dinner with Jesus and his disciples. [11]When the Pharisees saw it, they said to his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax-collectors and sinners?'
[12]Jesus heard them.
'It isn't the healthy who need a doctor,' he said, 'it's the sick. [13]Go and learn what this saying means: "It's mercy I want, not sacrifice." My job isn't to call upright people, but sinners.'
[14]Then John's disciples came to him with a question.
'How come,' they asked, 'we and the Pharisees fast a good deal, but your disciples don't fast at all?'
[15]'Wedding guests can't fast, can they,' replied Jesus, 'as long as the bridegroom is with them? But sooner or later the bridegroom will be taken away from them. They'll fast then all right.
[16]'No one', he went on, 'sews a patch of unshrunk cloth onto an old coat. The patch will simply pull away from the coat, and you'll have a worse hole than you started with. [17]People don't put new wine into old wineskins, otherwise the skins will split; then the wine will be lost, and the skins will be ruined. They put new wine into new skins, and then both are fine.'

The raising of the little girl

[18]As Jesus was saying this, suddenly an official came up and knelt down in front of him.
'It's my daughter!' he said. 'She's just died! But – if you'll come and lay your hand on her, she'll come back to life!'
[19]Jesus got up and followed him. So did his disciples.
[20]Just then a woman appeared. She had suffered from internal bleeding for twelve years. She came up behind Jesus and touched the hem of his coat.
[21]'If I can only touch his coat,' she said to herself, 'I'll be rescued.'
[22]Jesus turned round and saw her.
'Cheer up, my daughter!' he said. 'Your faith has rescued you.'
And the woman was healed from that moment.
[23]Jesus went into the official's house. There he saw the flute-players, and everybody in a great state of agitation.
[24]'Go away!' he said. 'The little girl isn't dead. She's asleep!' And they laughed at him.
[25]So when the crowd had been put out, he went in and took hold of her hand, and she got up. [26]The report of this went out around the whole of that region.

Jesus' fame increases

[27]As Jesus was leaving the area, two blind men followed him, shouting 'Have pity on us, son of David!' at the tops of their voices.
[28]Jesus went into the house, and the blind men came to him.
'Do you believe that I can do this?' asked Jesus.
'Yes, Master,' they replied.
[29]Then Jesus touched their eyes. 'As you have believed, so let it happen,' he said. [30]And their eyes were opened.
Then Jesus gave them a stern warning. 'Take good care', he said, 'that nobody gets to know about this.' [31]But they went out and spread the news in the whole of that region.
[32]After they had left, people brought to Jesus a demon-possessed man who couldn't speak. [33]Jesus cast out the demon, and the man spoke. The crowds were amazed. 'Nothing like this ever happened in Israel,' they said. [34]But the Pharisees said, 'He casts out demons by the prince of demons.'
[35]Jesus went around all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, announcing the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness. [36]When he saw the crowds, he felt deeply sorry for them, because they were distressed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd. [37]Then he said to his disciples, 'There's plenty of harvest to be had, but not many workers! [38]So pray the master of the harvest to send more workers to harvest his fields!'

The Twelve are sent out

10 Jesus called his twelve disciples to him, and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out and to heal every disease and every sickness.
[2]These are the names of the twelve apostles. First, Simon, who is called Peter ('the rock'), and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; [3]Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew the tax-collector, James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; [4]Simon the Cananaean; and Judas Iscariot (who betrayed him).
[5]Jesus sent these Twelve off with these instructions.
'Don't go into Gentile territory,' he said, 'and don't go into a Samaritan town. [6]Go instead to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. [7]As you go, declare publicly that the kingdom of heaven has arrived. [8]Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse people with skin diseases, cast out demons.
'It was all free when you got it; make sure it's free when you give it. [9]Don't take any gold or silver or copper in your belts; [10]no bag for the road, no second cloak, no sandals, no stick. Workers deserve their pay.
[11]'When you go into a town or village, make careful enquiry for someone who is good and trustworthy, and stay there until you

leave. [12]When you go into the house give a solemn greeting. [13]If the house is trustworthy, let your blessing of peace rest upon it, but if not, let it return to you. [14]If anyone won't welcome you or listen to your message, go out of the house or the town and shake the dust off your feet. [15]I'm telling you the truth: it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.'

Sheep among wolves

[16]'See here,' Jesus continued, 'I'm sending you out like sheep surrounded by wolves. So be as shrewd as snakes, and as innocent as doves.
[17]'Watch out for danger from people around you. They will hand you over to councils, and flog you in their synagogues. [18]You will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as evidence to them and to the nations. [19]But when they hand you over, don't worry how to speak or what to say. What you have to say will be given to you at that moment. [20]It won't be you speaking, you see; it will be the spirit of your father speaking in you.
[21]'One brother will betray another to death; fathers will betray children, and children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. [22]You will be hated by everyone because of my name. But the one who holds out to the end will be delivered.
[23]'When they persecute you in one town, run off to the next one. I'm telling you the truth: you won't have gone through all the towns of Israel before the son of man comes.'

Warnings and encouragements

[24]'The disciple isn't greater than the teacher; the slave isn't greater than the master. [25]It's quite enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave to be like the master. If they called the master of the house 'Beelzebul', think what they're going to call his family!
[26]'Don't be afraid of them. Nothing is hidden, you see, that won't come to light; nothing is secret that won't be made known. [27]What I tell you in the dark, speak in the light, and what you hear whispered in your ears, announce from the roofs of the houses.
[28]'Don't be afraid of people who can kill the body, but can't kill the soul. The one you should be afraid of is the one who can destroy both body and soul in Gehenna. [29]How much would you get for a couple of sparrows? A single copper coin if you're lucky? And not one of them falls to the ground without your father knowing about it. [30]When it comes to you – why, every hair on your head is counted. [31]So don't be afraid! You're worth much more than a great many sparrows.'

Jesus causes division

[32]'So: everyone who owns up in front of others to being on my side, I will own them before my father in heaven. [33]But anyone who disowns me in front of others, I will disown that person before my father in heaven.
[34]'Don't think it's my job to bring peace on the earth. I didn't come to bring peace – I came to bring a sword! [35]I came to divide a man from his father, a daughter from her mother, and a daughter-in-law from her mother-in-law. [36]Yes, you'll find your enemies inside your own front door.
[37]'If you love your father or mother more than me, you don't deserve me. If you love your son or daughter more than me, you don't deserve me. [38]Anyone who doesn't pick up their cross and follow after me doesn't deserve me. [39]If you find your life you'll lose it, and if you lose your life because of me you'll find it.
[40]'Anyone who welcomes you, welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me, welcomes the one who sent me. [41]Anyone who welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and anyone who receives an upright person in the name of an upright person will receive an upright person's reward. [42]Anyone who gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones, in the name of a disciple – I'm telling you the truth, they won't go short of their reward!'

Jesus and John the Baptist

11 So when Jesus had finished giving instructions to the twelve disciples, he moved on from there to teach and preach in their towns.
[2]Meanwhile, John, who was in prison, heard about these messianic goings-on. He sent word through his followers.
[3]'Are you the one who is coming?' he asked. 'Or should we be looking for someone else?'
[4]'Go and tell John', replied Jesus, 'what you've seen and heard. [5]Blind people are seeing! Lame people are walking! People with virulent skin diseases are being cleansed! Deaf people can hear again! The dead are being raised to life! And – the poor are hearing the good news! [6]And God bless you if you're not upset by what I'm doing.'

The identity of John the Baptist

[7]As the messengers were going away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John.
'What were you expecting to see,' he asked, 'when you went out into the desert? A reed wobbling in the wind? [8]No? Well, then, what were you expecting to see? Someone dressed in silks and satins? If you want to see people like that you'd have to go to somebody's royal palace. [9]All right, so what *were* you expecting to see? A prophet? Ah, now we're getting there: yes indeed, and much more than a prophet! [10]This is the one the Bible was talking about when it says,

See, I'm sending my messenger ahead of you

and he will clear your path before you.

[11]‘I’m telling you the truth: John the Baptist is the greatest mother’s son there ever was. But even the least significant person in heaven’s kingdom is greater than he is. [12]From the time of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has been forcing its way in – and the men of force are trying to grab it! [13]All the prophets and the law, you see, made their prophecies up to the time of John. [14]In fact, if you’ll believe it, he is Elijah, the one who was to come. [15]If you’ve got ears, then listen!’

Jesus condemns the cities

[16]‘What picture shall I give you for this generation?’ asked Jesus. ‘It’s like a bunch of children sitting in the town square, and singing songs to each other. [17]This is how it goes:

You didn’t dance when we played the flute,
you didn’t cry when we sang the dirge!

[18]‘What do I mean? When John appeared, he didn’t have any normal food or drink – and people said “What’s got into him, then? Some demon?” [19]Then along comes the son of man, eating and drinking normally, and people say, “Ooh, look at him – guzzling and boozing, hanging around with tax-collectors and other riff-raff.” But, you know, wisdom is as wisdom does – and wisdom will be vindicated!’

[20]Then he began to berate the towns where he’d done most of his powerful deeds, because they hadn’t repented.

[21]‘A curse on you, Chorazin!’ he said. ‘A curse on you, Bethsaida! If Tyre and Sidon had seen the kind of powerful things you saw, they would have repented long ago with hairshirts and ashes. [22]But I can tell you this: on the day of judgment Tyre and Sidon will have a better time of it than you will. [23]And what about you, Capernaum? You think you’re going to be exalted to heaven, do you? No – you’ll be sent down to Hades! If the powerful works that happened in you had happened in Sodom, it would still be standing today. [24]But I can tell you this: on the day of judgment the land of Sodom will have a better time of it than you will!’

Jesus’ invitation

[25]At that time Jesus turned to God with this prayer: ‘I give you my praise, father, Lord of heaven and earth! You hid these things from the wise and intelligent and revealed them to children! [26]Yes, father, that’s the way you decided to do it! [27]My father gave me everything: nobody knows the son except the father, and nobody knows the father except the son – and anyone the son wants to reveal him to.

[28]‘Are you having a real struggle? Come to me! Are you carrying a big load on your back? Come to me – I’ll give you a rest! [29]Pick up my yoke and put it on; take lessons from me! My heart is gentle, not arrogant. You’ll find the rest you deeply need. [30]My yoke is easy to wear, my load is easy to bear.’

Lord of the sabbath

12 At that time Jesus went through the cornfields on the sabbath. His disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck ears of corn and eat them. [2]When the Pharisees observed this they said to him, ‘Look here! Your disciples are doing something that’s not permitted on the sabbath!’

[3]‘Did you never read what David did?’ replied Jesus. ‘When he and his men were hungry, [4]they went into God’s house and ate the holy bread which neither he nor his men were allowed to eat – only the priests had that right. [5]Or didn’t you read in the law that the priests in the Temple do things on the sabbath which are against sabbath law – and they aren’t guilty? [6]Let me tell you this: something greater than the Temple is here. [7]If you’d known what this saying means:

Mercy, not sacrifice, is what I really want –

you wouldn’t have passed judgment on blameless people. [8]Yes, you see: the son of man is master of the sabbath, too.’

[9]He left the place and went into their synagogue, [10]where there was a man with a withered hand.

They put the question to him: ‘Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath?’

(They asked this so that they could frame a charge against him.)

[11]‘Supposing one of you has just one sheep,’ replied Jesus, ‘and it falls into a ditch on the sabbath. You’ll grab it and haul it out, won’t you? [12]Well then, think how much more important a human being is than a sheep! So, you see, it is permitted to do good on the sabbath.’

[13]Then he said to the man, ‘Stretch your hand out.’ He stretched it out, and it was restored to health, just like the other one. [14]But the Pharisees went off and plotted against him, with the intention of doing away with him.

The Servant

[15]Jesus discovered the plots against him, and left the district. Large crowds followed him, and he healed them all, [16]giving them strict instructions not to tell people about him. [17]This was so that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet might come true:

[18]Look! Here’s my servant, whom I chose;
my beloved one, my heart’s delight.

My spirit I will place on him,
and he'll announce true judgment
to the whole wide world.
[19]He will not argue, nor will he
lift up his voice and shout aloud;
nobody in the streets will hear
his voice. [20]He will not break the damaged
reed, or snuff the guttering lamp,
until his judgment wins the day.
[21]The world will hope upon his name.

Jesus and Beelzebul

[22]They brought to Jesus a man who was possessed by a demon that made him unable to see or speak. Jesus healed him, so that the sick man was able to talk and see. [23]All the crowds were astonished.
'He can't be David's Son, can he?' they said.
[24]The Pharisees heard this.
'The fellow can only cast out demons', they said, 'because he's in league with Beelzebul, the prince of demons!'
[25]Jesus knew their thoughts.
'Suppose a kingdom is split down the middle,' he said to them. 'It'll go to rack and ruin! If a city or a household is split down the middle, it's doomed! [26]And if the satan drives out the satan, he's split down the middle – so how can his kingdom stay standing?
[27]'What's more, if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, whose power are your people in league with when they cast them out? Yes, they'll tell you what's what! [28]But if I'm casting out demons because I'm in league with God's spirit – well, then, God's kingdom has arrived on your doorstep!
[29]'Look at it like this. Suppose you want to break into a strong man's house and steal his belongings. How are you going to do that unless you first tie up the strong man? Then you can plunder his house to your heart's content. [30]If you're not with me, you're against me. Unless you're gathering the flock with me, you're scattering it.
[31]'So let me tell you this: people will be forgiven for every sin and blasphemy; but blasphemy against the spirit will not be forgiven. [32]If anyone speaks a word against the son of man, it will be forgiven. But if anyone speaks a word against the holy spirit, it won't be forgiven, either in the present age or in the age to come.'

The sign of Jonah

[33]'You must make up your mind between two possibilities,' Jesus went on. 'Either the tree is good, in which case its fruit is good; or the tree is bad, in which case its fruit is bad. You can tell the tree by its fruits, after all.
[34]'You're a family of snakes! How can you say good things when you're bad inside? What the mouth speaks is what fills the heart. [35]A good person produces good things from a good storeroom; an evil person produces evil things from an evil storeroom. [36]Let me tell you this: on judgment day people will have to own up to every trivial word they say. [37]Yes: you will be vindicated by your own words – and you will be condemned by your own words.'
[38]'Teacher,' responded some of the scribes and Pharisees. 'We would like to see a sign from you.'
[39]'This wicked and immoral generation is looking for a sign,' replied Jesus. 'But no sign will be given to it – except the sign of Jonah. [40]Jonah, you see, was in the stomach of the sea-monster for three days and three nights – and in the same way the son of man will be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights. [41]The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment along with this generation and will condemn it. They, after all, repented when they heard Jonah's warnings! And, in case you hadn't noticed, something greater than Jonah is here. [42]The Queen of the South will be raised at the judgment with this generation and will condemn it. She, after all, came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon! And, in case you hadn't noticed, something greater than Solomon is here.'

Jesus' true family

[43]'When the unclean spirit goes out of a person,' Jesus continued, 'it goes wandering through waterless places looking for somewhere to rest, and doesn't find anywhere. [44]Then it says, "I'll go back to my house, the one I left." When it gets there it finds it standing empty, clean and tidy. [45]Then it goes out and collects seven other spirits to join it, spirits worse than itself. They go in and take up residence there. The poor person ends up worse off than they were to start with! And that's what will happen with this wicked generation.'
[46]Suddenly, while he was speaking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers came and stood outside, hoping for a chance to speak to him.
[47]'Look,' someone said to him, 'your mother and your brothers are standing outside wanting to speak to you.'
[48]'Who is my mother?' said Jesus to the person who had spoken to him. 'Who are my brothers?'
[49]Then he stretched out his hand towards his disciples.
'Look!' he said. 'Here are my mother and my brothers. [50]Yes; anyone who does what my heavenly father wants is my brother, and my sister, and my mother.'

The parable of the sower

13 That very day Jesus went out of the house and sat down beside the sea. [2]Large crowds gathered around him, so he got into a boat and sat down. The whole crowd was standing on the shore.
[3]He had much to say to them, and he said it all in parables.
'Listen!' he said. 'Once there was a sower who went out to sow. [4]As he sowed, some seed fell beside the path, and the birds came and ate it up. [5]Some seed fell on rocky soil, where it didn't have much earth. It sprang up at once because it didn't have depth of soil. [6]But when the sun was high it got scorched, and it withered because it didn't have any root. [7]Other seed fell in among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it. [8]And other seed fell into good soil, and produced a crop, some a hundred times over, some sixty, and some thirty times over. [9]If you've got ears, then listen!'

The reason for parables

[10]His disciples came to him.
'Why are you speaking to them in parables?' they asked.
[11]'You've been given the gift of knowing the secrets of the kingdom of heaven,' he replied, 'but they haven't been given it. [12]Anyone who already has something will be given more, and they will have plenty. But anyone who has nothing – even what they have will be taken away! [13]That's why I speak to them in parables, so that they may look but not see, and hear but not understand or take it in. [14]Isaiah's prophecy is coming true in them:

> You will listen and listen but won't understand,
> you will look and look but not see.
> [15]This people's heart has gone flabby and fat,
> their ears are muffled and dull,
> their eyes are darkened and shut;
> in order that they won't see with their eyes
> or hear with their ears, or know in their heart,
> or turn back again for me to restore them.

[16]But there's great news for *your* eyes: they can see! And for your ears: they can hear! [17]I'm telling you the truth: many prophets and holy people longed to see what you see and didn't see it, and to hear what you hear and didn't hear it.'

The parable of the sower explained

[18]'All right, then,' Jesus continued, 'this is what the sower story is all about. [19]When someone hears the word of the kingdom and doesn't understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This corresponds to what was sown beside the path. [20]What was sown on rocky ground is the person who hears the word and immediately receives it with delight, [21]but doesn't have any root of their own. Someone like that only lasts a short time; as soon as there's any trouble or persecution because of the word, they trip up at once. [22]The one sown among thorns is the one who hears the word, but the world's worries and the seduction of wealth choke the word and it doesn't bear fruit. [23]But the one sown on good soil is the one who hears the word and understands it. Someone like that will bear fruit: one will produce a hundred times over, another sixty, and another thirty times over.'

The parable of the weeds

[24]He put another parable to them.
'The kingdom of heaven', he said, 'is like this! Once upon a time a man sowed good seed in his field. [25]While the workers were asleep, his enemy came and sowed weeds in among the wheat, and went away. [26]When the crop came up and produced corn, then the weeds appeared as well.
[27]'So the farmer's servants came to him.
'"Master," they said, "didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where have the weeds come from?"
[28]'"This is the work of an enemy," he replied.
'"So," the servants said to him, "do you want us to go and pull them up?"
[29]'"No," he replied. "If you do that you'll probably pull up the wheat as well, while you're collecting the weeds. [30]Let them both grow together until the harvest. Then, when it's time for harvest, I will give the reapers this instruction: 'First gather the weeds and tie them up in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.'"
[31]He put another parable to them.
'The kingdom of heaven', he said, 'is like a grain of mustard seed, which someone took and sowed in his field. [32]It's the smallest of all the seeds, but when it grows it turns into the biggest of the shrubs. It becomes a tree, and the birds in the sky can then come and nest in its branches.'
[33]He told them another parable.
'The kingdom of heaven is like leaven,' he said, 'which a woman took and hid inside three measures of flour, until the whole thing was leavened.'
[34]Jesus said all these things to the crowds in parables. He didn't speak to them without a parable. [35]This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet:

I will open my mouth in parables,
I will tell the things that were hidden
since the very foundation of the world.

The parable of the weeds explained

36Then Jesus left the crowds and went into the house. His disciples came and joined him.
'Explain to us', they said, 'the parable of the weeds in the field.'
37'The one who sows the good seed', said Jesus, 'is the son of man. 38The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom. The weeds are the children of the evil one; 39the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the close of the age, and the reapers are angels.
40'So: when the weeds are gathered and burned in the fire, that's what it will be like at the close of the age. 41The son of man will send out his angels, and they will collect together out of his kingdom everything that causes offence, and everyone who acts wickedly. 42They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father. If you have ears, then hear!'

Other parables

44'The kingdom of heaven', Jesus continued, 'is like treasure hidden in a field. Someone found it and hid it, and in great delight went off and sold everything he possessed, and bought that field.
45'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a trader who was looking for fine pearls, 46and who found one that was spectacularly valuable. He went off and sold everything he possessed, and bought it.
47'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea, and collected every type of fish. 48When it was full, the fishermen brought it to shore. They sat down and selected the good ones, which they put into a bucket; but they threw out the bad ones. 49That's what it will be like at the close of the age. The angels will go off and separate the wicked from the righteous, 50and they will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
51'Have you understood all this?' asked Jesus.
'Yes,' they answered.
52'Well, then,' he said to them, 'every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his storeroom some new things and some old things.'
53When Jesus had finished these parables, he went away from there.

Opposition in Nazareth

54Jesus came to the town where he had been brought up. He taught them in their synagogue, and they were astonished.
'Where did this fellow get this wisdom, and these powers?' they said.
55'Isn't he the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother called Mary, and his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judah? 56And aren't all his sisters here with us? So where does he get it all from?' 57They were offended by him.
So Jesus said to them, 'No prophet lacks respect – except in his own town and his own house!'
58And he didn't perform many mighty works there, because they didn't believe.

The death of John the Baptist

14 At that time Herod the Tetrarch heard reports about Jesus.
2'This fellow must be John the Baptist,' he said to his servants. 'He's been raised from the dead! That's why these powers are at work in him.'
3This is what had happened. Herod had seized John, tied him up and put him in prison because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. 4John had been telling him that it wasn't right for him to have her. 5Herod wanted to kill him, but he was afraid of the crowd, because they reckoned that John was a prophet.
6When Herod's birthday came round, the daughter of Herodias danced for the assembled company, and delighted Herod. 7So he swore a great oath that he would give her whatever she requested. 8Prompted by her mother, she said, 'Give me – here, on a platter – the head of John the Baptizer!' 9The king was sorry; but because of his oaths, and his guests, he gave orders for it to be given to her. 10He sent to the prison and had John beheaded. 11His head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she passed it on to her mother. 12His disciples came and took away the body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus.

The feeding of the five thousand

13When Jesus heard it, he went away from there in a boat to a deserted spot by himself. The crowds heard it, and followed him on foot from the towns. 14When he came out and saw the large crowd, he was sorry for them. He healed their sick.
15When it was evening, the disciples came to him.
'This is a deserted spot,' they said, 'and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away so that they can go into the villages and buy food for themselves.'
16'They don't need to go away,' said Jesus. 'You give them something to eat.'
17'All we have here', they said, 'is five loaves of bread and two fish.'

[18]‘Bring them here to me,’ he said.
[19]He told the crowds to sit down on the grass. Then he took the five loaves and the two fish and looked up to heaven. He blessed the loaves, broke them, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. [20]Everybody ate and was satisfied, and they picked up twelve baskets full of broken pieces. [21]There were about five thousand men who had eaten, besides women and children.
[22]Jesus at once made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the opposite shore, while he dismissed the crowds.

Jesus walks on water

[23]After he had sent the crowds away, Jesus went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came he was there by himself. [24]The boat had already gone some distance from the shore and was being smashed around by the waves, since the wind was against it.
[25]At the very dead of night he came towards them, walking on the water. [26]The disciples saw him walking on the sea and panicked. ‘It’s a ghost!’ they said, and they screamed in terror. [27]But Jesus at once spoke to them.
‘Cheer up,’ he said, ‘it’s me! Don’t be frightened!’
[28]‘If it’s really you, Master,’ said Peter in reply, ‘give me the word to come to you on the water.’
[29]‘Come along, then,’ said Jesus.
Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came towards Jesus. [30]But when he saw the strong wind he was afraid, and began to sink.
‘Master,’ he yelled, ‘rescue me!’
[31]Jesus at once reached out his hand and caught him.
‘A fine lot of faith you’ve got!’ he said. ‘Why did you doubt?’
[32]They got into the boat, and the wind died down. [33]The people in the boat worshipped him.
‘You really are God’s son!’ they said.
[34]So they crossed over to the land called Gennesaret. [35]The men of that region recognized him and sent word to all the surrounding district. They brought all their sick people to him, [36]and begged him to be allowed simply to touch the hem of his clothes. And everyone who touched it was cured.

Discussions of clean and unclean

15 At that time some Pharisees and scribes came from Jerusalem to Jesus. They had a question for him.
[2]‘Why’, they said, ‘do your disciples go against the tradition of the elders? They don’t wash their hands when they eat their food!’
[3]‘Why’, Jesus replied, ‘do *you* go against the command of God because of your tradition? [4]What God said was “Honour your father and mother” and “If anyone speaks evil of father or mother, they must certainly die.” [5]But you say, “If anyone says to father or mother, ‘What you might have gained from me is given to God’, [6]they don’t need to honour their father any more.” As a result, you make God’s word null and void because of your tradition.
[7]‘You play-actors! Isaiah had the right words for you in his prophecy:

[8]This people gives me honour with their lips,
their heart, however, holds me at arm’s length.
[9]The worship which they offer me is vain,
because they teach, as law, mere human precepts.’

The parable of clean and unclean

[10]Then Jesus called the crowd, and said to them, ‘Listen and understand. [11]What makes someone unclean isn’t what goes into the mouth. It’s what comes out of the mouth that makes someone unclean.’
[12]Then the disciples came to Jesus.
‘Do you know’, they said, ‘that the Pharisees were horrified when they heard what you said?’
[13]‘Every plant that my heavenly father hasn’t planted’, replied Jesus, ‘will be plucked up by the roots. [14]Let them be. They are blind guides. But if one blind person guides another, both of them will fall into a pit.’
[15]Peter spoke up. ‘Explain the riddle to us,’ he said.
[16]‘Are you still slow on the uptake as well?’ replied Jesus. [17]‘Don’t you understand that whatever goes into the mouth travels on into the stomach and goes out into the toilet? [18]But what comes out of the mouth begins in the heart, and that’s what makes someone unclean. [19]Out of the heart, you see, come evil plots, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, and blasphemy. [20]These are the things that make someone unclean. But eating with unwashed hands doesn’t make a person unclean.’

The Canaanite woman

[21]Jesus left that place and went off to the district of Tyre and Sidon. [22]A Canaanite woman from those parts came out and shouted, ‘Have pity on me, Lord, son of David! My daughter is demon-possessed! She’s in a bad way!’ [23]Jesus, however, said nothing at all to her.

His disciples came up.
'Please send her away!' they asked. 'She's shouting after us.'
[24]'I was only sent', replied Jesus, 'to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'
[25]The woman, however, came and threw herself down at his feet.
'Master,' she said, 'please help me!'
[26]'It isn't right', replied Jesus, 'to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.'
[27]'I know, Master. But even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from their master's table.'
[28]'You've got great faith, haven't you, my friend!' replied Jesus. 'All right; let it be as you wish.'
And her daughter was healed from that moment.

The feeding of the four thousand

[29]Jesus went away from there, and arrived beside the sea of Galilee. He went up the mountain and sat down. [30]Large crowds came to him, with their lame, blind, crippled, mute and many others. They laid them at his feet, and he healed them. [31]When the crowd saw the mute speaking, the crippled made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing, they were astonished, and they gave praise to the God of Israel.
[32]Jesus called his disciples, and said, 'I am really sorry for the crowd. They've been around me now for three days and they haven't got anything to eat. I don't want to send them away hungry; they might faint on the way home.'
[33]The disciples said to him, 'Where could we get enough bread to feed a crowd this size, out in the country like this?'
[34]'How many loaves have you got?' asked Jesus.
'Seven,' they replied, 'and a few fish.'
[35]Jesus told the crowd to sit down on the ground. [36]Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, gave thanks, broke them, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. [37]They all ate and were satisfied. And they picked up seven baskets full of what was left of the broken pieces. [38]There were four thousand men who had eaten, besides the women and children.
[39]Jesus sent the crowds away. Then he got into the boat and went over to the Magadan coast.

The leaven of the Pharisees

16 The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tried to catch him out by asking him to show them a sign from heaven.
[2]This was his reply to them: 'When it's evening you say, "Sky looks like wine, it's going to be fine." [3]And in the morning you say, "Red in the sky, rain by and by." Well then: you know how to work out the look of the sky, so why can't you work out the signs of the times? [4]The generation that wants a sign is wicked and corrupt! No sign will be given to it, except the sign of Jonah.'
With that, he left them and went away.
[5]When the disciples crossed over the lake, they forgot to bring any bread. [6]'Watch out,' said Jesus to them, 'and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.'
[7]They discussed it with each other. 'It's because we didn't bring any bread,' they said.
[8]But Jesus knew what they were thinking.
'You really are a little-faith lot!' he said. 'Why are you discussing with each other that you haven't got any bread? [9]Don't you understand, even now? Don't you remember the five loaves and the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you picked up afterwards? [10]Or the seven loaves and the four thousand, and how many baskets you picked up? [11]Why can't you see that I wasn't talking about bread? Watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees!'
[12]Then they understood that he wasn't telling them to beware of the leaven you get in bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Peter's declaration of Jesus' messiahship

[13]Jesus came to Caesarea Philippi. There he put this question to his disciples: 'Who do people say that the son of man is?'
[14]'John the Baptist,' they replied. 'Others say Elijah. Others say Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.'
[15]'What about you?' he asked them. 'Who do you say I am?'
[16]Simon Peter answered.
'You're the Messiah,' he said. 'You're the son of the living God!'
[17]'God's blessing on you, Simon, son of John!' answered Jesus. 'Flesh and blood didn't reveal that to you; it was my father in heaven. [18]And I've got something to tell you, too: you are Peter, the rock, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell won't overpower it. [19]I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you tie up on earth will have been tied up in heaven, and whatever you untie on earth will have been untied in heaven.'
[20]Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Jesus predicts his death

[21]From then on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he would have to go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders, chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised on the third day.
[22]Peter took him and began to tell him off. 'That's the last thing God would want, Master!' he said. 'That's never, ever going to

happen to you!'
[23]Jesus turned on Peter. 'Get behind me, satan!' he said. 'You're trying to trip me up! You're not looking at things like God does! You're looking at things like a mere mortal!'
[24]Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'If anyone wants to come after me, they must give themselves up, and pick up their cross, and follow me. [25]Yes: if someone wants to save their life, they must lose it; and if anyone loses their life for my sake they will find it. [26]What use will it be, otherwise, if you win the whole world but forfeit your true life? What will you give to get your life back? [27]You see, the son of man is going to "come in the glory of his father with his angels", and then "he will reward everyone for the work they have done". [28]I'm telling you the truth: some of those standing here will not taste death until they see "the son of man coming in his kingdom".'

The transfiguration

17 After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and James's brother John, and led them off up a high mountain by themselves. [2]There he was transformed in front of them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as light. [3]Then, astonishingly, Moses and Elijah appeared to them. They were talking with Jesus.
[4]Peter just had to say something. 'Master,' he said to Jesus, 'it's wonderful for us to be here! If you want, I'll make three shelters here – one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah!'
[5]While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them. Then there came a voice out of the cloud. 'This is my dear son,' said the voice, 'and I'm delighted with him. Pay attention to him.'
[6]When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were scared out of their wits. [7]Jesus came up and touched them.
'Get up,' he said, 'and don't be afraid.'
[8]When they raised their eyes, they saw nobody except Jesus, all by himself.

The question about Elijah

[9]As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them strict instructions. 'Don't tell anyone about the vision,' he said, 'until the son of man has been raised from the dead.'
[10]'So why', asked the disciples, 'do the scribes say that "Elijah must come first"?'
[11]'Elijah does indeed come,' replied Jesus, 'and "he will restore everything". [12]But let me tell you this: Elijah has already come, and they didn't recognize him! They did to him whatever they wanted. That's how the son of man, too, will suffer at their hands.'
[13]Then the disciples realized that he was talking to them about John the Baptist.

Faith that moves mountains

[14]When they came near the crowd, a man approached and knelt in front of him.
[15]'Master,' he said, 'take pity on my son! He suffers from awful fits which are frightful for him. He often falls into the fire, and often into the water. [16]I brought him to your disciples, but they couldn't cure him.'
[17]'You unbelieving and twisted generation!' responded Jesus. 'How much longer must I be with you? How much longer must I put up with you? Bring him here to me.'
[18]Then Jesus rebuked the demon and it came out of him. The boy was cured from that moment.
[19]The disciples came to Jesus in private. 'Why couldn't we cast it out?' they asked.
[20]'Because of your lack of faith,' Jesus replied. 'I'm telling you the truth: if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, "Move from here to there", and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.'

The Temple tax

[22]As they regathered in Galilee, Jesus said to them, 'The son of man is going to be given over into human hands. [23]They will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised.' And they were very sad.
[24]They came to Capernaum, where the officials who collected the Temple tax approached Peter.
'Your teacher pays the Temple tax, doesn't he?' they asked.
[25]'Yes,' he replied.
When he came into the house, Jesus spoke first, 'What d'you think, Simon? When the kings of the world collect taxes or duties, who do they collect them from? From their own families, or from outsiders?'
[26]'From outsiders,' he replied.
'Well then,' said Jesus, 'that means the families are free. [27]But we don't want to give them offence, do we? So why don't you go down to the sea and cast out a hook? The first fish you catch, open its mouth and you'll find a coin. Take that and give it to them for the two of us.'

Humility and danger

18 At that time the disciples came to Jesus.
'So, then,' they said, 'who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?'
[2]Jesus called a child and stood her in the middle of them.
[3]'I'm telling you the truth,' he said. 'Unless you turn inside out and become like children, you will never, ever, get into the

kingdom of heaven. [4]So if any of you make yourselves humble like this child, you will be great in the kingdom of heaven. [5]And if anyone welcomes one such child in my name, they welcome me.

[6]'Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to trip up,' he went on, 'it would be better for them to have a huge millstone hung around their neck and be drowned far out in the deep sea. [7]It's a terrible thing for the world that people will be made to stumble. Obstacles are bound to appear and trip people up, but it will be terrible for the person who makes them come.'

More about the 'little ones'

[8]'But if your hand or your foot causes you to trip up,' Jesus continued, 'cut it off and throw it away. It's better to enter into life crippled or lame than to go into eternal fire with both hands and both feet! [9]And if your eye causes you to trip up, pull it out and throw it away. Going into life with one eye is better than going into hell with two!

[10]'Take care not to despise one of these little ones. I tell you this: in heaven, their angels are always gazing on the face of my father who lives there.

[12]'How does it seem to you? If someone has a hundred sheep and one of them wanders off and goes missing, what will he do? He'll leave the ninety-nine on the hillside and go off after the one that's missing, won't he? [13]And when, eventually, he finds it, I'll tell you the truth: he will celebrate over that one more than over the ninety-nine who didn't go missing! [14]It's the same with your father in heaven. The last thing he wants is for a single one of these little ones to be lost.'

Reconciliation and prayer in the community

[15]'If another disciple sins against you,' Jesus continued, 'go and have it out, just between the two of you alone. If they listen to you, you've won back a brother or sister. [16]But if they won't listen, you should take with you one or two others, so that "everything may be established from the mouth of two or three witnesses". [17]If they won't listen to them, tell it to the assembly. And if they won't listen to the assembly, you should treat such a person like you would a Gentile or a tax-collector. [18]I'm telling you the truth: whatever you tie up on earth will have been tied up in heaven; and whatever you untie on earth will have been untied in heaven.

[19]'Again, let me tell you the truth: if two of you come to an agreement on earth about any matter that you want to ask, it will be done for you by my father in heaven. [20]Yes: where two or three come together in my name, I'll be there in the midst of them.'

The challenge of forgiveness

[21]Then Peter came to Jesus.

'Master,' he said, 'how many times must I forgive my brother when he sins against me? As many as seven times?'

[22]'I wouldn't say seven times,' replied Jesus. 'Why not – seventy times seven?

[23]'So, you see,' he went on, 'the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle up accounts with his servants. [24]As he was beginning to sort it all out, one man was brought before him who owed ten thousand talents. [25]He had no means of paying it back, so the master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and everything he possessed, and payment to be made.

[26]'So the servant fell down and prostrated himself before the master.

'"Be patient with me," he said, "and I'll pay you everything!"

[27]'The master was very sorry for the servant, and let him off. He forgave him the loan.

[28]'But that servant went out and found one of his fellow-servants, who owed him a hundred dinars. He seized him and began to throttle him. "Pay me back what you owe me!" he said.

[29]'The colleague fell down and begged him, "Be patient with me, and I'll pay you!"

[30]'But he refused, and went and threw him into prison until he could pay the debt.

[31]'So when his fellow-servants saw what had happened, they were very upset. They went and informed their master about the whole affair. [32]Then his master summoned him.

'"You're a scoundrel of a servant!" he said to him. "I let you off the whole debt, because you begged me to. [33]Shouldn't you have taken pity on your colleague, like I took pity on you?"

[34]'His master was angry, and handed him over to the torturers, until he had paid the whole debt. [35]And that's what my heavenly father will do to you, unless each of you forgives your brother or sister from your heart.'

The question about divorce

19 So this is what happened next. When Jesus had finished saying all this, he went away from Galilee and came to the region of Judaea across the Jordan. [2]Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.

[3]Some Pharisees approached him with a trick question.

'Is it lawful', they asked, 'for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?'

[4]'Haven't you read', he replied, 'that the creator from the beginning "made them male and female"? [5]And this is what he said: "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." [6]As a result, they are no longer two, but one flesh. So humans shouldn't split up what God has joined together.'

[7]'So then,' they asked, 'why did Moses give the regulation that one should give the woman a certificate of divorce and make the separation legal?'

[8]'Moses gave you this instruction about how to divorce your wives,' replied Jesus, 'because your hearts were hard. But that's

not how it was at the beginning. [9]Let me tell you this: anyone who divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman, commits adultery.'

Marriage, celibacy and children

[10]The disciples said to Jesus, 'If that's the situation of a man with his wife, it would be better not to marry!'
[11]'Not everyone can accept this word,' replied Jesus; 'only the people it's given to. [12]You see, there are some eunuchs who are that way from birth. There are some who have been made eunuchs by others. And there are some who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. If anyone can receive this, let them do so.'
[13]Then children were brought to Jesus for him to lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to them. [14]But Jesus said, 'Let the children come to me! Don't stop them! They are the sort the kingdom of heaven belongs to!' [15]And he laid his hands on them.
Then he moved on elsewhere.

The rich young man

[16]Suddenly a man came up to Jesus. 'Teacher,' he asked, 'what good thing must I do if I'm to possess the life of the age to come?'
[17]'Why come to me with questions about what's good?' retorted Jesus. 'There is One who is good! If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.'
[18]'Which ones?' he asked.
'These ones,' Jesus answered: '"don't murder, don't commit adultery, don't steal, don't tell lies under oath, [19]respect your father and mother", and "love your neighbour as yourself".'
[20]'I've kept the lot,' said the young man. 'What am I still short of?'
[21]'If you want to complete the set,' Jesus replied, 'go and sell everything you own and give it to the poor. That way you'll have treasure in heaven! Then come and follow me.'
[22]When the young man heard him say that, he went away very sad. He had many possessions.

The first and the last

[23]Jesus said to his disciples, 'I'm telling you the truth: it's very hard for a rich person to get into the kingdom of heaven. [24]Let me say it again: it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter God's kingdom.'
[25]The disciples were completely flabbergasted when they heard that. 'So who then can be saved?' they asked.
[26]Jesus looked round at them. 'Humanly speaking,' he replied, 'it's impossible. But everything's possible with God.'
[27]Then Peter spoke up. 'Look here,' he said, 'we've left everything behind and followed you. What can we expect?'
[28]'I'm telling you the truth,' Jesus replied. 'In God's great new world, when the son of man sits on his glorious throne, those of you who have followed me will sit on twelve thrones – yes, you! – and rule over the twelve tribes of Israel. [29]And anyone who's left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or estates because of my name will get back a hundred times over, and will inherit the life of that new age. [30]But many at the front will find themselves at the back, and the back ones at the front.'

The workers in the vineyard

20 'So you see,' Jesus continued, 'the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. [2]He agreed with the workers to give them a dinar a day, and sent them off to his vineyard.
[3]'He went out again in the middle of the morning, and saw some others standing in the market-place with nothing to do.
[4]'"You too can go to the vineyard," he said, "and I'll give you what's right." [5]So off they went.
'He went out again about midday, and then in the middle of the afternoon, and did the same. [6]Then, with only an hour of the day left, he went out and found other people standing there.
'"Why are you standing here all day with nothing to do?" he asked them.
[7]'"Because no one has hired us," they replied.
'"Well," he said, "you too can go into the vineyard."
[8]'When evening came, the vineyard-owner said to his servant, "Call the workers and give them their pay. Start with the last, and go on to the first."
[9]'So the ones who had worked for one hour came, and each of them received a dinar. [10]When the first ones came, they thought they would get something more; but they, too, each received a dinar.
[11]'When they had been given it, they grumbled against the landowner. [12]"This lot who came in last", they said, "have only worked for one hour – and they've been put on a level with us! And we did all the hard work, all day, and in the heat as well!"
[13]'"My friend," he said to one of them, "I'm not doing you any wrong. You agreed with me on one dinar, didn't you? [14]Take it! It's yours! And be on your way. I want to give this fellow who came at the end the same as you. [15]Or are you suggesting that I'm not allowed to do what I like with my own money? Or are you giving me the evil eye because I'm good?"
[16]'So those at the back will be at the front, and the front ones at the back.'

The cup he had to drink

[17]Jesus was on his way up to Jerusalem. He took the twelve disciples aside in private, while they were on the road, and said to

them, [18]‘Look here. We’re going up to Jerusalem. The son of man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they’re going to condemn him to death. [19]They will hand him over to the pagans, and they’re going to mock him, flog him and crucify him. And on the third day he will be raised.’

[20]Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came up, with her sons, to Jesus. She bowed low in front of him and indicated that she had a special request to make.

[21]‘What d’you want?’ he asked her.

‘It’s about these two sons of mine,’ she said to him. ‘Please say that, when you’re king, they may sit, one at your right hand and one at your left.’

[22]‘You don’t know what you’re asking for,’ said Jesus. ‘Can you two drink the cup I’m going to drink?’

‘Yes, we can,’ they replied.

[23]‘Well,’ said Jesus, ‘so you will drink my cup, then! But sitting at my right and left is not something I can grant. That’s up to my father to give to whoever he has in mind.’

[24]When the other ten heard this they were annoyed with the two brothers. [25]But Jesus called them together.

‘You know how it is with pagan rulers,’ he said. ‘They lord it over their subjects. They get all high and mighty and let everybody know it. [26]But that’s not how it’s to be with you. If any of you wants to be great, he must be your servant. [27]If any of you wants to be first, he must be the slave of all. [28]That’s how it is with the son of man: he didn’t come to have servants obey him, but to *be* a servant – and to give his life as “a ransom for many”.’

The healing of two blind men

[29]As they were going out of Jericho, a large crowd was following Jesus. [30]Just then two blind men were sitting by the wayside, and heard that Jesus was going by. ‘Have pity on us, Master, son of David!’ they shouted.

[31]The crowd scolded them and told them to be silent. But they shouted out all the more, ‘Have pity on us, Master, son of David!’

[32]Jesus came to a stop. He called them.

‘What d’you want me to do for you?’ he asked.

[33]‘Master,’ they replied, ‘we want you to open our eyes.’

[34]Jesus was very moved. He touched their eyes. At once they could see again, and they followed him.

Jesus rides into Jerusalem

21 When they came near to Jerusalem, and arrived at Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of the disciples on ahead.

[2]‘Go into the village over there,’ he said, ‘and at once you’ll find a donkey tied up, and a foal beside it. Untie them and bring them to me. [3]And if anyone says anything to you, say, “The master needs them, and he’ll send them back straight away.”’

He sent them off at once.

[4]This happened so that the prophet’s words might be fulfilled:

> [5]Tell this to Zion’s daughter:
> look now! Here comes your king;
> he’s humble, mounted on an ass,
> yes, on a foal, its young.

[6]So the disciples went off and did as Jesus had told them. [7]They brought the donkey and its foal, and put their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them.

[8]The huge crowd spread their cloaks on the road . Others cut branches from the trees and scattered them on the road. [9]The crowds who went on ahead of him, and those who were following behind, shouted out,

> Hosanna now to David’s Son!
> God’s blessing on the coming one –
> the one who comes in the Lord’s own name!
> Hosanna in the highest!

[10]When they came into Jerusalem, the whole city was gripped with excitement.

‘Who is this?’ they were saying.

[11]‘This is the prophet, Jesus,’ replied the crowds, ‘from Nazareth in Galilee!’

The Temple and the fig tree

[12]Jesus went into the Temple and threw out all the people who were buying and selling in the Temple. He upturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of the dove-sellers.

[13]‘This is what the Bible says,’ he said to them,

> My house will be called a house of prayer –
> but you have made it a brigands’ lair!’

[14]The blind and the lame came to him in the Temple, and he healed them. [15]But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the remarkable things he was doing, and the children shouting out ‘Hosanna to David’s son!’ in the Temple, they were very cross.
[16]‘Do you hear what they’re saying?’ they asked Jesus.
‘Yes,’ said Jesus. ‘Did you never read what it says,

You called forth praise to rise to you
from newborn babes and infants too!’

[17]Then he left them, and went out of the city to Bethany, where he stayed the night.
[18]Early the next morning Jesus went back to the city. He was hungry. [19]He saw a single fig tree beside the road, but when he came up to it he found nothing on it except leaves.
‘May you never bear fruit, ever again!’ he said to it. Instantly the fig tree withered up.
[20]The disciples saw it, and were astonished.
‘Look how quickly the fig tree has withered up!’ they said.
[21]‘I’m telling you the truth,’ replied Jesus. ‘If you have faith, and don’t doubt, you will not only be able to do this to a fig tree, but if you say to this mountain, “Be lifted up and thrown into the sea”, it will happen. [22]Whatever you ask in prayer, you’ll get it, if you believe.’

The question about John

[23]Jesus went into the Temple. As he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him.
‘By what right are you doing these things?’ they asked him. ‘Who gave you this right?’
[24]‘I’m going to ask you one question, too,’ replied Jesus, ‘and if you tell me the answer then I’ll tell you by what right I’m doing these things. [25]Where did John’s baptism come from? Was it from heaven, or from this world?’
They debated this among themselves. ‘If we say “from heaven”,’ they said, ‘he’s going to say to us, “So why didn’t you believe him?” [26]But if we say “from this world”, we’ll have to watch out for the crowd, because they all reckon that John was a prophet.’
[27]So they answered Jesus, ‘We don’t know.’
‘Well, then,’ said Jesus, ‘nor will I tell you by what right I’m doing these things.
[28]‘What d’you think?’ he went on. ‘Once upon a time there was a man who had two sons.
‘He went to the first one and said, “Now then, my boy, off you go and do a day’s work in the vineyard.”
[29]‘“Don’t want to,” replied the son; but afterwards he thought better of it and went.
[30]‘He went to the other son and said the same thing.
‘“Certainly, Master,” he said; but he didn’t go.
[31]‘So which of the two did what his father wanted?’
‘The first,’ they answered.
‘I’m telling you the truth,’ Jesus said to them. ‘The tax-collectors and prostitutes are going into God’s kingdom ahead of you! [32]Yes: John came to you, in accordance with God’s righteous covenant plan, and you didn’t believe him – but the tax-collectors and prostitutes believed him. But when you saw it, you didn’t think better of it afterwards and believe him.’

The parable of the tenants

[33]‘Listen to another parable,’ Jesus went on. ‘Once upon a time there was a householder who planted a vineyard, built a wall for it, dug out a wine-press in it, and built a tower. Then he let it out to tenant farmers and went away on a journey.
[34]‘When harvest time arrived, he sent his slaves to the farmers to collect his produce. [35]The farmers seized his slaves; they beat one, killed another, and stoned another. [36]Again he sent other slaves, more than before, and they treated them in the same way. [37]Finally he sent his son to them.
‘“They’ll respect my son,” he said.
[38]‘But the farmers saw the son.
‘“This fellow’s the heir!” they said among themselves. “Come on, let’s kill him, and then we can take over the property!”
[39]‘So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.
[40]‘Now then: when the vineyard-owner returns, what will he do to those farmers?’
[41]‘He’ll kill them brutally, the wretches!’ they said. ‘And he’ll lease the vineyard to other farmers who’ll give him the produce at the right time.’
[42]‘Did you never read what the Bible says?’ said Jesus to them:

The stone the builders threw away
is now atop the corner;
it’s from the Lord, all this, they say
and we looked on in wonder.

[43]‘So then let me tell you this: God’s kingdom is going to be taken away from you and given to a nation that will produce the goods. [44]Anyone who falls on this stone will be smashed to pieces, and anyone it falls on will be crushed.’
[45]When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they knew he was talking about them. [46]They tried to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowds, who regarded him as a prophet.

The parable of the wedding feast

22 Jesus spoke to them once again in parables.
[2]‘The kingdom of heaven’, he said, ‘is like a king who made a wedding feast for his son. [3]He sent his slaves to call the invited guests to the wedding, and they didn’t want to come.
[4]‘Again he sent other slaves, with these instructions: “Say to the guests, Look! I’ve got my dinner ready; my bulls and fatted calves have been killed; everything is prepared. Come to the wedding!”
[5]‘But they didn’t take any notice. They went off, one to his own farm, another to see to his business. [6]The others laid hands on his slaves, abused them and killed them. [7](The king was angry, and sent his soldiers to destroy those murderers and burn down their city.) [8]Then he said to his slaves, “The wedding is ready, but the guests didn’t deserve it. [9]So go to the roads leading out of town, and invite everyone you find to the wedding.” [10]The slaves went off into the streets and rounded up everyone they found, bad and good alike. And the wedding was filled with partygoers.
[11]‘But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who wasn’t wearing a wedding suit.
[12]‘“My friend,” he said to him, “how did you get in here without a wedding suit?” And he was speechless. [13]Then the king said to the servants, “Tie him up, hands and feet, and throw him into the darkness outside, where people weep and grind their teeth.”
[14]‘Many are called, you see, but few are chosen.’

Paying taxes to Caesar

[15]Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might trap him into saying the wrong thing. [16]They sent their followers to him, with the Herodians.
‘Teacher,’ they said, ‘we know that you are truthful, and that you teach God’s way truthfully. You don’t care what anyone thinks about you, because you don’t try to flatter people or favour them. [17]So tell us what you think. Is it lawful to pay tribute to Caesar, or not?’
[18]Jesus knew their evil intentions.
‘Why are you trying to trick me, you hypocrites?’ he said. [19]‘Show me the tribute coin.’ They brought him a dinar.
[20]‘This . . . image,’ said Jesus, ‘and this . . . inscription. Who do they belong to?’
[21]‘Caesar,’ they said.
‘Well then,’ said Jesus, ‘you’d better give Caesar back what belongs to Caesar! And – give God what belongs to God!’
[22]When they heard that they were astonished. They left him and went away.

The question of the resurrection

[23]The same day some Sadducees came to him. (The Sadducees deny the resurrection.) Their question was this.
[24]‘Teacher,’ they began, ‘Moses said, “If a man dies without children, his brother should marry his widow and raise up seed for his brother.” [25]Well now, there were seven brothers living among us. The first got married, and then died, and since he didn’t have children he left his wife to his brother. [26]The same thing happened with the second and the third, and so on with all seven. [27]Last of all the woman died. [28]So: in the resurrection, whose wife will she be, of all the seven? All of them had married her, after all.’
[29]This was Jesus’ answer to them: ‘You are quite mistaken,’ he said, ‘because you don’t know your Bibles or God’s power. [30]In the resurrection, you see, people don’t marry or get married off; they are like angels in heaven. [31]But as for the resurrection of the dead, did you never read what was said to you by God, in these words: [32]“I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?” He isn’t God of the dead, but of the living.’
[33]The crowds heard this, and they were astonished at his teaching.

The Great Commandment, and David’s Master

[34]When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they got together in a group. [35]One of them, a lawyer, put him on the spot with this question.
[36]‘Teacher,’ he said, ‘which is the most important commandment in the law?’
[37]‘You must love the Lord your God’, replied Jesus, ‘with all your heart, with all your life, and with all your mind. [38]This is the first commandment, and it’s the one that really matters. [39]The second is similar, and it’s this: You must love your neighbour as yourself. [40]The entire law hangs on these two commandments – and that goes for the prophets, too.’
[41]While the Pharisees were gathered there, Jesus asked them, [42]‘What’s your view of the Messiah? Whose son is he?’
‘David’s,’ they said to him.
[43]‘Why then’, said Jesus, ‘does David (speaking by the spirit) call him “Master”, when he says,

[44]The Master says to my master,
sit here at my right hand,
until I place your enemies
down beneath your feet.

[45]‘If David calls him “Master”, how can he be his son?’
[46]Nobody was able to answer him a single word. From that day on nobody dared ask him anything any more.

Warnings against scribes and Pharisees

23 Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples: [2]‘The scribes and Pharisees’, he said, ‘sit on the seat of Moses. [3]So you must do whatever they tell you, and keep it, but don’t do the things they do. You see, they *talk* but they don’t *do*. [4]They tie up heavy bundles which are difficult to carry, and they dump them on people’s shoulders – but they themselves aren’t prepared to lift a little finger to move them!

[5]‘Everything they do is for show, to be seen by people. Yes, they make their prayer-boxes large and their prayer-tassels long, [6]and they love the chief places at dinners, the main seats in the synagogues, [7]the greetings in the market-places, and having people call them “Rabbi”.

[8]‘You mustn’t be called “Rabbi”. You have one teacher, and you are all one family. [9]And you shouldn’t call anyone “father” on earth, because you have one father, in heaven. [10]Nor should you be called “teacher”, because you have one teacher, the Messiah.

[11]‘The greatest among you should be your servant. [12]People who make themselves great will be humbled; and people who humble themselves will become great.’

Condemnation of scribes and Pharisees (1)

[13]‘Woe betide you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites!’ Jesus continued. ‘You lock up the kingdom of heaven in front of people’s faces. You don’t go in yourselves, and when other people try to enter, you stop them.

[15]‘Woe betide you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You cross sea and land to make one single Gentile take up Judaism, and when that happens you make the convert twice as much a child of Gehenna as you are yourselves.

[16]‘Woe betide you, you blind guides! This is what you say: “If anyone swears by the Temple, it’s nothing; but if anyone swears by the gold in the Temple, the oath is valid.” [17]How crazy and blind can you get! Which is greater, the gold, or the Temple that makes the gold sacred? [18]And you say, “If anyone swears by the altar, it’s nothing; but if anyone swears by the gift on it, the oath is valid.” [19]How blind you are! Which is greater, the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? [20]So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. [21]And whoever swears by the Temple swears by it and by the one who lives in it. [22]And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by the one who sits on it.’

Condemnation of scribes and Pharisees (2)

[23]‘Woe betide you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites!’ Jesus went on. ‘You tithe mint and dill and cumin, and you omit the serious matters of the law like justice, mercy and loyalty. You should have done these, without neglecting the others. [24]You’re blind guides! You filter out a gnat, but you gulp down a camel!

[25]‘Woe betide you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You scrub the outside of the cup and the dish, but the inside is full of extortion and moral flabbiness. [26]You blind Pharisee, first make the inside of the cup clean, and then the outside will be clean as well.

[27]‘Woe betide you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You’re like whitewashed graves, which look very fine on the outside, but inside they are full of the bones of the dead and uncleanness of every kind. [28]That’s like you: on the outside you appear to be virtuous and law-abiding, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

[29]‘Woe betide you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build the tombs of the prophets, and you decorate the memorials of the righteous, [30]and you say, “If we’d lived in the days of our ancestors, we wouldn’t have gone along with them in killing the prophets.” [31]So you testify against yourselves that you are the children of the people who murdered the prophets! [32]Well then, go ahead: complete the work your ancestors began! [33]You snakes, you nest of vipers, how can you escape the judgment of Gehenna?’

Judgment on Jerusalem and its leaders

[34]‘Because of all this,’ Jesus concluded, ‘I’m sending you prophets, wise men and scribes. Some of them you will kill and crucify. Some of them you will whip in your synagogues. You’ll chase them from town to town. [35]That’s how all the righteous blood that’s been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah – you murdered him between sanctuary and altar – all that blood will come upon you. [36]I’m telling you the solemn truth: it will all come on this generation.

[37]‘Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often have I longed to gather up your children, the way a hen gathers up her brood under her wings, and you didn’t want me to! [38]Now, see here: your house has been abandoned by God; it’s a ruin. [39]Yes, I tell you: you won’t see me again from now on until you say, “God’s blessing on the coming one, the one who comes in the Lord’s own name!”’

The beginning of the birth pangs

24 Jesus left the Temple and went away. As he did so, his disciples came and pointed out the Temple buildings to him. [2]‘Yes,’ he said, ‘and you see all these things? I’m telling you the truth: not one stone will be left standing upon another. All of them will be thrown down.’

[3]As he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, his disciples came to him privately.

‘Tell us,’ they said, ‘when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that you are going to appear as king, and that the end of the age is upon us?’

[4]‘Watch out,’ replied Jesus. ‘Don’t let anyone deceive you. [5]You see, there will be several who will come along, using my

name, telling you "I'm the Messiah!" They will fool lots of people. [6]You're going to hear about wars, actual wars and rumoured ones; make sure you don't get alarmed. This has got to happen, but it doesn't mean the end is coming yet. [7]Nations will rise against one another, and kingdoms against each other. There will be famines and earthquakes here and there. [8]All this is just the start of the birthpangs.

[9]'Then they will hand you over to be tortured, and they will kill you. You will be hated by all nations because of my name. [10]Then several will find the going too hard, and they will betray each other and hate each other. [11]Many false prophets will arise, and they will deceive plenty of people. [12]And because lawlessness will be on the increase, many will find their love growing cold. [13]But the one who lasts out to the end will be delivered. [14]And this gospel of the kingdom must be announced to the whole world, as a witness to all the nations. Then the end will come.'

The desolating sacrilege

[15]'So when you see "the sacrilege that desolates", as Daniel the prophet put it, "standing in the holy place" (the reader should understand), [16]then those who are in Judaea should take to their heels and run to the mountains. [17]If you're up on your roof, don't go down into the house to get things out. [18]If you're in the fields, don't go back to pick up your cloak. [19]It's going to be terrible for pregnant and nursing women during those days. [20]Pray that it won't be winter when you have to run away, or for that matter a sabbath. [21]Yes: there's going to be such great suffering then as has never been since the start of the world until now – no, and won't ever be again. [22]And if those days had not been shortened, nobody at all would have been rescued. But for the sake of God's chosen ones those days will be shortened.

[23]'Then if anyone says to you, "Look! Here is the Messiah!" or "Look! There he is!", don't believe them. [24]False messiahs will arise, you see, and false prophets too. They will provide great signs and portents, so as to deceive even God's chosen ones, if that were possible. [25]Remember, I'm telling you this beforehand!

[26]'So if someone says to you, "Look! He's out in the wilderness", don't go out. If they say, "Look, he's in the inner room", don't believe them. [27]You see, the royal appearing of the son of man will be like the lightning that comes from the East and flashes across to the West. [28]Where the carcass is, there the vultures will gather.'

The coming of the son of man

[29]'Straight away,' Jesus continued, 'after the suffering that those days will bring,

The sun will turn to darkness,
and the moon won't give its light;
the stars will fall from heaven,
and the powers of heaven will shake.

[30]'And then the sign of the son of man will appear in heaven; then all the tribes of the earth will mourn. They will see "the son of man coming on the clouds of heaven" with power and great glory. [31]He will send off his messengers with a great trumpet-blast, and they will collect his chosen ones from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

[32]'Learn the hidden meaning from the fig tree. When its branch begins to sprout, and to push out its leaves, then you know that summer is nearly there. [33]So with you: when you see all these things, you will know that it is near, at the very gates. [34]I'm telling you the truth: this generation won't be gone before all these things happen. [35]Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never, ever disappear.'

The unexpected coming

[36]'Nobody knows what day or time this will happen,' Jesus went on. 'The angels in heaven don't know it, and nor does the son; only the father knows. [37]You see, the royal appearing of the son of man will be like the days of Noah.

[38]'What does that mean? Well, in those days, before the flood, they were eating and drinking, they were getting married and giving children in marriage, right up to the day when Noah went into the ark. [39]They didn't know about it until the flood came and swept them all away. That's what it'll be like at the royal appearing of the son of man.

[40]'On that day there will be two people working in the field. One will be taken, the other will be left. [41]There will be two women grinding corn in the mill. One will be taken, the other will be left.

[42]'So keep alert! You don't know what day your master will come. [43]But bear this in mind: if the householder had known what time of night the burglar was going to come, he would have stayed awake and wouldn't have let his house get broken into. [44]So you too must be ready! The son of man is coming at a time you don't expect.'

The wise and wicked slaves

[45]'So,' Jesus went on, 'who then is the trustworthy and sensible slave, the one the master will set over his household, so that he will give them their meals at the right time? [46]Blessings on the servant whom the master, when he comes, finds doing just that. [47]I'm telling you the truth: he'll promote him to be over all his belongings. [48]But if the wicked slave says in his heart, "My master's taking his time", [49]and starts to beat the other slaves, and to feast and drink with the drunkards, [50]the master of that slave will come on a day he doesn't expect, and at a time he doesn't know. [51]He will cut him in two, and put him along with the

hypocrites, where people will weep and grind their teeth.'

The wise and foolish girls

25 'Then,' continued Jesus, 'the kingdom of heaven will be like ten girls who each took their own torches and went out to meet
the bridegroom. [2]Five of them were silly, and five were sensible. [3]The silly ones took their torches, but didn't take oil with
them. [4]The sensible ones took oil, in flasks, along with their torches.
[5]'The bridegroom took his time coming, and they all nodded off and went to sleep. [6]In the middle of the night a shout went up:
"Here's the bridegroom! Come on and meet him!" [7]Then all the girls got up and trimmed the wicks of their torches.
[8]'The silly ones said to the sensible ones, "Give us some of your oil! Our torches are going out!"
[9]'But the sensible ones answered, "No! If we do that, there won't be enough for all of us together! You'd better go to the
dealers and buy some for yourselves."
[10]'So off they went to buy oil. But, while they were gone, the bridegroom arrived. The ones who were ready went in with him
to the wedding party, and the door was shut.
[11]'Later on the other girls came back. "Master, Master!" they said. "Open the door for us!"
[12]'"I'm telling you the truth," he said, "I don't know you."
[13]'So keep awake! You don't know the day or the hour.'

The parable of the talents

[14]'This is what it will be like,' Jesus went on. 'It will be like a man who was going off on a journey. He summoned his slaves, and
handed over control of his property to them. [15]He gave five talents to the first, two to the next, and one to the last – each according
to his ability. Then he left.
'Straight away [16]the man who had been given the five talents went out and traded with them, and made five more. [17]Similarly,
the one who had received two talents went and made another two. [18]But the one who received a single talent went and dug a hole
in the ground, and hid his master's money.
[19]'After a long time, the master of those slaves came back and settled accounts with them. [20]The man who had received five
talents came forward and gave him the other five talents. "Master," he said, "you gave me five talents. Look: I've made another
five!" [21]"Well done indeed," said his master. "You're an excellent slave, and loyal too! You've been trustworthy with small
things, and now I'm going to put you in charge of bigger ones. Come and join your master's celebration!"
[22]'Then the man who had had the two talents came forward. "Master," he said, "you gave me two talents. Look: I've made
another two!" [23]"Well done indeed," said his master. "You're an excellent slave, and loyal too! You've been trustworthy with
small things, and now I'm going to put you in charge of bigger ones. Come and join your master's celebration!"
[24]'Then the man who had had the one talent came forward. "Master," he said, "I knew that you were a hard man. You reap
where you didn't sow, and you profit from things you never invested in. [25]So I was scared! I went and hid your talent in the
ground. Here it is: it's yours, you can have it back."
[26]'"You're a wicked and lazy slave!" answered his master. "So! You knew that I reap where I didn't sow, and profit from
investments I never made? [27]Then you should have put my money with the bankers, and when I returned I would have received
back what I had with interest!
[28]'"So take the talent from him," he went on, "and give it to the man who has ten talents." [29](If someone already has something,
you see, they will be given more, and they'll have plenty. But if someone has nothing, even what they have will be taken away
from them.) [30]"But as for this useless slave, throw him outside in the dark, where people weep and grind their teeth."'

The sheep and the goats

[31]'When the son of man comes in his glory,' Jesus went on, 'and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.
[32]All the nations will be assembled in front of him, and he will separate them from one another, like a shepherd separates the
sheep from the goats. [33]He will stand the sheep at his right hand, and the goats at his left.
[34]'Then the king will say to those on his right, "Come here, you people who my father has blessed. Inherit the kingdom
prepared for you from the foundation of the world! [35]Why? Because I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty
and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you made me welcome. [36]I was naked and you clothed me; I was sick
and you looked after me; I was in prison and you came to me."
[37]'Then the righteous will answer him, "Master, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink?
[38]When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? [39]When did we see you sick or in prison and come
to see you?"
[40]'Then the king will answer them, "I'm telling you the truth: when you did it to one of the least significant of my brothers and
sisters here, you did it to me."
[41]'Then he will say to those on his left hand, "Get away from me! You're accursed! Go to the everlasting fire prepared for the
devil and his angels! [42]Why? Because I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat! I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to
drink! [43]I was a stranger and you didn't welcome me; I was naked and you didn't clothe me; I was sick and in prison and you
didn't look after me!"
[44]'Then they too will answer, "Master, when did we see you hungry or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and
didn't do anything for you?"

[45]‘Then he will answer them, “I’m telling you the truth: when you didn’t do it for one of the least significant of my brothers and sisters here, you didn’t do it for me.”
[46]‘And they will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous will go into everlasting life.’

Preparations for Jesus’ death

26 So this is how it finally happened.
When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, [2]‘In two days’ time, as you know, it’ll be Passover! That’s when the son of man will be handed over to be crucified.’
[3]Then the chief priests got together with the elders of the people, in the official residence of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas. [4]They plotted how to capture Jesus by some trick, and kill him.
[5]‘We’d better not try anything at the feast,’ they said. ‘We don’t want the people to riot.’
[6]While Jesus was at Bethany, in the house of Simon (known as ‘the Leper’), [7]a woman came to him who had an alabaster vase of extremely valuable ointment. She poured it on his head as he was reclining at the table.
[8]When the disciples saw it, they were furious.
‘What’s the point of all this waste?’ they said. [9]‘This could have been sold for a fortune, and the money could have been given to the poor!’
[10]Jesus knew what they were thinking.
‘Why make life difficult for the woman?’ he said. ‘It’s a lovely thing, what she’s done for me. [11]You always have the poor with you, don’t you? But you won’t always have me. [12]When she poured this ointment on my body, you see, she did it to prepare me for my burial. [13]I’m telling you the truth: wherever this gospel is announced in all the world, what she has just done will be told, and people will remember her.’

Passover and betrayal

[14]Then one of the Twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests.
[15]‘What will you give me’, he said, ‘to hand him over to you?’
They settled the deal with him at thirty pieces of silver. [16]From that moment on, he was watching for an opportunity to hand him over.
[17]On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples said to Jesus, ‘Where do you want us to get the Passover ready for you to eat it?’
[18]‘Go into the city’, he said, ‘to a certain man, and say to him, “The Teacher says, ‘My time is very close. I’m going to keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.’”’
[19]So the disciples did as Jesus had told them, and got the Passover ready.
[20]When evening came, he settled down with the Twelve. [21]As they were eating, he said, ‘I’m telling you the truth: one of you will betray me.’ [22]They were extremely upset, and began to say one by one, ‘It’s not me, is it, Master?’
[23]‘It’s one who’s dipped his hand with me in the dish,’ Jesus replied. ‘That’s the one who will betray me. [24]The son of man is on his way, as the Bible said it would happen, but it’s misery for the man who hands him over. It would be better for that man if he’d never been born.’
[25]At this, Judas, who was planning to betray him, said, ‘It isn’t me, is it, Teacher?’
‘You’ve just said so,’ he replied.

The Last Supper

[26]As they were eating, Jesus took some bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to the disciples.
‘Take it and eat it,’ he said, ‘this is my body.’
[27]Then he took a cup; and, after giving thanks, he gave it to them.
‘Drink this, all of you,’ he said. [28]‘This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. [29]But let me tell you this: I will not drink any more from this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in the kingdom of my father.’
[30]They sang a hymn, and went out to the Mount of Olives.
[31]Then Jesus said to them, ‘You are all going to stumble and fall tonight because of me. This is what the Bible says, you see:

I shall strike the shepherd,
and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.

[32]‘But after I am raised up, I shall go on ahead of you to Galilee.’
[33]‘Even if everyone else trips and falls,’ said Peter in reply to him, ‘I’m never going to do that!’
[34]‘I’m telling you the truth,’ said Jesus to him, ‘this very night, before the cock has crowed, you will deny me three times.’
[35]‘Even if I have to die with you,’ said Peter to him, ‘I won’t ever deny you!’
And all the disciples said the same.

Gethsemane

[36]So Jesus went with them to the place called Gethsemane.
‘You sit here,’ he said to the disciples, ‘while I go over there and pray.’
[37]He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with him, and began to be very upset and distressed.
[38]‘My soul is overwhelmed with grief,’ he said, ‘even to death. Stay here and keep watch with me.’
[39]Then, going a little further on, he fell on his face and prayed.
‘My father,’ he said, ‘if it’s possible – please, please let this cup go away from me! But . . . not what I want, but what you want.’
[40]He came back to the disciples and found them asleep.
‘So,’ he said to Peter, ‘couldn’t you keep watch with me for a single hour? [41]Watch and pray so that you don’t get pulled down into the time of testing. The spirit is eager, but the body is weak.’
[42]Again, for the second time, he went off and said, ‘My father, if it’s not possible for this to pass unless I drink it, let your will be done.’
[43]Again he came and found them asleep; their eyes were heavy. [44]Once more he left them and went away. He prayed for the third time, using the same words once again. [45]Then he came back to the disciples.
‘You can sleep now,’ he said, ‘and have a good rest! Look – the time has come, and the son of man is given over into the hands of wicked people! [46]Get up and let’s be going. Look! Here comes the one who’s going to betray me!’

Jesus is arrested

[47]While Jesus was still speaking, there was Judas, one of the Twelve. He had come with a large crowd, with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. [48]The one who was intending to betray him gave them a sign: ‘The one I kiss – that’s him! Grab hold of him!’
[49]So he went up at once to Jesus and said ‘Greetings, Teacher!’, and kissed him.
[50]‘My friend,’ said Jesus, ‘what have you come to do?’
Then they came and laid hands on Jesus, and arrested him.
[51]At that, one of the men with Jesus reached out his hand, drew his sword and hit the high priest’s slave, cutting off his ear.
[52]‘Put your sword back where it belongs!’ said Jesus to him. ‘People who use the sword die by the sword! [53]Don’t you realize that I could call on my father and have him send me more than twelve legions of angels, just like that? [54]But how then can the Bible come true when it says this has to happen?’
[55]At that time Jesus said to the crowds, ‘Have you really come out with swords and sticks to arrest me, as if I were some kind of brigand? I sat there teaching in the Temple every day, and you didn’t arrest me! [56]But all this has happened so that the writings of the prophets would be fulfilled.’
Then all the disciples abandoned him and ran away.

Jesus before Caiaphas

[57]The people who had arrested Jesus took him off to Caiaphas the high priest. The scribes and elders had already gathered at his house. [58]Peter, however, followed him at some distance, all the way to the high priest’s residence. He went in and sat with the servants, to see how things would work out.
[59]The high priest and the whole council tried to produce false evidence against Jesus, to frame a capital charge and have him killed. [60]But even though they brought in plenty of lying witnesses, they couldn’t find the evidence they wanted. Finally two people came forward [61]and declared: ‘This fellow said, “I can destroy God’s Temple and build it again in three days!”’
[62]Then the high priest stood up.
‘Aren’t you going to answer?’ he said to him. ‘What are these people accusing you of?’
[63]But Jesus remained silent.
Then the high priest said to him, ‘I put you on oath before the living God: tell us if you are the Messiah, God’s son!’
[64]‘You said the words,’ replied Jesus. ‘But let me tell you this: from now on you will see “the son of man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven”.’
[65]Then the high priest tore his robes.
‘He’s blasphemed!’ he said. ‘Why do we need any more witnesses? Look – you’ve heard his blasphemy, here and now! [66]What’s your verdict?’
‘He deserves to die,’ they answered.
[67]Then they spat in his face and hit him. Some of them slapped him, [68]and said, ‘Prophesy for us, Mr Messiah! Who was it who hit you?’

Peter’s denial

[69]Meanwhile, Peter sat outside in the courtyard.
One of the servant-girls came up to him. ‘You were with Jesus the Galilean too, weren’t you?’ she said.
[70]He denied it in front of everyone.
‘I don’t know what you’re talking about,’ he said.
[71]He went out to the gateway. Another girl saw him, and said to the people who were there, ‘This fellow was with Jesus the Nazarene!’
[72]Once more he denied it, this time swearing, ‘I don’t know the man!’

[73]After a little while the people standing around came up and said to Peter, ‘You really are one of them! Look – the way you talk makes it obvious!’
[74]Then he began to curse and swear, ‘I don’t know the man!’ And then, all at once, the cock crowed.
[75]And Peter remembered.
He remembered the words Jesus had spoken to him: ‘Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.’
And he went outside and cried like a baby.

The death of Judas

27 When dawn broke, all the chief priests and elders of the people held a council meeting about Jesus, in order to have him put to death. [2]They tied him up, took him off, and handed him over to Pilate, the governor.
[3]Meanwhile Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that he had been condemned, and was filled with remorse. He took the thirty pieces of silver back to the high priests and elders.
[4]‘I’ve sinned!’ he said. ‘I betrayed an innocent man, and now I’ve got his blood on my hands!’
‘See if we care!’ they replied. ‘Deal with it yourself.’
[5]And he threw down the money in the Temple, and left, and went and hanged himself.
[6]‘Well now,’ said the chief priests, picking up the money. ‘According to the law, we can’t put it into the Temple treasury. It’s the price of someone’s blood.’
[7]So they had a discussion, and used it to buy the Potter’s Field, as a burial place for foreigners. [8](That’s why that field is called Blood Field, to this day.) [9]Then the word that was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet came true:

They took the thirty pieces of silver,
the price of the one who was valued,
valued by the children of Israel;
[10]and they gave them for the potter’s field,
as the Lord instructed me.

Jesus and Barabbas before Pilate

[11]So Jesus stood in front of the governor.
‘Are you the King of the Jews?’ the governor asked him.
‘If you say so,’ replied Jesus.
[12]The chief priests and elders poured out their accusations against him, but he made no answer.
[13]Then Pilate said to him, ‘Don’t you hear all this evidence they’re bringing against you?’
[14]He gave him no answer, not even a word, which quite astonished the governor.
[15]Now the governor had a custom. At festival time he used to release one prisoner for the crowd, whoever they chose. [16]Just then they had a famous prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. [17]So when the people were all gathered there, Pilate said to them, ‘Who do you want me to release for you? Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus the so-called Messiah?’ [18](He knew that they’d handed him over out of sheer envy.)
[19]While he was presiding in the court, his wife sent a message to him.
‘Don’t have anything to do with that man,’ she said. ‘He’s innocent! I’ve had a really bad time today in a dream, all because of him.’
[20]The high priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas, and to have Jesus killed. [21]So when the governor came back to them again, and asked, ‘Which of the two do you want me to release for you?’ they said, ‘Barabbas!’
[22]‘So what shall I do with Jesus the so-called Messiah?’ asked Pilate.
‘Let him be crucified!’ they all said.
[23]‘Why?’ asked Pilate. ‘What’s he done wrong?’
But they shouted all the louder, ‘Let him be crucified!’
[24]Pilate saw that it was no good. In fact, there was a riot brewing. So he took some water and washed his hands in front of the crowd.
‘I’m not guilty of this man’s blood,’ he said. ‘It’s your problem.’
[25]‘Let his blood be on us!’ answered all the people. ‘And on our children!’
[26]Then Pilate released Barabbas for them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

Jesus mocked and crucified

[27]Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the barracks, and gathered the whole regiment together. [28]They took off his clothes and dressed him up in a scarlet military cloak. [29]They wove a crown out of thorns and stuck it on his head, and put a reed in his right hand. Then they knelt down in front of him.
‘Greetings, King of the Jews!’ they said, making fun of him.
[30]They spat on him. Then they took the reed and beat him about the head. [31]When they had finished mocking him, they took off the cloak, dressed him in his own clothes again, and led him off to crucify him.
[32]As they were going out they found a man from Cyrene, called Simon. They forced him to carry his cross.
[33]When they came to the place called Golgotha, which means Skull-Place, [34]they gave him a drink of wine mixed with bitter

herbs. When he tasted it, he refused to drink it.
[35]So then they crucified him. They divided up his clothes by casting lots, [36]and they sat down and kept watch over him there.
[37]And they placed the written charge above his head: 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.'
[38]Then they crucified two brigands alongside him, one on his right and one on his left.

Jesus mocked on the cross

[39]The people who were going by shouted blasphemies at Jesus. They shook their heads at him.
[40]'So!' they said. 'You were going to destroy the Temple and build it in three days, were you? Save yourself, if you're God's son! Come down from the cross!'
[41]The chief priests, too, and the scribes and the elders, mocked him.
[42]'He rescued others,' they said, 'but he can't rescue himself! All right, so he's the King of Israel! – well, let him come down from the cross right now, and then we'll really believe that he is! [43]He trusted in God; let God deliver him now, if he's that keen on him – after all, he did say he was God's son!'
[44]The brigands who were crucified alongside him heaped insults on him as well.

The death of God's son

[45]From noon until mid-afternoon there was darkness over the whole land. [46]About the middle of the afternoon Jesus shouted out in a loud voice, '*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani!*'
– which means, 'My God, my God, why did you abandon me?'
[47]Some of the people who were standing there heard it and said, 'This fellow's calling Elijah!'
[48]One of them ran at once and got a sponge. He filled it with vinegar, put it on a reed, and gave him a drink.
[49]The others said, 'Wait a bit. Let's see if Elijah is going to come and rescue him!'
[50]But Jesus shouted out loudly one more time, and then breathed his last breath.
[51]At that instant the Temple curtain was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks were split, [52]and the tombs burst open. Many bodies of the sleeping holy ones were raised. [53]They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection, and went into the holy city, where they appeared to many people.
[54]When the centurion and the others with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that happened, they were scared out of their wits.
'He really was God's son!' they said.
[55]There were several women there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee, helping to look after his needs. [56]They included Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

The burial of Jesus

[57]When evening came, a rich man from Arimathea arrived. He was called Joseph, and he, too, was a disciple of Jesus. [58]He went to Pilate and requested the body of Jesus. Pilate gave the order that it should be given to him.
[59]So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. [60]He laid it in his own new tomb, which he had carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a large stone across the doorway of the tomb, and went away.
[61]Mary Magdalene was there, and so was the other Mary. They were sitting opposite the tomb.
[62]On the next day (that is, the day after Preparation Day), the chief priests and the Pharisees went as a group to Pilate.
[63]'Sir,' they said, 'when that deceiver was still alive, we recall that he said, "After three days, I'll rise again." [64]So please give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise his disciples might come and steal him away, and then tell the people, "He's been raised from the dead!", and so the last deception would be worse than the first.'
[65]'You may have a guard,' said Pilate; 'go and make it as secure as you know how.' [66]So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and putting a guard on watch.

The resurrection of Jesus

28 Dawn was breaking on the first day of the week; the sabbath was over. Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, had come to look at the tomb, [2]when suddenly there was a great earthquake. An angel of the Lord came down from heaven. He came to the stone, rolled it away, and sat down on top of it. [3]Looking at him was like looking at lightning, and his clothes were white, like snow. [4]The guards trembled with terror at him, and became like corpses themselves.
[5]'Don't be afraid,' said the angel to the women. 'I know you're looking for Jesus, who was crucified. [6]He isn't here! He's been raised, as he said he would be! Come and see the place where he was lying –[7]and then go at once, and tell his disciples that he's been raised from the dead, and that he's going on ahead of you to Galilee. That's where you'll see him. There: I've told you.'
[8]The women scurried off quickly away from the tomb, in a mixture of terror and great delight, and went to tell his disciples.
[9]Suddenly, there was Jesus himself. He met them and said, 'Greetings!' They came up to him and took hold of his feet, prostrating themselves in front of him.
[10]'Don't be afraid,' said Jesus to them. 'Go and tell my brothers that they should go to Galilee. Tell them they'll see me there.'

The priests and the guards

[11]While the women were on their way, some of the soldiers who had been on guard went into the city and told the chief priests everything that had happened. [12]They called an emergency meeting with the elders, allotted a substantial sum of money, and gave it to the soldiers.

[13]‘This’, they told them, ‘is what you are to say: “His disciples came in the night, while we were asleep, and stole him away.” [14]And if this gets reported to the governor, we’ll explain it to him and make sure you stay out of trouble.’

[15]They took the money and did as they had been instructed. And this story still goes the rounds among the Jews to this day.

The Great Commission

[16]So the eleven disciples went off to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had instructed them to go. [17]There they saw him, and worshipped him, though some hesitated.

[18]Jesus came towards them and addressed them.

‘All authority in heaven and on earth’, he said, ‘has been given to me! [19]So you must go and make all the nations into disciples. Baptize them in the name of the father, and of the son, and of the holy spirit. [20]Teach them to observe everything I have commanded you. And look: I am with you, every single day, to the very end of the age.’

Mark

Mark's is the shortest gospel, and when you read it straight through you can *feel* why: it has a breathless, eager sense, with things happening 'at once', and one dramatic incident following another. Unlike its longer cousins, Matthew and Luke, Mark gets straight to the point and pretty much stays there: who is Jesus, and what was the meaning of his death?

The central scene in which these questions are posed, and answered, comes towards the end of chapter 8, halfway through the story, when Peter blurts out, 'You're the Messiah!' – and Jesus at once tells his followers that they are going to Jerusalem where he will be crucified. But the abrupt opening of the book sets this double truth within a larger and still more startling frame. Quoting Malachi and Isaiah, Mark indicates that John the Baptist is to be understood as the 'messenger' who will prepare the way, as the 'voice in the wilderness' who will be the herald . . . for *Israel's God in person.* Malachi 3 and Isaiah 40 are not about a coming Messiah. They are about Israel's God himself, coming back at last to judge and to save after the long years of extended exile. Mark intends that we should read his fast-paced, dramatic narrative as the story of what it looked like when the one God finally came back.

Mark has comparatively little 'teaching'. What he does have is Jesus acting with authority, healing all sorts and conditions, casting out demons, feasting with tax-collectors, stilling storms, multiplying loaves and fishes – and teasingly chiding his disciples because they kept on misunderstanding what was going on. They knew he was doing things which meant that the one God was taking charge in a whole new way, but though 'the kingdom of God' was a well-known slogan at the time they had never thought it would look like this.

The drama intensifies as they reach the city. On the way, the disciples squabble about who would be the greatest, and Jesus reminds them that in the true 'kingdom' all human power-systems will be stood on their heads – because, he says, 'the son of man didn't come to be waited on. He came to be the servant, to give his life "as a ransom for many"' (10.45). The meaning of the cross is found *inside* the power-reversing meaning of the kingdom. Mark explains the meaning of Jesus' strange action in the Temple, symbolizing its destruction, in a sequence of events and dialogues which highlight Jesus' own role as the last prophet, issuing the last warning to God's rebel subjects. We are not surprised when he is arrested, or that the question of the Temple and its destruction is central at his trial. Jesus responds to the ultimate question of his identity with a devastating combination of Daniel 7 and Psalm 110: he is claiming not only to be Israel's Messiah but to share the throne of the one God. Mark shows us all this in such a way as to make his alert reader conclude, like the Roman centurion at the foot of the cross, that 'this fellow really was God's son' (15.39).

Mark, then, has given us the message, straight from the shoulder: Jesus is the Messiah, the embodiment of Israel's God, dying to rescue his people from their fate. But his book is also full of mysteries: beneath the plain-spoken story we sense huge earthquakes rumbling until, with the women at the tomb on Easter morning, all we can sense is 'trembling and panic' (16.8). They were right to be afraid. The world had been turned upside down. *Their vision of God had been turned inside out.* St Mark's gospel, twenty pages or so of text in a modern translation, still has the capacity to do that for today's readers.

The preaching of John the Baptist

1 This is where the good news starts – the good news of Jesus the Messiah, God's son.
[2]Isaiah the prophet put it like this ('Look! I am sending my messenger ahead of me; he will clear the way for you!'):
[3]'A shout goes up in the desert: Make way for the Lord! Clear a straight path for him!'
[4]John the Baptizer appeared in the desert. He was announcing a baptism of repentance, to forgive sins. [5]The whole of Judaea, and everyone who lived in Jerusalem, went out to him; they confessed their sins and were baptized by him in the river Jordan.
[6]John wore camel-hair clothes, with a leather belt round his waist. He used to eat locusts and wild honey.
[7]'Someone a lot stronger than me is coming close behind,' John used to tell them. 'I don't deserve to squat down and undo his sandals. [8]I've plunged you in the water; he's going to plunge you in the holy spirit.'

Jesus' baptism

[9]This is how it happened. Around that time, Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and was baptized by John in the river Jordan.
[10]That very moment, as he was getting out of the water, he saw the heavens open, and the spirit coming down like a dove onto him. [11]Then there came a voice, out of the heavens: 'You are my son! You are the one I love! You make me very glad.'
[12]All at once the spirit pushed him out into the desert. [13]He was in the desert forty days, and the satan tested him there. He was with the wild beasts, and angels waited on him.

The calling of the disciples

[14]After John's arrest, Jesus came into Galilee, announcing God's good news.
[15]'The time is fulfilled!' he said; 'God's kingdom is arriving! Turn back, and believe the good news!'
[16]As he went along beside the sea of Galilee he saw Simon and his brother Andrew. They were fishermen, and were casting nets into the sea.
[17]'Follow me!' said Jesus to them. 'I'll have you fishing for people!'
[18]Straight away they left their nets and followed him. [19]He went on a bit, and saw James, Zebedee's son, and John his brother. They were in the boat mending their nets, [20]and he called them then and there. They left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went off after him.

Exorcism and healings

[21]They went to Capernaum. At once, on the sabbath, Jesus went into the synagogue and taught. [22]They were astonished at his teaching. He wasn't like the legal teachers; he said things on his own authority.

[23]All at once, in their synagogue, there was a man with an unclean spirit.

[24]'What business have you got with us, Jesus of Nazareth?' he yelled. 'Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are: you're God's Holy One!'

[25]'Be quiet!' ordered Jesus. 'And come out of him!'

[26]The unclean spirit convulsed the man, gave a great shout, and came out of him. [27]Everyone was astonished.

'What's this?' they started to say to each other. 'New teaching – with real authority! He even tells the unclean spirits what to do, and they do it!'

[28]Word about Jesus spread at once, all over the surrounding district of Galilee.

[29]They came out of the synagogue, and went at once (with James and John) into Simon and Andrew's house. [30]Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her right away. [31]He went in, took her by the hand, and raised her up. The fever left her, and she waited on them.

[32]When the sun went down and evening came, they brought to Jesus everyone who was ill, all who were demon-possessed. [33]The whole town was gathered around the door. [34]Jesus healed many people suffering from all kinds of diseases, and cast out many demons. He didn't allow the demons to speak, because they knew him.

The healing of a man with a skin disease

[35]Very early – in the middle of the night, actually – Jesus got up and went out, off to a lonely place, and prayed. [36]Simon, and those with him, followed. [37]When they found him, they said, 'Everyone is looking for you!'

[38]'Let's go off to the other towns around here,' Jesus replied, 'so that I can tell the news to people there too. That's why I came out.'

[39]So he went into their synagogues, throughout the whole of Galilee, telling the news and casting out demons.

[40]A man with a virulent skin disease came up to him. He knelt down and begged him, 'If you want to, you can make me clean!'

[41]Jesus was deeply moved. He reached out his hand and touched him, and said to him, 'I do want to: be clean!' [42]The disease left him at once, and he was clean.

[43]Jesus sent him away at once, with this stern warning: [44]'Mind you don't say anything to anyone! Just go and show yourself to the priest, and make the offering Moses commanded, to purify yourself and to give them a sign.'

[45]But the man went out and began to tell the news widely. He spread the tale so effectively that Jesus couldn't any longer go publicly into a town. He stayed out in the open country, and people came to him from all around.

The healing of the paralytic

2 Jesus went back again to Capernaum, where, after a few days, word got round that he was at home. [2]A crowd gathered, so that people couldn't even get near the door as he was telling them the message.

[3]A party arrived: four people carrying a paralysed man, bringing him to Jesus. [4]They couldn't get through to him because of the crowd, so they opened up the roof above where he was. When they had dug through it, they used ropes to let down the stretcher the paralysed man was lying on.

[5]Jesus saw their faith, and said to the paralysed man, 'Child, your sins are forgiven!'

[6]'How dare the fellow speak like this?' grumbled some of the legal experts among themselves. [7]'It's blasphemy! Who can forgive sins except God?'

[8]Jesus knew at once, in his spirit, that thoughts like this were in the air. 'Why do your hearts tell you to think that?' he asked. [9]'Answer me this,' he went on. 'Is it easier to say to this cripple, "Your sins are forgiven", or to say, "Get up, pick up your stretcher, and walk"?

[10]'You want to know that the son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins?' He turned to the paralytic. [11]'I tell you,' he said, 'Get up, take your stretcher, and go home.' [12]He got up, picked up the stretcher in a flash, and went out before them all.

Everyone was astonished, and they praised God. 'We've never seen anything like this!' they said.

The calling of Levi

[13]Once more Jesus went out beside the sea. All the crowd came to him, and he taught them.

[14]As he went along he saw Levi, son of Alphaeus, sitting at the toll booth. 'Follow me!' he said. And he got up and followed him.

[15]That's how Jesus came to be sitting at home with lots of tax-collectors and sinners. There they were, plenty of them, sitting with Jesus and his disciples; they had become his followers.

[16]When the legal experts from the Pharisees saw him eating with tax-collectors and sinners, they said to his disciples, 'Why does he eat with tax-collectors and sinners?'

[17]When Jesus heard it, he said to them, 'It's sick people who need the doctor, not healthy ones. I came to call the bad people, not the good ones.'

Questions about fasting

[18]John's disciples, and the Pharisees' disciples, were fasting. People came and said to Jesus, 'Look here: John's disciples are fasting, and so are the Pharisees' disciples; why aren't yours?'
[19]'How can the wedding guests fast', Jesus replied, 'if the bridegroom is there with them? As long as they've got the bridegroom with them, they can't fast.
[20]'Mind you, the time is coming when the bridegroom will be taken away from them. They'll fast then all right.
[21]'No one sews unshrunk cloth onto an old cloak. If they do, the new patch will tear the old cloth, and they'll end up with a worse hole. [22]Nor does anyone put new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the wine will burst the skins, and they'll lose the wine and the skins together. New wine needs new skins.'

Teachings on the sabbath

[23]One sabbath, Jesus was walking through the cornfields. His disciples made their way along, plucking corn as they went.
[24]'Look here,' said the Pharisees to him, 'why are they doing something illegal on the sabbath?'
[25]'Haven't you ever read what David did,' replied Jesus, 'when he was in difficulties, and he and his men got hungry? [26]He went into God's house (this was when Abiathar was high priest), and ate the "bread of the presence", which only the priests were allowed to eat – and he gave it to the people with him.
[27]'The sabbath was made for humans,' he said, 'not humans for the sabbath; [28]so the son of man is master even of the sabbath.'

Healing of the man with the withered hand

3 Once more Jesus went to the synagogue. There was a man there with a withered hand. [2]People were watching to see if Jesus would heal him on the sabbath, so that they could frame a charge against him.
[3]'Stand up', said Jesus to the man with the withered hand, 'and come out here.' And he said to them, [4]'Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath, or to do evil? To save life or to kill?' They stayed quiet.
[5]He was deeply upset at their hard-heartedness, and looked round at them angrily. Then he said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' He stretched it out – and his hand was restored. [6]The Pharisees went out right away and began to plot with the Herodians against Jesus, trying to find a way to destroy him.

The Twelve are appointed

[7]Jesus went off towards the sea with his disciples, and a large crowd from Galilee followed him. A great company, too, from Judaea, [8]Jerusalem, Idumaea, Transjordan, and the region of Tyre and Sidon, heard what he was doing and came to him.
[9]There was a real danger that he might be crushed by the crowd, so he told his disciples to get a boat ready for him. [10]He healed large numbers, and sick people were pushing towards him to touch him. [11]Whenever unclean spirits saw him, they fell down in front of him and yelled out, 'You are the son of God!' [12]He gave them strict orders not to reveal his identity.
[13]Jesus went up the mountain, and summoned the people he wanted, and they came to him. [14]He appointed twelve (naming them 'apostles') to be with him and to be sent out as heralds, [15]and to have authority to cast out demons. [16]In appointing the Twelve, he named Simon 'Peter'; [17]James, son of Zebedee, and his brother John, he named 'Boanerges', which means 'sons of thunder'. The others were [18]Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Cananaean, [19]and Judas Iscariot (the one who handed him over).

Jesus and Beelzebul

[20]He went into the house. A crowd gathered again, so that they couldn't even have a meal. [21]When his family heard it, they came to restrain him. 'He's out of his mind,' they said.
[22]Experts who had come from Jerusalem were saying, 'He is possessed by Beelzebul! He casts out demons by the prince of demons!'
[23]Jesus summoned them and spoke to them in pictures. 'How can the Accuser cast out the Accuser? [24]If a kingdom splits into two factions, it can't last; [25]if a household splits into two factions, it can't last. [26]So if the Accuser revolts against himself and splits into two, he can't last – his time is up! [27]But remember: no one can get into a strong man's house and steal his property unless first they tie up the strong man; then they can plunder his house.
[28]'I'm telling you the truth: people will be forgiven all sins, and all blasphemies of whatever sort. [29]But people who blaspheme the holy spirit will never find forgiveness. They will be guilty of an eternal sin.' [30]That was his response to their claim that he had an unclean spirit.

Jesus' family

[31]Jesus' mother and brothers appeared. They waited outside the house, and sent in a message, asking for him.
[32]'Look!' said the crowd sitting around Jesus. 'Your mother, your brothers, and your sisters are outside! They're searching for you!'
[33]'Who is my mother?' replied Jesus. 'Who are my brothers?'
[34]He looked around him at the people sitting there in a ring. 'Here is my mother!' he said. 'Here are my brothers! [35]Anybody who does God's will is my brother! And my sister! And my mother!'

The parable of the sower

4 Once again Jesus began to teach beside the sea. A huge crowd gathered; so he got into a boat and stationed himself on the sea, with all the crowd on the shore looking out to sea. [2]He taught them lots of things in parables. This is how his teaching went.

[3]'Listen!' he said. 'Once upon a time there was a sower who went out sowing. [4]As he was sowing, some seed fell beside the path, and the birds came and ate it up. [5]Other seed fell on the rock, where it didn't have much soil. There was no depth to the ground, so it shot up at once; [6]but when the sun came up it was scorched, and withered away, because it hadn't got any root. [7]Other seed fell in among thorns; the thorns grew up and choked it, and it didn't give any crop. [8]And other seeds fell into good soil, and gave a harvest, which grew up and increased, and bore a yield, in some cases thirtyfold, in some sixtyfold, and in some a hundredfold.'

[9]And he added, 'If you've got ears, then listen!'

[10]When they were alone, the people who were around Jesus, with the Twelve, asked him about the parables.

[11]'The mystery of God's kingdom is given to you,' he replied, 'but for the people outside it's all in parables, [12]so that "they may look and look but never see, and hear and hear but never understand; otherwise they would turn and be forgiven".

[13]'Don't you understand the parable?' he said to them. 'How are you going to understand all the parables?

[14]'The sower sows the word. [15]The ones by the path are people who hear the word, but immediately the Accuser comes and takes away the word that has been sown in them. [16]The ones sown on the rock are those who hear the word and accept it with excitement, [17]but don't have any root in themselves. They are short-term enthusiasts. When the word brings them trouble or hostility they quickly become disillusioned. [18]The others – the ones sown among thorns – are those who hear the word, [19]and the worries of the present age, and the deceit of riches, and desires for other kinds of things, come in and choke the word, so that it produces no fruit. [20]But the ones sown on good soil are the people who hear the word and receive it, and produce fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixtyfold, some a hundredfold.'

A lamp on its stand

[21]Jesus said to them, 'When you bring a lamp into a room, do you put it under a bucket, or under a bed? Of course not! It goes on a lampstand. [22]No: nothing is secret except what's meant to be revealed, and nothing is covered up except what's meant to be uncovered. [23]If you have ears, then listen!

[24]'Be careful with what you hear,' he went on. 'The scales you use will be used for you, and more so. [25]If you have something, you'll be given more; but if you have nothing, even what you have will be taken away.'

More seed parables

[26]'This is what God's kingdom is like,' said Jesus. 'Once upon a time a man sowed seed on the ground. [27]Every night he went to bed; every day he got up; and the seed sprouted and grew without him knowing how it did it. [28]The ground produces crops by itself: first the stalk, then the ear, then the complete corn in the ear. [29]But when the crop is ready, in goes the sickle at once, because harvest has arrived.'

[30]'What shall we say God's kingdom is like?' he said. 'What picture shall we give of it? [31]It's like a grain of mustard seed. When it's sown on the ground, it's the smallest of all the seeds of the earth. [32]But when it's sown, it springs up and becomes the biggest of all shrubs. It grows large branches, so that "the birds of the air make their nests" within its shade.'

[33]He used to tell them a lot of parables like this, speaking the word as much as they were able to hear. [34]He never spoke except using parables. But he explained everything to his own disciples in private.

Jesus calms the storm

[35]That day, when it was evening, Jesus said to them, 'Let's go over to the other side.'

[36]They left the crowd, and took him with them in the boat he'd been in. There were other boats with him too.

[37]A big windstorm blew up. The waves beat on the boat, and it quickly began to fill. [38]Jesus, however, was asleep on a cushion in the stern. They woke him up.

'Teacher!' they said to him, 'We're going down! Don't you care?'

[39]He got up, scolded the wind, and said to the sea, 'Silence! Shut up!'

The wind died, and there was a flat calm. [40]Then he said to them, 'Why are you scared? Don't you believe yet?'

[41]Great fear stole over them. 'Who *is* this?' they said to each other. 'Even the wind and the sea do what he says!'

The healing of the demoniac

5 So they came over the sea to the land of the Gerasenes. [2]When they got out of the boat, they were suddenly confronted by a man with an unclean spirit. [3]He was emerging from a graveyard, which was where he lived. Nobody had been able to tie him up, not even with a chain; [4]he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he used to tear up the chains and snap the shackles. No one had the strength to tame him. [5]On and on, night and day, he used to shout out in the graveyard and on the hillside, and slash himself with stones.

[6]When he saw Jesus a long way away, he ran and threw himself down in front of him.

[7]‘Why you and me, Jesus?’ he shouted at the top of his voice. ‘Why you and me, son of the High God? By God, stop torturing me!’ – [8]this last, because Jesus was saying to him, ‘Unclean spirit, come out of him!’
[9]‘What’s your name?’ Jesus asked him.
‘Legion,’ he replied. ‘That’s my name – there are lots of us!’ [10]And he implored Jesus not to send them out of the country.
[11]It so happened that right there, near the hillside, was a sizeable herd of pigs. They were grazing.
[12]‘Send us to the pigs,’ begged the spirits, ‘so that we can enter them.’
[13]So Jesus gave them permission. The unclean spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd rushed down the steep slope into the sea – about two thousand of them! – and were drowned.
[14]The herdsmen fled. They told it in the town, they told it in the countryside, and people came to see what had happened. [15]They came to Jesus; and there they saw the man who had been demon-possessed, who had had the ‘legion’, seated, clothed and stone-cold sober. They were afraid. [16]The people who had seen it all told them what had happened to the man – and to the pigs. [17]And they began to beg Jesus to leave their district.
[18]Jesus was getting back into the boat, when the man asked if he could go with him. [19]Jesus wouldn’t let him.
‘Go back home,’ he said. ‘Go to your people and tell them what the Lord has done for you. Tell them how he had pity on you.’
[20]He went off, and began to announce in the Ten Towns what Jesus had done for him. Everyone was astonished.

Jairus’s daughter and the woman with chronic bleeding

[21]Jesus crossed over once more in the boat to the other side. There a large crowd gathered around him, and he was by the seashore.
[22]One of the synagogue presidents, a man named Jairus, arrived. When he saw Jesus he fell down at his feet.
[23]‘My daughter’s going to die! My daughter’s going to die!’ he pleaded. ‘Please come – lay your hands on her – rescue her and let her live!’
[24]Jesus went off with him. A large crowd followed, and pressed in on him.
[25]A woman who had had internal bleeding for twelve years heard about Jesus. [26](She’d had a rough time at the hands of one doctor after another; she’d spent all she had on treatment, and had got worse rather than better.) [27]She came up in the crowd behind him and touched his clothes. [28]‘If I can just touch his clothes,’ she said to herself, ‘I’ll be rescued.’ [29]At once her flow of blood dried up. She knew, in her body, that her illness was cured.
[30]Jesus knew at once, inside himself, that power had gone out of him. He turned around in the crowd and said, ‘Who touched my clothes?’
[31]‘You see this crowd crushing you,’ said the disciples, ‘and you say “Who touched me?”’
[32]He looked round to see who had done it. [33]The woman came up; she was afraid and trembling, but she knew what had happened to her. She fell down in front of him and told him the whole truth.
[34]‘My daughter,’ Jesus said to her, ‘your faith has rescued you. Go in peace. Be healed from your illness.’

The raising of Jairus’s daughter

[35]As he said this, some people arrived from the synagogue president’s house.
‘Your daughter’s dead,’ they said. ‘Why bother the teacher any more?’
[36]Jesus overheard the message. ‘Don’t be afraid!’ he said to the synagogue president. ‘Just believe!’
[37]He didn’t let anyone go with him except Peter, James and James’s brother John. [38]They arrived at the synagogue president’s house, and saw a commotion, with a lot of weeping and wailing. [39]Jesus went inside.
‘Why are you making such a fuss?’ he said. ‘Why all this weep¬ing? The child isn’t dead; she’s asleep.’ [40]And they laughed at him.
He put them all out. Then he took the child’s father and mother, and his companions, and they went in to where the child was. [41]He took hold of her hand, and said to her, ‘*Talitha koum*’, which means ‘Time to get up, little girl!’ [42]At once the girl got up and walked about. (She was twelve years old.) They were astonished out of their wits. [43]Then he commanded them over and over not to let anyone know about it, and told them to give her something to eat.

A prophet in his own town

6 Jesus went away from there, and came to his home region. His disciples followed him. [2]On the sabbath, he began to teach in the synagogue. When they heard him, lots of people were astonished.
‘Where does he get it all from?’ they said. ‘What’s this wisdom he’s been given? How does he get this kind of power in his hands? [3]Isn’t he the handyman, Mary’s son? Isn’t he the brother of James, Joses, Judah and Simon? And aren’t his sisters here with us?’ They took offence at him.
[4]‘Prophets have honour everywhere’, said Jesus, ‘except in their own country, their own family, and their own home.’
[5]He couldn’t do anything remarkable there, except that he laid hands on a few sick people and cured them. [6]Their unbelief dumbfounded him.
He went round the villages, teaching.

The Twelve sent out

[7]Jesus called the Twelve, and began to send them out in pairs, giving them authority over unclean spirits. [8]These were his instructions: they were not to take anything for the road, just one staff; no bread, no bag, no cash in the belt; [9]to wear sandals, and not to wear a second tunic.

[10]'Whenever you go into a house,' he told them, 'stay there until you leave the district. [11]If any place doesn't welcome you, or won't listen to you, go away and wipe the dust from your feet as evidence against them.'

[12]They went off and announced that people should repent. [13]They cast out several demons; and they anointed many sick people with oil, and cured them.

The speculations of Herod

[14]Jesus' name became well known, and reached the ears of King Herod.

'It's John the Baptist,' he said, 'risen from the dead! That's why these powers are at work in him.'

[15]Other people said, 'It's Elijah!'

Others said, 'He's a prophet, like one of the old prophets.'

[16]'No,' said Herod when he heard this. 'It's John. I cut off his head, and he's been raised.'

Herod and John the Baptist

[17]What had happened was this. Herod had married Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. [18]John regularly told Herod it wasn't right for him to take his brother's wife; so Herod gave the word, arrested him and tied him up in prison. [19]Herodias kept up a grudge against him and wanted to kill him, but couldn't; [20]Herod was afraid of John, knowing that he was a just and holy man. So he protected him, and used to listen to him regularly. What he heard disturbed him greatly, and yet he enjoyed listening to him.

[21]And then, one day, the moment came. There was a great party. It was Herod's birthday, and he gave a feast for his leading retainers, militia officers, and the great and good of Galilee. [22]Herodias's daughter came in and danced, and Herod and his guests were delighted.

'Tell me what you'd like', said the king to the girl, 'and I'll give it you!'

[23]He swore to her, over and over again, 'Whatever you ask me, I'll give it you – right up to half my kingdom!'

[24]She went out, and said to her mother, 'What shall I ask for?'

'The head of John the Baptist,' she replied.

[25]So she went back at once to the king, all eager, and made her request: 'I want you to give me, right now, on a dish – the head of John the Baptist!'

[26]The king was distraught. But his oaths on the one hand, and his guests on the other, meant he hadn't the guts to refuse her. [27]So he sent a jailer straight away with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, [28]brought the head on a dish, and gave it to the girl. The girl gave it to her mother.

[29]When John's followers heard about it, they came and took his body, and buried it in a tomb.

The feeding of the five thousand

[30]The apostles came back to Jesus and told him all they had done and taught. [31]'All right,' he said, 'it's time for a break. Come away, just you, and we'll go somewhere lonely and private.' (Crowds of people were coming and going and they didn't even have time to eat.)

[32]So they went off privately in the boat to a deserted spot. [33]And . . . crowds saw them going, realized what was happening, hurried on foot from all the towns, and arrived there first. [34]When Jesus got out of the boat he saw the huge crowd, and was deeply sorry for them, because they were like a flock without a shepherd. So he started to teach them many things.

[35]It was already getting late when his disciples came to him and said, 'Look: there's nothing here. It's getting late. [36]Send them away. They need to go off into the countryside and the villages and buy themselves some food.'

[37]'Why don't you give them something?' Jesus replied.

'Are you suggesting', they asked, 'that we should go and spend two hundred dinars and get food for this lot?'

[38]'Well,' said Jesus, 'how many loaves have you got? Go and see.'

They found out, and said, 'Five, and a couple of fish.'

[39]Jesus told them to sit everyone down, group by group, on the green grass. [40]So they sat down in companies, by hundreds and by fifties. [41]Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, looked up to heaven, blessed the bread, broke it, and gave it to his disciples to give to the crowd. Then he divided the two fish for them all. [42]Everyone ate, and had plenty. [43]They picked up the leftovers, and there were twelve baskets of broken pieces, and of the fish.

[44]The number of men who had eaten was five thousand.

Jesus walks on water

[45]At once Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and set sail across towards Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. [46]He took his leave of them and went off up the mountain to pray.

[47]When evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea, and he was alone on the shore. [48]He saw they were having to work hard at rowing, because the wind was against them; and he came to them, about the fourth watch of the night, walking on the sea. He intended to go past them, [49]but they saw him walking on the sea and thought it was an apparition. They yelled out; [50]all of them saw him, and they were scared stiff.

At once he spoke to them.
'Cheer up,' he said, 'it's me. Don't be afraid.'
[51]He came up to them and got into the boat, and the wind stopped. They were overwhelmed with astonishment; [52]they hadn't understood about the loaves, because their hearts were hardened.
[53]They made landfall at Gennesaret, and tied the boat up. [54]People recognized Jesus as soon as they got out of the boat, [55]and scurried about the whole region to bring sick people on stretchers to wherever they heard that he was. [56]And wherever he went, in villages, towns or in the open country, they placed the sick in the market-places and begged him to let them touch even the hem of his garment. And all who touched it were healed.

God's law and human tradition

7 The Pharisees gathered round Jesus, together with some legal experts from Jerusalem. [2]They saw that some of his disciples were eating their food with unclean (that is, unwashed) hands.
[3](The Pharisees, you see – and indeed all the Jews – don't eat unless they first carefully wash their hands. This is to maintain the tradition of the elders. [4]When they come in from the market, they never eat without washing. There are many other traditions which they keep: washings of cups, pots and bronze dishes.)
[5]Anyway, the Pharisees and legal experts asked Jesus, 'Why don't your disciples follow the tradition of the elders? Why do they eat their food with unwashed hands?'
[6]'Isaiah summed you up just right,' Jesus replied. 'Hypocrites, the lot of you! What he said was this:

With their lips this people honour me,
but with their hearts they turn away from me;
[7]all in vain they think to worship me,
all they teach is human commands.

[8]'You abandon God's commands, and keep human tradition!
[9]'So,' he went on, 'you have a fine way of setting aside God's command so as to maintain your tradition. [10]Here's an example: Moses said, "Honour your father and your mother," and, "Anyone who slanders father or mother should die." [11]But you say, "If someone says to their father or mother, 'What you might get from me – it's Korban!'" (which means, 'given-to-God'), [12]you don't let them do anything else for their father or mother! [13]The net result is that you invalidate God's word through this tradition which you hand on. And there are lots more things like that which you do.'

Clean and unclean

[14]Jesus summoned the crowd again.
'Listen to me, all of you,' he said, 'and get this straight. [15]What goes into you from outside can't make you unclean. What makes you unclean is what comes out from inside.'
[17]When they got back into the house, away from the crowd, his disciples asked him about the parable.
[18]'You didn't get it either?' he asked. 'Don't you see that whatever goes into someone from outside can't make them unclean? [19]It doesn't go into the heart; it only goes into the stomach, and then carries on, out down the drain.' (Result: all foods are clean.)
[20]'What makes someone unclean', he went on, 'is what comes out of them. [21]Evil intentions come from inside, out of people's hearts – sexual immorality, theft, murder, [22]adultery, greed, wickedness, treachery, debauchery, envy, slander, pride, stupidity. [23]These evil things all come from inside. They are what make someone unclean.'

The Syrophoenician woman

[24]Jesus got up, left that place, and went to the region of Tyre. When he took up residence in a house, he didn't want anyone to know, but it wasn't possible for him to remain hidden. [25]On the contrary: news of him at once reached a woman who had a young daughter with an unclean spirit. She came and threw herself down at his feet. [26]She was Greek, a Syrophoenician by race; and she asked him to cast the demon out of her daughter.
[27]'Let the children eat what they want first,' Jesus replied. 'It's not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.'
[28]'Well, Master,' she said, 'even the dogs under the table eat the crumbs that the children drop.'
[29]'Well said!' replied Jesus. 'Off you go; the demon has left your daughter.'
[30]So she went home, and found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

A deaf and mute man is healed

[31]Jesus went away from the region of Tyre, through Sidon, round towards the sea of Galilee, and into the region of the Ten Towns. [32]They brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, and asked that he would lay his hand on him.
[33]Jesus took the man off in private, away from the crowd. He put his fingers into his ears, spat, and touched his tongue. [34]Then he looked up to heaven, groaned, and said to him, '*Ephphatha*' (that is, 'Be opened'). [35]Immediately the man's ears were opened, and his tongue was untied, and he spoke clearly.
[36]Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone. But the more he ordered them, the more they spread the news. [37]They were totally astonished.

‘Everything he does is marvellous!’ they said. ‘He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak!’

The feeding of the four thousand

8 Once again, about that time, a large crowd gathered with nothing to eat.
Jesus called the disciples.
[2]‘I’m really sorry for the people,’ he said. ‘They’ve been with me three days now, and they haven’t got anything to eat. [3]If I send them home hungry, they’ll collapse on the way. Some of them have come from miles off.’
[4]‘Where could you get food for all this lot, out here in the wilderness?’ answered his disciples.
[5]‘How many loaves have you got?’ he asked.
‘Seven,’ they replied.
[6]He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. Then he took the seven loaves, gave thanks, broke them and gave them to his disciples to share around, and they gave them to the crowd. [7]They had a few small fish, which he also blessed and told them to distribute. [8]They ate; they were satisfied; and they took up seven baskets of leftover bits. [9]There were about four thousand people. And he sent them away.
[10]At once Jesus got into the boat with his disciples and went to the region of Dalmanoutha.

The yeast of the Pharisees and Herod

[11]The Pharisees came out and began to dispute with Jesus. They were asking him for a sign from heaven, to test him out.
[12]Jesus groaned deeply in his spirit. ‘Why is this generation looking for a sign?’ he said. ‘I’m telling you the truth: no sign will be given to this generation.’ [13]He left them again, got into the boat, and crossed over to the other side.
[14]They had forgotten to get any bread, and had only one loaf with them in the boat.
[15]‘Beware!’ said Jesus sternly to them. ‘Watch out for leaven – the Pharisees’ leaven, and Herod’s leaven too!’
[16]‘It must be something to do with us not having any bread,’ they said to each other.
[17]‘Why are you mumbling about not bringing bread?’ said Jesus, who knew what they were thinking. ‘Don’t you get it? Don’t you understand? Have your hearts gone hard?

[18]Can’t you see with your two good eyes?
Can’t you hear with your two good ears?

‘And don’t you remember? [19]When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken bits were left over?’
‘Twelve,’ they said.
[20]‘And the seven loaves for the four thousand – how many baskets full of bits were left over?’
‘Seven.’
[21]‘You still don’t get it?’

Peter’s declaration of Jesus’ messiahship

[22]They arrived at Bethsaida. A blind man was brought to Jesus, and they begged him to touch him. [23]He took his hand, led him off outside the village, and put spittle on his eyes. Then he laid his hands on him, and asked, ‘Can you see anything?’
[24]‘I can see people,’ said the man, peering around, ‘but they look like trees walking about.’
[25]Then Jesus laid his hands on him once more. This time he looked hard, and his sight came back: he could see everything clearly. [26]Jesus sent him back home.
‘Don’t even go into the village,’ he said.
[27]Jesus and his disciples came to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked his disciples, ‘Who are people saying that I am?’
[28]‘John the Baptist,’ they said, ‘or, some say, Elijah; or, others say, one of the prophets.’
[29]‘What about you?’ asked Jesus. ‘Who do you say I am?’
Peter spoke up. ‘You’re the Messiah,’ he said.
[30]He gave them strict orders not to tell anyone about him.

Jesus predicts his death

[31]Jesus now began to teach them something new.
‘There’s big trouble in store for the son of man,’ he said. ‘The elders, the chief priests and the scribes are going to reject him. He will be killed – and after three days he’ll be raised.’ [32]He said all this quite explicitly.
At this, Peter took him aside and started to scold him. [33]But he turned round, saw the disciples, and scolded Peter.
‘Get behind me, Accuser!’ he said. ‘You’re thinking human thoughts, not God’s thoughts.’
[34]He called the crowd to him, with his disciples. ‘If any of you want to come the way I’m going,’ he said, ‘you must say “no” to your own selves, pick up your cross, and follow me. [35]Yes: if you want to save your life, you’ll lose it; but if you lose your life because of me and the message you’ll save it. [36]After all, what use is it to win the world and lose your life? [37]What can you give in exchange for your life? [38]If you’re ashamed of me and my words in this cheating and sinning generation, the son of man will be

ashamed of you when he “comes in the glory of his father with the holy angels”.

9 ‘I’m telling you the truth,’ he said; ‘some people standing here won’t experience death before they see God’s kingdom come in power.’

The transfiguration

2A week later, Jesus took Peter, James and John away by themselves, and went up a high mountain. There he was transformed
before their eyes. 3His clothes shone with a whiteness that no laundry on earth could match. 4Elijah appeared to them, and Moses
too, and they were talking with Jesus.
5‘Teacher,’ said Peter as he saw this, ‘it’s great to be here! I tell you what – we’ll make three shelters, one for you, one for
Moses and one for Elijah!’ 6(He didn’t know what to say; they were terrified.)
7Then a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud: ‘This is my son, the one I love. Listen to him!’
8Then, quite suddenly, they looked round and saw nobody there any more, only Jesus with them.
9As they came down the mountain, Jesus instructed them not to talk to anyone about what they had seen, ‘until’, he said, ‘the
son of man has been raised from the dead’. 10They held on to this saying among themselves, puzzling about what this ‘rising from
the dead’ might mean.
11‘Why then’, they asked him, ‘do the legal experts say “Elijah must come first”?’
12‘Elijah does come first,’ he replied, ‘and his job is to put everything straight. But what do you think it means that “the son of
man must suffer many things and be treated with contempt”? 13Actually, listen to this: Elijah has already come, and they did to
him whatever they wanted. That’s what scripture said about him.’

The demon-possessed boy

14The four of them made their way back to the other disciples. There they saw a large crowd surrounding them, and legal experts
arguing with them. 15As soon as the crowd saw Jesus they were astounded, and they all ran up to greet him.
16‘What’s all the fuss about?’ he asked.
17‘Teacher,’ said someone from the crowd, ‘I brought my son to you. He’s got a spirit that stops him speaking. 18Whenever it
takes hold of him it throws him on the ground; he foams at the mouth, and grinds his teeth, and goes rigid. I spoke to your
disciples about casting it out, but they couldn’t.’
19‘You unbelieving generation!’ replied Jesus. ‘How much longer must I be with you? How much longer must I put up with
you? Bring the boy to me.’
20They brought him to him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion, and he fell on the
ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth.
21‘How long has it been like this with him?’ asked Jesus.
‘Since childhood,’ replied the man. 22‘Often it even throws him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything . . .
please, please help us! Have pity on us!’
23‘What d’you mean, “If you can”?’ said Jesus. ‘Everything is possible to someone who believes.’
24At this the father gave a great shout. ‘I do believe!’ he roared. ‘Help me in my unbelief!’
25Jesus saw that the crowd was getting bigger by the minute. He scolded the unclean spirit: ‘Speechless and deaf spirit,’ he said,
‘I command you – come out of him, and never go back again!’
26The spirit yelled, gave the boy a huge convulsion, and came out. The boy seemed to be dead; in fact, several people did say
‘He’s dead!’ 27But Jesus took him by the hand and helped him to his feet, and he stood up.
28‘Why couldn’t we cast it out?’ asked his disciples, once they were back in the house by themselves.
29‘This sort’, replied Jesus, ‘can only be cast out by prayer.’

True greatness

30They went away from there and were travelling through Galilee. Jesus didn’t want anyone to know, 31because he was teaching
his disciples.
‘The “son of man”’, he was saying, ‘is to be given over into human hands. They will kill him; and, when he’s been killed, after
three days he will rise again.’
32They didn’t understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him.
33They came to Capernaum. When they got into the house he asked them, ‘What were you arguing about on the road?’
34They said nothing, because on the road they had been arguing about which of them was the greatest.
35Jesus sat down and called the Twelve.
‘If you want to be first,’ he said, ‘you must be last of all, and servant of all.’ 36He took a small child, and stood it in the middle
of them. Then he hugged the child, and said to them, 37‘If anyone welcomes one child like this in my name, they welcome me.
And if anyone welcomes me, it isn’t me they welcome, but the one who sent me.’

Warnings about sin

38‘Teacher,’ said John, ‘we saw someone casting out demons in your name. We stopped him, because he wasn’t following us.’
39‘Don’t stop him,’ said Jesus. ‘No one who does powerful things by my name will be able to say bad things about me soon

afterwards. [40]Anyone who's not against us is on our side. [41]Anyone who even gives you a cup of water in my name, because you belong to the Messiah – I'm telling you the truth, that person won't go unrewarded.
[42]'Think about these little ones who believe in me,' he went on. 'If anyone causes one of them to slip up, it would be much better for that person to have a huge millstone put around their neck, and be thrown into the sea.
[43]'And if your hand causes you to slip up, cut it off. It's better for you to go into life maimed than to have two hands and go into Gehenna, into the fire that never goes out.
[45]'And if your foot causes you to slip up, cut it off. It's better for you to go into life lame than to have two feet and be thrown into Gehenna.
[47]'And if your eye causes you to slip up, throw it away. It's better for you to go into the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into Gehenna, [48]where

their worm lives on for ever
and the fire can never be quenched.

[49]'You see, everyone will be salted with fire. [50]Salt is great stuff; but if salt becomes unsalty, how can you make it salty again? You need salt among yourselves. Live at peace with each other.'

Teachings on divorce

10 Jesus left the region, and went to the districts of Judaea across the Jordan. A large crowd gathered around him, and once more, as his custom was, he taught them.
[2]Some Pharisees approached him with a question. 'Is it permitted', they asked, 'for a man to divorce his wife?' They said this to trap him.
[3]'Well,' answered Jesus, 'what did Moses command you?'
[4]'Moses permitted us', they replied, 'to write a notice of separation and so to complete the divorce.'
[5]'He gave you that command', said Jesus, 'because you are hardhearted. [6]But from the beginning of creation

male and female he made them; [7]and that's why the man must leave his father and his mother and cleave unto his wife; [8]so that the two become one flesh.

'There you are, then: they are no longer two, but one flesh. [9]What God has joined, humans must not split up.'
[10]When they were back indoors, the disciples asked him about this.
[11]'Anyone who divorces his wife', said Jesus, 'and marries someone else commits adultery against her. [12]And if she divorces her husband and marries someone else she commits adultery.'
[13]People brought children to Jesus for him to touch them. The disciples reprimanded them. [14]But Jesus was angry when he saw it, and said to them, 'Let the children come to me! Don't stop them! The kingdom of God belongs to people like that. [15]I'm telling you the truth: anyone who doesn't receive the kingdom of God like a child will never get into it.'
[16]And he hugged them, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

The rich young ruler

[17]As he was setting out on the road, a man ran up and knelt down in front of him.
'Good teacher,' he asked, 'what should I do to inherit the life of the Age to Come?'
[18]'Why call me "good"?' replied Jesus. 'No one is good except God alone. [19]You know the commandments:

Don't kill.
Don't commit adultery.
Don't steal.
Don't swear falsely.
Don't defraud.
Honour your father and your mother.'

[20]'Teacher,' he said, 'I've kept all of them since I was little.'
[21]Jesus looked hard at him, and loved him.
'One more thing,' he said. 'Go away, and whatever you possess – sell it, and give it to the poor. You will have treasure in heaven! Then: come and follow me.'
[22]At that, his face fell, and he went off sadly. He was very wealthy.
[23]Jesus looked slowly around. Then he said to his disciples, 'How difficult it is for the wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!'
[24]The disciples were astonished at what he was saying. So Jesus repeated once more, 'Children, it's very hard to enter the kingdom of God! [25]It would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter God's kingdom.'
[26]They were totally amazed, and said to each other, 'So who then can be saved?'
[27]'It's impossible for mortals,' Jesus said, looking hard at them, 'but it's not impossible for God. All things are possible for God.'
[28]'Look here,' Peter started up, 'we've left everything and followed you.'
[29]'I'll tell you the truth,' replied Jesus. 'No one who has left a house, or brothers or sisters, or mother or father, or children, or

lands, because of me and the gospel, [30]will fail to receive back a hundred times more in the Present Age: houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and lands – with persecutions! – and finally the life of the Age to Come. [31]But plenty of people at the front will end up at the back, and the back at the front.'

The request of James and John

[32]They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem. Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were amazed, and the people following were afraid.

Again he took the Twelve aside and began to tell them what was going to happen to him. [33]'Look,' he said, 'we're going up to Jerusalem. The son of man will be handed over to the chief priests and the legal experts, and they will condemn him to death, and hand him over to the pagans. [34]They will taunt him and spit at him and flog him and kill him – and after three days he will rise again.'

[35]James and John, Zebedee's sons, came up to him.

'Teacher,' they said, 'we want you to grant us whatever we ask.'

[36]'What do you want me to do for you?' asked Jesus.

[37]'Grant us,' they said, 'that when you're there in all your glory, one of us will sit at your right, and the other at your left.'

[38]'You don't know what you're asking for!' Jesus replied. 'Can you drink the cup I'm going to drink? Can you receive the baptism I'm going to receive?'

[39]'Yes,' they said, 'we can.'

'Well,' said Jesus, 'you will drink the cup I drink; you will receive the baptism I receive. [40]But sitting at my right hand or my left – that's not up to me. It's been assigned already.'

[41]When the other ten disciples heard, they were angry with James and John. [42]Jesus called them to him.

'You know how it is in the pagan nations,' he said. 'Think how their so-called rulers act. They lord it over their subjects. The high and mighty ones boss the rest around. [43]But that's not how it's going to be with you. Anyone who wants to be great among you must become your servant. [44]Anyone who wants to be first must be everyone's slave. [45]Don't you see? The son of man didn't come to be waited on. He came to be the servant, to give his life "as a ransom for many".'

Jesus heals a blind beggar

[46]They came to Jericho. As Jesus, his disciples and a substantial crowd were leaving the town, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the road. [47]When he heard it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out: 'Son of David! Jesus! Take pity on me!'

[48]Lots of people told him crossly to be quiet. But he shouted out all the louder, 'Son of David – take pity on me!'

[49]Jesus came to a stop. 'Call him,' he said.

So they called the blind man.

'Cheer up,' they said, 'and get up. He's calling you.'

[50]He flung his cloak aside, jumped up, and came to Jesus.

Jesus saw him coming. [51]'What do you want me to do for you?' he asked.

'Teacher,' the blind man said, 'let me see again.'

[52]'Off you go,' said Jesus. 'Your faith has saved you.' And immediately he saw again, and he followed him on the way.

The triumphal entry

11 So they approached Jerusalem. They got as far as Bethphage and Bethany, on the Mount of Olives, when Jesus sent two of his disciples on ahead with a specific task.

[2]'Go to the village over there,' he said to them, 'and as soon as you enter it you will find a colt tied up – one that nobody has ever ridden before. Untie it and bring it here. [3]And if anyone says to you, "Why are you doing that?" then say, "The master needs it, and he will return it at once."'

[4]They went off and found the colt tied up beside a door, out in the street; and they untied it.

[5]Some of the bystanders said to them, 'Why are you untying the colt?' [6]They gave the answer Jesus had told them, and they let them carry on. [7]So they brought the colt to Jesus and laid their cloaks on it, and he mounted it. [8]Several people spread their cloaks out in the road. Others did the same with foliage that they had cut in the fields. [9]Those in front, and those coming behind, shouted out, 'Hosanna! Welcome in the Lord's Name! [10]Welcome to the kingdom of our father David, the kingdom coming right now! Hosanna in the highest!'

[11]Jesus entered Jerusalem, went into the Temple, and looked all round. It was already getting late, and he returned to Bethany with the Twelve.

Jesus cleanses the Temple

[12]The next day, as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. [13]From some distance away he saw a fig tree covered with leaves, and hoped to find some fruit on it; but when he came up to it he found nothing but leaves. (It wasn't yet the season for figs.)

[14]He addressed the tree directly. 'May no one ever eat fruit from you again,' he said. And his disciples heard.

[15]They came into Jerusalem. Jesus went into the Temple and began to drive out the traders, those who bought and sold in the

Temple, and overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of the dove-sellers. [16]He permitted no one to carry any vessel through the Temple. [17]He began to teach: 'Isn't this what's written,' he said,

'My house shall be called
a house of prayer
for all the world to share?

But you've made it a brigands' den!'
[18]The chief priests and the legal experts heard, and looked for a way to get rid of him. But they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was astonished at his teaching.
[19]When evening came, they went back out of the city.
[20]As they were returning, early in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from its roots.
[21]'Look, Teacher!' said Peter to Jesus, remembering what had happened before. 'The fig tree you cursed has withered.'
[22]'Have faith in God,' replied Jesus. [23]'I'm telling you the truth: if anyone says to this mountain, "Be off with you – get yourself thrown into the sea", if they have no doubt in their heart, but believe that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. [24]That's why I'm telling you, everything that you request in prayer, everything you ask God for, believe that you receive it, and it will happen for you.
[25]'And when you are standing there praying, if you have something against someone else, forgive them – so that your father in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.'

The authority of Jesus is questioned

[27]Once more they went into Jerusalem. As Jesus was walking in the Temple he was approached by the chief priests, the legal experts and the elders.
[28]'By what right do you do these things?' they asked. 'Who gave you the right to do them?'
[29]'I have one question for you, too,' replied Jesus, 'and if you tell me the answer I shall tell you by what right I do these things. [30]Was the baptism of John from heaven, or was it a human invention? What's your answer?'
[31]'Well now,' they muttered to each other, 'if we say it was from heaven, he will say, "Then why didn't you believe him?" [32]But if we say it was a human invention . . .' They were afraid of the crowd, because everyone regarded John as a prophet.
[33]'We don't know,' they said to Jesus.
'Nor will I tell you', replied Jesus, 'by what right I do these things.'

The parable of the tenants

12 Jesus began to speak to them with parables.
'Once upon a time,' he began, 'there was a man who planted a vineyard. He built a fence around it, dug out a wine-press, built a watchtower, and then let it out to tenant farmers. He himself went abroad. [2]When the time came he sent a slave to the farmers to collect from them his portion of the vineyard's produce. [3]They seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed.
[4]'So again he sent another slave to them. This one they beat about the head, and treated shamefully. [5]He sent another, and they killed him. He sent several more; they beat some and killed others.
[6]'He had one more to send: his beloved son. He sent him to them last of all, thinking "They will respect my son".
[7]'But the tenant farmers said to themselves,
"This is the heir! Come on – let's kill him, and we'll get the inheritance!" [8]So they seized him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.
[9]'So what will the vineyard owner do? He will come and destroy those tenants, and give the vineyard to others. [10]Or haven't you read the scripture which says,

There is the stone the builders refused;
now it's in place at the top of the corner.
[11]This happened the way the Lord planned it;
we were astonished to see it.'

[12]They tried to find a way of arresting him, because they realized he had directed the parable against them. But they were afraid of the crowd. They left him and went away.

On paying taxes to Caesar

[13]They sent some Pharisees to Jesus, and some Herodians, to try to trick him into saying the wrong thing.
[14]'Teacher,' they said, 'we know you are a man of integrity; you don't regard anybody as special. You don't bother about the outward show people put up; you teach God's way truly.
'Well then: is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not? Should we pay it, or shouldn't we?'
[15]He knew the game they were playing. 'Why are you trying to trap me?' he said. 'Bring me a tribute-coin; let me look at it.'
[16]They brought one to him.
'This image,' he asked, 'whose is it? And whose is this superscription?'
'Caesar's,' they replied.

[17]‘Well then,’ said Jesus, ‘give Caesar back what belongs to Caesar – and give God back what belongs to God!’
They were astonished at him.

Marriage and the resurrection

[18]Some Sadducees approached Jesus (Sadducees, by the way, deny the resurrection).
[19]‘Teacher,’ they said, ‘Moses wrote for us that “If a man’s brother dies, and leaves a wife but no child, the brother should take the wife and raise up descendants for his brother.” [20]Well now: there were once seven brothers. The first married a wife, and died without children. [21]The second married the widow, and died without children. The third did so as well, [22]and so did all seven, still without leaving children. Finally the woman died too. [23]So: when they rise again in the resurrection, whose wife will she be? All seven had her, after all.’
[24]‘Where you’re going wrong’, replied Jesus, ‘is that you don’t know the scriptures, or God’s power. [25]When people rise from the dead, they don’t marry, nor do people give them in marriage. They are like angels in heaven.
[26]‘However, to show that the dead are indeed to be raised, surely you’ve read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, what God says to Moses? “I am Abraham’s God, Isaac’s God and Jacob’s God”? [27]He isn’t the God of the dead, but of the living. You are completely mistaken.’

The most important commandment

[28]One of the legal experts came up, and overheard the discussion. Realizing that Jesus had given a splendid answer, he put a question of his own.
‘Which commandment’, he asked, ‘is the first one of all?’
[29]‘The first one’, replied Jesus, ‘is this: “Listen, Israel: the Lord your God, the Lord is one; [30]and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your understanding, and with all your strength.” [31]And this is the second one: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” No other commandment is greater than these ones.’
[32]‘Well said, Teacher,’ answered the lawyer. ‘You are right in saying that “he is one and there is no other beside him”, [33]and that “to love him with all the heart, and with all the intelligence, and with all the strength” and “to love one’s neighbour as oneself” is worth far more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.’
[34]Jesus saw that his answer came out of deep understanding.
‘You are not far from God’s kingdom,’ he said to him.
After that, nobody dared put any more questions to him.

David’s son and the widow’s mite

[35]By way of response to it all, Jesus began to teach in the Temple.
‘Why do the experts say’, he asked, ‘that the Messiah is the son of David? [36]David himself, inspired by the holy spirit, said:

The Lord said to my Lord:
sit at my right hand,
until I place your enemies
right underneath your feet.

[37]‘David himself calls him “Lord”; how then can he be his son?’
The whole crowd listened to him with delight.
[38]During his teaching, he said, ‘Beware of the lawyers! They like to walk about in long robes, and to be greeted in the market-places. [39]They take the chief seats in the synagogue, and the best places at dinner parties. [40]They devour the property of widows, and make long prayers without meaning them. They will receive all the more condemnation.’
[41]As he sat opposite the Temple treasury, he watched the crowd putting money into the almsboxes. Lots of rich people put in substantial amounts. [42]Then there came a single poor widow, who put in two tiny coins, together worth a single penny.
[43]Jesus called his disciples.
‘I’m telling you the truth,’ he said. ‘This poor widow just put more into the treasury than everybody else. [44]You see, all the others were contributing out of their wealth; but she put in everything she had, out of her poverty. It was her whole livelihood.’

Signs of the end

13 As they were going out of the Temple, one of Jesus’ disciples said to him, ‘Teacher! Look at these huge stones, and these huge buildings!’
[2]‘You see these enormous buildings?’ said Jesus. ‘There will not be one single stone left on top of another. They will all be torn down.’
[3]Peter, James, John and Andrew approached him privately as he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the Temple.
[4]‘Tell us,’ they asked. ‘When will these things happen? What will be the sign that these things are about to be completed?’
[5]‘Take care that nobody deceives you,’ Jesus began to say to them. [6]‘Plenty of people will come in my name, saying “I’m the one!”, and they will lead plenty astray. [7]But whenever you hear about wars, and rumours about wars, don’t be disturbed. These things have to happen, but it doesn’t mean the end is here. [8]One nation will rise up against another; one kingdom will rise up

against another. There will be earthquakes from place to place, and famines too. These are the first pains of childbirth.
[9]‘But watch out for yourselves. They will hand you over to courts, they will beat you in synagogues; you will stand before rulers and kings because of me, as a witness against them. [10]And the message of the kingdom must first be announced to all the nations. [11]And when they put you on trial and hand you over, don’t work out beforehand what you are going to say, but say whatever is given you at that moment. It won’t be you speaking, you see, but the holy spirit.
[12]‘One brother will hand over another to death. Fathers will hand over children. Children will rebel against parents and have them put to death. [13]And you will be hated by everyone because of my name. But the one who is patient through to the end – that one will be saved.’

Further signs of the end

[14]‘However,’ Jesus continued, ‘when you see “the desolating abomination” set up where it ought not to be’ (let the reader understand) ‘then those who are in Judaea should run away to the mountains. [15]If you’re on the housetop, don’t go down, and don’t go in to get anything from the house. [16]If you’re out in the countryside, don’t turn back again to pick up your cloak.
[17]‘It will be a terrible time for pregnant and nursing mothers. [18]Pray that it won’t happen in winter. [19]Yes, those days will bring trouble like nothing that’s ever happened from the beginning of creation, which God created, until now, or ever will again. [20]In fact, if the Lord had not shortened the days, no one would be rescued. But for the sake of his chosen ones, those whom he appointed, he shortened the days.
[21]‘So at that time, if someone says to you, “Look – here is the Messiah!” or, “Look – there he is!”, don’t believe them; [22]because false messiahs and false prophets will arise, and will perform signs and portents to lead astray even God’s chosen ones, if that were possible. [23]But you must be on your guard. I’ve told you everything ahead of time.
[24]‘But in those days, after that suffering,

The sun will be dark as night
and the moon will not give its light;
[25]the stars will fall from heaven
and the powers in heaven will shake.

[26]‘Then they will see “the son of man coming on clouds with great power and glory”. [27]And then he will dispatch his messengers, and will gather in his chosen ones from the four winds, from the ends of earth to the ends of heaven.’

Watching for the son of man

[28]‘Learn this lesson from the fig tree. When its branch becomes soft and sprouts leaves, you know that summer is near. [29]In the same way, when you see these things happen, you should know that it is near, right at the gates. [30]I’m telling you the truth: this generation won’t disappear until all of this has happened. [31]Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words won’t disappear.
[32]‘No one knows, though, the day or the hour. The angels in heaven don’t know it; nor does the son; only the father.
[33]‘Keep watch, stay awake. You don’t know when the moment will arrive. [34]It’s like a man who goes away from home: he leaves his house, giving each of his slaves authority for their own tasks; and he commands the doorkeeper to keep watch. [35]Keep watch, then, because you don’t know when the master of the house is going to come. It might be at evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning! [36]You don’t want him to come suddenly and find you asleep. [37]What I am telling you, I am telling everyone: keep watch!’

Jesus is anointed at Bethany

14 Passover – the feast of unleavened bread – was due in two days. The chief priests and the lawyers were plotting how to seize Jesus by a trick, and kill him.
[2]‘We can’t do it at the feast,’ they said. ‘The people might riot.’
[3]Jesus was in Bethany, at the house of Simon (known as ‘the Leper’). While he was at table, a woman came up with an alabaster pot containing extremely valuable ointment made of pure spikenard. She broke the pot and poured the ointment on Jesus’ head.
[4]Some of the people there grumbled to one another.
‘What’s the point of wasting the ointment?’ they asked. [5]‘That ointment could have been sold for three hundred dinars, and given to the poor.’
And they were angry with her.
[6]‘Leave her alone,’ said Jesus. ‘Why make trouble for her? She has done a wonderful thing for me. [7]You have the poor with you always; you can help them whenever you want to. But you won’t always have me.
[8]‘She has played her part. She has anointed my body for its burial, ahead of time. [9]I’m telling you the truth: wherever the message is announced in all the world, the story of what she has just done will be told. That will be her memorial.’
[10]Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests, to arrange to hand Jesus over to them. [11]They were delighted with his proposal, and made an agreement to pay him. And he began to look for a good moment to hand him over.

The Last Supper

[12]On the first day of unleavened bread, when the Passover lambs were sacrificed, Jesus' disciples said to him, 'Where would you like us to go and get things ready for you to eat the Passover?'
[13]He sent off two of his disciples, with these instructions.
'Go into the city, and you will be met by a man carrying a water-pot. Follow him. [14]When he goes indoors, say to the master of the house, "The teacher says, where is the guest room for me, where I can eat the Passover with my disciples?" [15]He will show you a large upstairs room, set out and ready. Make preparations for us there.'
[16]The disciples went out, entered the city, and found it exactly as he had said. They prepared the Passover.
[17]When it was evening, Jesus came with the Twelve. [18]As they were reclining at table and eating, Jesus said, 'I'm telling you the truth: one of you is going to betray me – one of you that's eating with me.'
[19]They began to be very upset, and they said to him, one after another, 'It isn't me, is it?'
[20]'It's one of the Twelve,' said Jesus, 'one who has dipped his bread in the dish with me. [21]Yes: the son of man is completing his journey, as scripture said he would; but it's bad news for the man who betrays him! It would have been better for that man never to have been born.'
[22]While they were eating, he took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them.
'Take it,' he said. 'This is my body.'
[23]Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it.
[24]'This is my blood of the covenant,' he said, 'which is poured out for many. [25]I'm telling you the truth: I won't ever drink from the fruit of the vine again, until that day – the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.'

Jesus is arrested

[26]They sang a hymn, and went out to the Mount of Olives.
[27]'You're all going to desert me,' said Jesus, 'because it's written,

I shall attack the shepherd
and then the sheep will scatter.

[28]'But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.'
[29]Peter spoke up.
'Everyone else may desert you,' he said, 'but I won't.'
[30]'I'm telling you the truth,' Jesus replied. 'Today – this very night, before the cock has crowed twice – you will renounce me three times.'
[31]This made Peter all the more vehement.
'Even if I have to die with you,' he said, 'I will never renounce you.'
And all the rest said the same.
[32]They came to a place called Gethsemane.
'Stay here', said Jesus to the disciples, 'while I pray.'
[33]He took Peter, James and John with him, and became quite overcome and deeply distressed.
[34]'"My soul is disturbed within me", he said, 'right to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch.'
[35]He went a little further, and fell on the ground and prayed that, if possible, the moment might pass from him.
[36]'Abba, father,' he said, 'all things are possible for you! Take this cup away from me! But – not what I want, but what you want.'
[37]He returned and found them sleeping.
'Are you asleep, Simon?' he said to Peter. 'Couldn't you keep watch for a single hour? [38]Watch and pray, so that you won't come into the time of trouble. The spirit is eager, but the body is weak.'
[39]Once more he went off and prayed, saying the same words. [40]And again, when he returned, he found them asleep, because their eyes were very heavy. They had no words to answer him. [41]But the third time he came, he said to them, 'All right – sleep as much as you like now. Have a good rest. The job is done, the time has come – and look! The son of man is betrayed into the clutches of sinners. [42]Get up, let's be on our way. Here comes the man who's going to betray me.'
[43]At once, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by a crowd, with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the legal experts, and the elders. [44]The betrayer had given them a coded sign: 'The one I kiss – that's him! Seize him and take him away safely.'
[45]He came up to Jesus at once. 'Rabbi!' he said, and kissed him.
[46]The crowd laid hands on him and seized him. [47]One of the bystanders drew a sword and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his ear. [48]Then Jesus spoke to them.
'Anyone would think', he said, 'you'd come after a brigand! Fancy needing swords and clubs to arrest me! [49]Day after day I've been teaching in the Temple, under your noses, and you never laid a finger on me. But the scriptures must be fulfilled.'
[50]Then they all abandoned him and ran away.
[51]A young man had followed him, wearing only a linen tunic over his otherwise naked body. [52]They seized him, and he left the tunic and ran away naked.

In the high priest's house

[53]They took Jesus away to the high priest. All the chief priests and the elders and legal experts were assembled. [54]Peter followed

him at a distance, and came to the courtyard of the high priest's house, where he sat with the servants and warmed himself at the fire.
55The chief priests, and all the Sanhedrin, looked for evidence for a capital charge against Jesus, but they didn't find any.
56Several people invented fictitious charges against him, but their evidence didn't agree. 57Then some stood up with this fabricated charge: 58'We heard him say, "I will destroy this Temple, which human hands have made, and in three days I'll build another, made without human hands."'
59But even so their evidence didn't agree.
60Then the high priest got up in front of them all and interrogated Jesus.
'Haven't you got any answer about whatever it is these people are testifying against you?'
61Jesus remained silent, and didn't answer a word.
Once more the high priest questioned him.
'Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?'
62'I am,' replied Jesus, 'and you will see "the son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven".'
63'Why do we need any more evidence?' shouted the high priest, tearing his clothes. 64'You heard the blasphemy! What's your verdict?'
They all agreed on their judgment: he deserved to die.
65Some of them began to spit at him. They blindfolded him and hit him, and said, 'Prophesy!' And the servants took charge of him and beat him.
66Peter, meanwhile, was below in the courtyard. One of the high priest's servant-girls came up 67and saw him warming himself. She looked closely at him, and said, 'You were with Jesus the Nazarene too, weren't you?'
68'I don't know what on earth you're talking about,' replied Peter.
He went outside into the forecourt, and the cock crowed.
69The servant-girl saw him, and once more began to say to the bystanders, 'This man is one of them.' 70But Peter again denied it.
A little while later the bystanders said again to Peter, 'You really are one of them, aren't you? You're a Galilean!'
71At that he began to curse and swear, 'I don't know this man you're talking about.' 72And immediately the cock crowed for the second time. Then Peter remembered the words that Jesus had said to him: 'Before the cock crows twice, you will renounce me three times.' And he burst into tears.

Jesus before Pilate

15 As soon as morning came, the chief priests held a council meeting with the elders, the legal experts, and the whole Sanhedrin. They bound Jesus, took him off to Pilate, and handed him over.
2'Are you the king of the Jews?' asked Pilate.
'You have said it,' replied Jesus.
3The chief priests laid many accusations against him.
4Pilate again interrogated him: 'Aren't you going to make any reply? Look how many things they're accusing you of!'
5But Jesus gave no reply at all, which astonished Pilate.
6The custom was that at festival time he used to release for them a single prisoner, whoever they would ask for. 7There was a man in prison named Barabbas, one of the revolutionaries who had committed murder during the uprising. 8So the crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do what he normally did.
9'Do you want me', answered Pilate, 'to release for you "the king of the Jews"?'
10He said this because he knew that the chief priests had handed him over out of envy. 11The chief priests stirred up the crowd to ask for Barabbas instead to be released to them. So Pilate once again asked them, 12'What then do you want me to do with the one you call "the king of the Jews"?'
13'Crucify him!' they shouted again.
14'Why?' asked Pilate. 'What has he done wrong?'
'Crucify him!' they shouted all the louder.
15Pilate wanted to satisfy the crowd; so he released Barabbas for them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

The crucifixion

16The soldiers took Jesus into the courtyard, that is, the Praetorium, and called together the whole squad. 17They dressed Jesus up in purple; then, weaving together a crown of thorns, they stuck it on him. 18They began to salute him: 'Greetings, King of the Jews!' 19And they hit him over the head with a staff, and spat at him, and knelt down to do him homage. 20Then, when they had mocked him, they took the purple robe off him, and put his own clothes back on.
Then they led him off to crucify him. 21They compelled a man called Simon to carry Jesus' cross. He was from Cyrene, and was coming in from out of town. He was the father of Alexander and Rufus.
22They took Jesus to the place called Golgotha, which in translation means 'Skull's Place'. 23They gave him a mixture of wine and myrrh, but he didn't drink it.
24So they crucified him; they 'parted his clothing between them, casting lots' to see who would get what. 25It was about nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. 26The inscription, giving the charge, read: 'The King of the Jews'. 27They also

crucified two bandits alongside him, one on his right and one on his left.
[29]People who were passing by abused him. They shook their heads at him.
'Hah!' they said. 'You were going to destroy the Temple, were you? And build it again in three days? [30]Why don't you rescue yourself, and come down from the cross?'
[31]The chief priests and the lawyers were mocking him in the same way among themselves.
'He rescued others,' they said, 'but he can't rescue himself. [32]Messiah, is he? King of Israel, did he say? Well, let's see him come down from the cross! We'll believe him when we see that!'
The two who were crucified alongside him taunted him as well.

The death of Jesus

[33]At midday there was darkness over all the land until three in the afternoon. [34]At three o ' clock Jesus shouted out in a powerful voice, '*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*' which means, 'My God, my God, why did you abandon me?'
[35]When the bystanders heard it, some of them said, 'He's calling for Elijah!'
[36]One of them ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a pole, and gave it him to drink.
'Well then,' he declared, 'let's see if Elijah will come and take him down.'
[37]But Jesus, with another loud shout, breathed his last.
[38]The Temple veil was torn in two, from top to bottom. [39]When the centurion who was standing facing him saw that he died in this way, he said, 'This fellow really was God's son.'

The burial of Jesus

[40]Some women were watching from a distance. They included Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of the younger James and of Joses, and Salome. [41]They had followed Jesus in Galilee, and had attended to his needs. There were several other women, too, who had come up with him to Jerusalem.
[42]It was already getting towards evening, and it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath. [43]Joseph of Arimathea, a reputable member of the council who was himself eagerly awaiting God's kingdom, took his courage in both hands, went to Pilate, and requested the body of Jesus.
[44]Pilate was surprised that he was already dead. He summoned the centurion, and asked whether he had been dead for some time. [45]When he learned the facts from the centurion, he conceded the body to Joseph.
[46]So Joseph bought a linen cloth, took the body down, wrapped it in the cloth, and laid it in a tomb cut out of the rock. He rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. [47]Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where he was buried.

The resurrection

16 When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they could come and anoint Jesus. [2]Then, very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb, just at sunrise. [3]They were saying to one another, 'There's that stone at the door of the tomb – who's going to roll it away for us?'
[4]Then, when they looked up, they saw that it had been rolled away. (It was extremely large.)
[5]So they went into the tomb, and there they saw a young man sitting on the right-hand side. He was wearing white. They were totally astonished.
[6]'Don't be astonished,' he said to them. 'You're looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has been raised! He isn't here! Look – this is the place where they laid him.
[7]'But go and tell his disciples – including Peter – that he is going ahead of you to Galilee. You'll see him there, just like he told you.'
[8]They went out, and fled from the tomb. Trembling and panic had seized them. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

Two extra endings

[[They gave a brief account to the people around Peter of what they had been told. After this, Jesus himself sent out from East to West, through their work, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation. Amen.]]

[9][When Jesus was raised, early on the first day of the week, he appeared first of all to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. [10]She went and told the people who had been with him, who were mourning and weeping. [11]When they heard that he was alive, and that he had been seen by her, they didn't believe it.
[12]After this he appeared in a different guise to two of them as they were walking into the countryside. [13]They came back and told the others, but they didn't believe them.
[14]Later Jesus appeared to the eleven themselves, as they were at table. He told them off for their unbelief and hardheartedness, for not believing those who had seen him after he had been raised.
[15]'Go into all the world,' he said to them, 'and announce the message to all creation. [16]Anyone who believes and is baptized will be rescued, but people who don't believe will be condemned. [17]And these signs will happen around those who believe: they will drive out demons in my name, they will speak with new tongues, [18]they will pick up serpents in their hands; and if they drink anything poisonous it won't harm them. They will lay their hands on the sick, and they will get better.'

[19]When the Lord Jesus had spoken with them, he was taken up into heaven, and sat down at God's right hand. [20]They went out and announced the message everywhere. The Lord worked with them, validating their message by the signs that accompanied them.]

Luke

Some ancient traditions, following a hint in Paul (Colossians 4.14), suppose that Luke was a doctor. Other traditions, not so ancient but still important, claim that he was an artist. For all we know, he may have been both, in which case we have two clues as to the kind of book his gospel might be.

For a start, Luke's gospel shows signs of a scholarly approach, such as we might expect from someone with a degree of academic training. He speaks of having checked his sources, both oral and written, and of his determination to set out 'an orderly account' (1.1) of what had happened. When we put alongside Luke the other similar writings we have, it seems overwhelmingly probable that he used Mark's gospel as a basis for his own, adding plenty of other material, shaping his Markan material and polishing the style as he went along. Mark's is a gospel for someone in a hurry; Luke's is a book to be studied by the wider world.

This wider aim and audience has prompted some to ask whether Luke was a Gentile. We don't know the answer to that, but he was clearly soaked in the scriptures, probably knowing them best in a Greek version. He highlights the way in which the risen Jesus insists that the events of his crucifixion and resurrection were to be understood in the light of the entire scriptural narrative, and how, balancing that, the scriptures themselves were now to be understood in a fresh way in the light of Jesus and by the leading of the spirit. His book is scriptural through and through, but in a quite different way from Matthew's, allowing Israel's scriptures to resonate in the background as he tells the opening stories of the conception and birth of John the Baptist and then of Jesus himself.

What does this mean? This is where Luke-as-an-artist comes into his own. He knows how to tell a story so well that we can see it happening in front of us as if painted by a master. He tells, early on, the story of Mary and Joseph losing the twelve-year-old Jesus in the Passover crowd and spending three days frantically hunting for him before finding him calmly sitting in the Temple, discussing things with the teachers. Luke balances this at the end with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, distraught for a third day after the crucifixion of the one they thought was to redeem Israel, only to discover that their unexpected companion on the road was Jesus himself, making their hearts burn as he opens the scriptures. Luke expects his readers to find themselves in this story as well. That is what artists aim at.

In particular, Luke has structured his book so as to move fairly quickly through the material corresponding to Mark's first eight chapters, in order then to present most of the gospel in terms of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. This journey begins, in quite a formal way, in 9.51, and though the next ten chapters contain much besides, Luke steadily leads the eye up to chapter 19, where he paints a scene worthy of a Rembrandt or Titian. From the start the scriptural echoes tell us what is going on: Jesus 'sent messengers ahead of him' (9.52), echoing the promise in Exodus 23.20 and, more darkly, the warning in Malachi 3.1. Jesus' journey to Jerusalem is to be seen in terms of the long-delayed promise that one day YHWH would return to his people in person, to judge and to save. This becomes explicit in 19.11–48, when Jesus tells a story about the king who comes back at last, and then rides into Jerusalem in floods of tears at the fate the city now faces 'because you didn't know the moment when God was visiting you' (verse 44).

Thus, through the human story of Jesus the storyteller and healer, Luke offers us both a work of art for our contemplation and the medicine for the deepest human disease.

Prologue

1 Many people have undertaken to draw up an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled in our midst. [2]It has been handed down to us by the original eyewitnesses and stewards of the word. [3]So, most excellent Theophilus, since I had traced the course of all of it scrupulously from the start, I thought it a good idea to write an orderly account for you, [4]so that you may have secure knowledge about the matters in which you have been instructed.

Gabriel visits Zechariah

[5]In the time when Herod was king of Judaea, there was a priest called Zechariah, of the priestly division of Abijah. His wife, who came from the Aaron family, was called Elisabeth. [6]Both of them were righteous in God's sight; they followed all the Lord's commandments and ordinances without fault. [7]They had no children. Elisabeth was barren, and both of them were of an advanced age.

[8]It so happened, when Zechariah was performing his priestly service before God, according to the order of his division, [9]that the lot fell to him, according to the priestly custom, to go in to the Lord's sanctuary to offer incense. [10]The people were praying outside in a large crowd, at the time of the incense-offering. [11]An angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right hand side of the incense-altar. [12]Zechariah was troubled and terror-struck when he saw the angel.

[13]But the angel said to him: 'Don't be afraid, Zechariah: your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elisabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. [14]This will bring you joy and celebration, and many will rejoice at his birth. [15]He will be a great man in God's sight; he will drink no wine or strong drink. He will be filled with the holy spirit from his mother's womb, [16]and will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. [17]He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, and he will turn the hearts of fathers to children, and of unbelievers to the wisdom of the righteous. He will get ready for the Lord a prepared people.'

[18]'How can I be sure of this?' said Zechariah to the angel. 'I'm an old man! My wife's not as young as she used to be, either!'

[19]'Look here,' replied the angel, 'I'm Gabriel. I stand in God's presence. I was sent to speak to you and give you this splendid news. [20]Now, listen: you will be silent – you won't be able to speak – until the day when it all happens, because you didn't believe my words. But they will come true at the proper time.'

[21]Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah, and were surprised that he was taking such a long time in the sanctuary.
[22]But when he came out he couldn't speak to them, and they understood that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He made gestures to them, but remained speechless.
[23]So, when the days of his priestly service were complete, he went back home. [24]After that time, Elisabeth his wife conceived. She stayed in hiding for five months.
[25]'This is the Lord's doing,' she said; 'at last he has looked on me, and taken away my public shame.'

The annunciation of the birth of Jesus

[26]In the sixth month, Gabriel the angel was sent from God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, [27]to a virgin engaged to a man called Joseph, from the family of David. The virgin was called Mary.
[28]'Greetings, favoured one!' said the angel when he arrived. 'May the Lord be with you!'
[29]She was disturbed at this, and wondered what such a greeting might mean.
[30]'Don't be afraid, Mary,' said the angel to her. 'You're in favour with God. [31]Listen: you will conceive in your womb and will have a son; and you shall call his name Jesus. [32]He will be a great man, and he'll be called the son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, [33]and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever. His kingdom will never come to an end.'
[34]'How will this happen?' said Mary to the angel. 'I'm still a virgin!'
[35]'The holy spirit will come upon you,' replied the angel, 'and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. For that reason the holy one who is born from you will be called God's Son.
[36]'Let me tell you this, too: your cousin Elisabeth, in her old age, has also conceived a son. This is the sixth month for her, a woman who people used to say was barren. [37]With God, you see, nothing is impossible.'
[38]'Here I am,' said Mary; 'I'm the Lord's servant-girl. Let it happen to me as you've said.'
Then the angel left her.

The Magnificat: Mary's song of praise

[39]Mary got up then and there, and went in excitement to the hill country of Judaea. [40]She went into Zechariah's house, and greeted Elisabeth. [41]When Elisabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby gave a leap in her womb. Elisabeth was filled with the holy spirit, [42]and shouted at the top of her voice: 'Of all women, you're the blessed one! And the fruit of your womb – he's blessed, too! [43]Why should this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? [44]Look – when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the child in my womb gave a great leap for joy! [45]A blessing on you, for believing that what the Lord said to you would come true!'
[46]Mary said,

'My soul declares that the Lord is great,
[47]my spirit exults in my saviour, my God.
[48]He saw his servant-girl in her humility;
from now, I'll be blessed by all peoples to come.
[49]The Powerful One, whose name is Holy,
has done great things for me, for me.
[50]His mercy extends from father to son,
from mother to daughter for those who fear him.
[51]Powerful things he has done with his arm:
he routed the arrogant through their own cunning.
[52]Down from their thrones he hurled the rulers,
up from the earth he raised the humble.
[53]The hungry he filled with the fat of the land,
but the rich he sent off with nothing to eat.
[54]He has rescued his servant, Israel his child,
because he remembered his mercy of old,
[55]just as he said to our long-ago ancestors –
Abraham and his descendants for ever.'

[56]Mary stayed with Elisabeth for three months, and then returned home.

Zechariah's song of praise

[57]The time arrived for Elisabeth's child to be born, and she gave birth to a son. [58]Her neighbours and relatives heard that the Lord had increased his mercy to her, and they came to celebrate with her.
[59]Now on the eighth day, when they came to circumcise the child, they were calling him by his father's name, Zechariah. [60]But his mother spoke up.
'No,' she said, 'he is to be called John.'
[61]'None of your relatives', they objected, 'is called by that name.'

[62]They made signs to his father, to ask what he wanted him to be called. [63]He asked for a writing tablet, and wrote on it, 'His name is John.'

Everyone was astonished. [64]Immediately his mouth and his tongue were unfastened, and he spoke, praising God. [65]Fear came over all those who lived in the neighbourhood, and all these things were spoken of throughout all the hill country of Judaea. [66]Everyone who heard about it turned the matter over in their hearts.

'What then will this child become?' they said. And the Lord's hand was with him.

[67]John's father Zechariah was filled with the holy spirit, and spoke this prophecy:

[68]'Blessed be the Lord, Israel's God!
He's come to his people and bought them their freedom.
[69]He's raised up a horn of salvation for us
in David's house, the house of his servant,
[70]just as he promised, through the mouths of his prophets,
the holy ones, speaking from ages of old:
[71]salvation from our enemies, rescue from hatred,
[72]mercy to our ancestors, keeping his holy covenant.
[73]He swore an oath to Abraham our father,
[74]to give us deliverance from fear and from foes,
so we might worship him, [75]holy and righteous
before his face to the end of our days.
[76]You, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest One,
go ahead of the Lord, preparing his way,
[77]letting his people know of salvation,
through the forgiveness of all their sins.
[78]The heart of our God is full of mercy,
that's why his daylight has dawned from on high,
[79]bringing light to the dark, as we sat in death's shadow,
guiding our feet in the path of peace.'

[80]The child grew, and became powerful in the spirit. He lived in the wilderness until the day when he was revealed to Israel.

The birth of Jesus

2 At that time a decree was issued by Augustus Caesar: a census was to be taken of the whole world. [2](This was the first census, before the one when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) [3]So everyone set off to be registered, each to their own town. [4]Joseph too, who belonged to the house and family of David, went from the city of Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem in Judaea, David's city, [5]to be registered with his fiancée Mary, who was pregnant.

[6]So that's where they were when the time came for her to give birth; [7]and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him up and put him to rest in a feeding-trough, because there was no room for them in the normal living quarters.

[8]There were shepherds in that region, out in the open, keeping a night watch around their flock. [9]An angel of the Lord stood in front of them. The glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

[10]'Don't be afraid,' the angel said to them. 'Look: I've got good news for you, news which will make everybody very happy. [11]Today a saviour has been born for you – the Messiah, the Lord! – in David's town. [12]This will be the sign for you: you'll find the baby wrapped up, and lying in a feeding-trough.'

[13]Suddenly, with the angel, there was a crowd of the heavenly armies. They were praising God, saying,

[14]'Glory to God in the highest,
and peace upon earth among those in his favour.'

[15]So when the angels had gone away again into heaven, the shepherds said to each other, 'Well then; let's go to Bethlehem and see what it's all about, all this that the Lord has told us.'

[16]So they hurried off, and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the feeding-trough. [17]When they saw it, they told them what had been said to them about this child. [18]And all the people who heard it were amazed at the things the shepherds said to them. [19]But Mary treasured all these things and mused over them in her heart.

[20]The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told to them.

Simeon and Anna

[21]After eight days, the time came to circumcise the baby. He was called by the name Jesus, which the angel had given him before he had been conceived in the womb.

[22]When the time came for them to be purified according to the law of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him before the Lord. [23]That's what the law of the Lord says: 'Every firstborn male shall be called holy to the Lord.' [24]They also came to offer sacrifice, according to what it says in the law of the Lord: 'A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.'

[25]Now there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout, waiting for God to comfort Israel, and the

holy spirit was upon him. [26]He had been told by the holy spirit that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. [27]Led by the spirit, he came into the Temple. As Jesus' parents brought him in, to do for him what the law's regulations required, [28]he took the baby in his arms and blessed God with these words:

[29]'Now, master, you are dismissing your servant in peace,
just as you said.
[30]These eyes of mine have seen your salvation,
[31]which you made ready in the presence of all peoples:
[32]a light for revelation to the nations,
and glory for your people Israel.'

[33]His father and mother were astonished at the things that were said about him. [34]Simeon blessed them.
'Listen,' he said to Mary his mother, 'this child has been placed here to make many in Israel fall and rise again, and as a sign that will be spoken against [35](yes, a sword will go through your own soul as well), so that the thoughts of many hearts may be disclosed.'
[36]There was also a prophetess called Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having been widowed after a seven-year marriage, [37]and was now eighty-four. She never left the Temple, but worshipped with fasting and prayer night and day. [38]She came up at that moment and gave thanks to God, and spoke about Jesus to everyone who was waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.
[39]So when they had finished everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their town of Nazareth. [40]The child grew and became strong, and was full of wisdom, and God's grace was upon him.

The boy Jesus

[41]Jesus' parents used to go to Jerusalem every year for the Passover festival. [42]When he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. [43]When the feast days were over, they began the journey back, but the boy Jesus remained in Jerusalem. His parents didn't know; [44]they thought he was in the travelling party, and went a day's journey before looking for him among their relatives and friends.
[45]When they didn't find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. [46]And so it happened that after three days they found him in the Temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. [47]Everyone who heard him was astonished at his understanding and his answers.
[48]When they saw him they were quite overwhelmed.
'Child,' said his mother, 'why did you do this to us? Look – your father and I have been in a terrible state looking for you!'
[49]'Why were you looking for me?' he replied. 'Didn't you know that I would have to be getting involved with my father's work?'
[50]They didn't understand what he had said to them. [51]He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and lived in obedience to them. And his mother kept all these things in her heart.
[52]So Jesus became wiser and taller, gaining favour both with God and with the people.

The preaching of John the Baptist

3 It was the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar. Pontius Pilate was governor of Judaea; Herod was tetrarch of Galilee; his brother Philip was tetrarch of Ituraea and Trachonitis; Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene. [2]Annas and Caiaphas were the high priests.
At that time, the word of God came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the wilderness. [3]He went through all the region of the Jordan, announcing a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. [4]This is what is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet:

A voice shouting in the wilderness:
get ready a path for the Lord,
make the roads straight for him!
[5]Every valley shall be filled in,
and every mountain and hill shall be flattened,
the twisted paths will be straightened out,
and the rough roads smoothed off,
[6]and all that lives shall see God's rescue.

[7]'You brood of vipers,' John used to say to the crowds who came out to be baptized by him. 'Who told you to escape from the coming anger? [8]You'd better prove your repentance by bearing the proper fruit! Don't start saying to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father"; let me tell you, God can raise up children for Abraham from these stones! [9]The axe is already standing by the roots of the tree – so every tree that doesn't produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.'

John the Baptist confronts the crowds

[10]'What shall we do?' asked the crowds.

[11]‘Anyone who has two cloaks’, replied John, ‘should give one to someone who hasn’t got one. The same applies to anyone who has plenty of food.’
[12]Some toll-collectors came to be baptized. ‘Teacher,’ they said, ‘what should we do?’
[13]‘Don’t collect more than what is laid down,’ he replied.
[14]Some soldiers, too, asked John, ‘What about us? What should we do?’
‘No extortion,’ replied John, ‘and no blackmail. Be content with your wages.’
[15]The people were very excited, and everyone was questioning in their hearts whether John might not be the Messiah. [16]To all of them John responded: ‘I am baptizing you with water. But someone is coming who is stronger than I am. I don’t deserve to untie his sandal-strap. He will baptize you with the holy spirit and with fire. [17]He will have his winnowing-fork to hand, ready to sort out the mess on his threshing floor and gather the corn into his barn. Any rubbish he will burn with a fire that will never go out.’
[18]John urged his news on the people with many other words. [19]But Herod the Tetrarch – whom John had accused in the matter of his brother’s wife Herodias, and for all the evil things which Herod had done – [20]added this to his list of crimes, that he shut John up in prison.

Jesus’ baptism and genealogy

[21]So it happened that, as all the people were being baptized, Jesus too was baptized, and was praying. The heaven was opened, [22]and the holy spirit descended in a bodily form, like a dove, upon him. There came a voice from heaven: ‘You are my son, my dear son! I’m delighted with you.’
[23]Jesus was about thirty years old at the start of his work. He was, as people thought, the son of Joseph, from whom his ancestry proceeds back in the following line: Heli, [24]Matthat, Levi, Melchi, Jannai, Joseph, [25]Mattathias, Amos, Nahum, Esli, Naggai, [26]Maath, Mattathias, Semein, Josech, Joda, [27]Johanan, Rhesa, Zerubbabel, Shealtiel, Neri, [28]Melchi, Addi, Kosam, Elmadam, Er, [29]Joshua, Eliezer, Jorim, Matthat, Levi, [30]Simeon, Judah, Joseph, Jonam, Eliakim, [31]Melea, Menna, Mattatha, Nathan, David, [32]Jesse, Obed, Boaz, Sala, Nahshon, [33]Amminadab, Admin, Arni, Hezron, Perez, Judah, [34]Jacob, Isaac, Abraham, Terah, Nahor, [35]Serug, Reu, Peleg, Eber, Shela, [36]Kainan, Arphachsad, Shem, Noah, Lamech, [37]Methuselah, Enoch, Jared, Mahalaleel, Kainan, [38]Enosh, Seth, Adam, and God.

Temptation in the wilderness

4 Jesus returned from the Jordan, filled with the spirit. The spirit took him off into the wilderness [2]for forty days, to be tested by the devil. He ate nothing during that time, and at the end of it he was hungry.
[3]‘If you are God’s son,’ said the devil, ‘tell this stone to become a loaf of bread.’
[4]‘It is written,’ replied Jesus, ‘“It takes more than bread to keep you alive.”’
[5]The devil then took him up and showed him, in an instant, all the kingdoms of the world.
[6]‘I will give you authority over all of this,’ said the devil, ‘and all the prestige that goes with it. It’s been given to me, you see, and I give it to anyone I like. [7]So it can all be yours . . . if you will just worship me.’
[8]‘It is written,’ replied Jesus, ‘“The Lord your God is the one you must worship; he is the only one you must serve.”’
[9]Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and stood him on a pinnacle of the Temple.
‘If you are God’s son,’ he said, ‘throw yourself down from here; [10]it’s written that “He will give his angels a command about you, to look after you”; [11]and “They will carry you in their hands, so that you won’t hit your foot against a stone.”’
[12]‘It has been said,’ replied Jesus, ‘“You mustn’t put the Lord your God to the test.”’
[13]When the devil had finished each temptation, he left him until another opportunity.

Opposition to Jesus in Nazareth

[14]Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the spirit. Word about him went out throughout the whole district. [15]He taught in their synagogues, and gained a great reputation all around.
[16]He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. On the sabbath, as was his regular practice, he went into the synagogue and stood up to read. [17]They gave him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

[18]The spirit of the Lord is upon me
because he has anointed me
to tell the poor the good news.
He has sent me to announce release to the prisoners
and sight to the blind,
to set the wounded victims free,
[19]to announce the year of God’s special favour.

[20]He rolled up the scroll, gave it to the attendant, and sat down. All eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him.
[21]‘Today,’ he began, ‘this scripture is fulfilled in your own hearing.’
[22]Everyone remarked at him; they were astonished at the words coming out of his mouth – words of sheer grace.

‘Isn’t this Joseph’s son?’ they said.
23‘I know what you’re going to say,’ Jesus said. ‘You’re going to tell me the old riddle: “Heal yourself, doctor!” “We heard of
great happenings in Capernaum; do things like that here, in your own country!”
24‘Let me tell you the truth,’ he went on. ‘Prophets never get accepted in their own country. 25This is the solemn truth: there
were plenty of widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when heaven was shut up for three years and six months, and there was a
great famine over all the land. 26Elijah was sent to none of them, only to a widow in the Sidonian town of Zarephath.
27‘And there were plenty of people with virulent skin diseases in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was
healed – only Naaman, the Syrian.’
28When they heard this, everyone in the synagogue flew into a rage. 29They got up and threw him out of town. They took him
to the top of the mountain on which their town was built, meaning to fling him off. 30But he slipped through the middle of them
and went away.

Jesus’ authoritative healings

31Jesus went down to Capernaum, a town of Galilee. He used to teach them every sabbath. 32They were astonished at his teaching,
because his message was powerful and authoritative.
33There was a man in the synagogue who had the spirit of an unclean demon.
34‘Hey, you!’ he yelled out at the top of his voice. ‘What’s going on with you and me, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to
destroy us? I know who you are – you’re God’s Holy One!’
35‘Shut up!’ Jesus rebuked him. ‘Come out of him!’
The demon threw the man down right there in front of them, and came out without harming him. 36Fear came over them all.
‘What’s all this?’ they started to say to one another. ‘He’s got power! He’s got authority! He tells the unclean spirits what to do,
and they come out!’ 37Word about him went out to the whole surrounding region.
38He left the synagogue and went into Simon’s house. Simon’s mother-in-law was sick with a high fever, and they asked him
about her. 39He stood in front of her, rebuked the fever, and it left her. And straight away she got up and waited on them.
40When the sun went down, everyone who had sick people – all kinds of sicknesses – brought them to him. He laid his hands on
each one in turn, and healed them. 41Demons came out of many people, shouting out, ‘You are the son of God!’ He sternly
forbade them to speak, because they knew he was the Messiah.
42When day dawned he left the town and went off to a deserted place. The crowds hunted for him, and when they caught up
with him they begged him not to leave them.
43‘I must tell the good news of God’s kingdom to the other towns,’ he said. ‘That’s what I was sent for.’ 44And he was
announcing the message to the synagogues of Judaea.

The miraculous catch of fish

5 One day, as the crowds were pressing close to him to hear the word of God, Jesus was standing by the lake of Gennesaret.
2He saw two boats moored by the land; the fishermen had gone ashore and were washing their nets. 3He got into one of the
boats – it was Simon’s – and asked him to put out a little way from the land. Then he sat down in the boat and began to teach the
crowd.
4When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, ‘Put out into the deeper part, and let down your nets for a catch.’
5‘Master,’ replied Simon, ‘we were working hard all night and caught nothing at all. But if you say so, I’ll let down the nets.’
6When they did so, they caught such a huge number of fish that their nets began to break. 7They signalled to their partners in
the other boat to come and help them. So they came, and filled both the boats, and they began to sink.
8When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees.
‘Go away,’ he said. ‘Leave me, Lord! I’m a sinner!’ 9He and all his companions were gripped with amazement at the catch of
fish they had taken; 10this included James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon.
‘Don’t be afraid,’ said Jesus to Simon. ‘From now on you’ll be catching people.’
11They brought the boats in to land. Then they abandoned everything and followed him.

The healing of the man with a virulent skin disease

12It so happened that, as Jesus was in one particular town, there was a man whose body was riddled with a virulent skin disease.
When he saw Jesus, he fell on his face.
‘Lord,’ he begged, ‘if you want, you can make me clean.’
13Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him.
‘I do want to,’ he said. ‘Be clean.’
And the skin disease disappeared immediately.
14Jesus instructed the man not to tell anyone. ‘Go and show yourself to the priest’, he said, ‘and make the offering commanded
by Moses in connection with your healing, as evidence for them.’
15The news about Jesus, though, spread all round, and large crowds came to hear and to be healed from their diseases. 16He
used to slip away to remote places and pray.

The healing of the paralytic lowered through the roof

[17]One day, as Jesus was teaching, there were Pharisees and legal experts sitting there who had come from every village of Galilee, and from Judaea and Jerusalem. The power of the Lord was with Jesus, enabling him to heal. [18]Just then some men appeared, carrying a paralysed man on a mattress; they were trying to bring him in and lay him before Jesus. [19]The crowd made it impossible for them to get through, so they went up on the roof and let him down through the tiles, mattress and all, so that he landed right in the middle, in front of Jesus.

[20]Jesus saw what trust they had.

'My friend,' he said, 'your sins are forgiven.'

[21]The legal experts and Pharisees began to argue. 'Who does he think he is?' they said. 'He's blaspheming! Nobody can forgive sins – only God can do that!'

[22]Jesus knew their line of thought.

'Why are you complaining in your hearts?' he replied. [23]'Which is easier, to say, "Your sins are forgiven", or to say, "Get up and walk"? [24]But if you want to be convinced that the son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins –' (here he turned to the paralysed man) '– I say to you, get up, pick up your mattress, and go home.'

[25]At once he got up in front of them all, picked up what he'd been lying on, and went off home, praising God.

[26]A sense of awe came over everyone. They praised God, and were filled with fear. 'We've seen extraordinary things today,' they said.

Questions about table-company and fasting

[27]After this Jesus went out and saw a tax-collector called Levi, sitting at the tax-office. 'Follow me,' he said. [28]And he left everything, got up, and followed him.

[29]Levi made a great feast for him in his house, and a large crowd of tax-collectors and others were there reclining at table. [30]The Pharisees and the legal experts began to grumble to Jesus' disciples.

'Why do you lot eat and drink', they asked, 'with tax-collectors and sinners?'

[31]'Healthy people don't need a doctor,' replied Jesus. 'It's sick people who do! [32]I haven't come to call the righteous; I'm calling sinners to repentance.'

[33]'John's disciples often fast, and say prayers,' they said to him, 'and so do the Pharisees' followers – but your disciples eat and drink.'

[34]'Can you make the wedding guests fast', replied Jesus, 'while the bridegroom is with them? [35]But the time will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them. That's when they will fast.'

[36]He added this parable. 'Nobody tears a piece of cloth from a new coat to make a patch on an old one. If they do, they tear the new, and the patch from it won't fit the old one anyway. [37]And nobody puts new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the new wine will burst the skins: it will go to waste, and the skins will be ruined too. [38]You have to put new wine in new skins. [39]And nobody who drinks old wine wants new. "I prefer the old," they say.'

Teachings on the sabbath

6 One sabbath, Jesus was walking through some cornfields. His disciples were plucking and eating ears of grain, rubbing them with their hands.

[2]'Why', asked some Pharisees, 'are you doing something that isn't permitted on the sabbath?'

[3]'Haven't you read what David did?' replied Jesus. 'When he and his men were hungry, [4]he went into God's house and took the "bread of the Presence", which no one but the priests was allowed to eat. He ate some, and gave it to his companions.

[5]'The son of man', he declared, 'is Lord of the sabbath.'

[6]On another sabbath he went into the synagogue and was teaching. A man was there whose right hand was withered. [7]The scribes and Pharisees were watching him, to see if he would heal him on the sabbath, so that they could find an accusation against him.

[8]He knew what they were thinking.

'Get up,' he said to the man with the withered hand, 'and come out here in the middle.' He got up and came out.

[9]'Let me ask you something,' Jesus said to them. 'Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath or to do evil? To save life or to destroy it?'

[10]He looked round at all of them.

'Stretch out your hand,' he said to the man.

He did so; and his hand was restored. [11]But they were filled with rage, and discussed with each other what they might do to Jesus.

The Beatitudes

[12]It happened around that time that Jesus went up into the mountain to pray, and he spent all night in prayer to God. [13]When day came, he called his disciples, and chose twelve of them, calling them 'apostles': [14]Simon, whom he called Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, Bartholomew, [15]Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called 'the hothead', [16]Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who turned traitor.

[17]He went down with them, and took up a position on a level plain where there was a large crowd of his followers, with a huge company of people from all Judaea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon. [18]They came to hear him, and to be cured from their diseases. Those who were troubled by unclean spirits were healed, [19]and the whole crowd tried to touch

him, because power was going out from him and healing everybody.
[20]He lifted up his eyes and looked at his disciples, and said:
'Blessings on the poor: God's kingdom belongs to you!
[21]'Blessings on those who are hungry today: you'll have a feast!
'Blessings on those who weep today: you'll be laughing!
[22]'Blessings on you, when people hate you, and shut you out, when they slander you and reject your name as if it was evil, because of the son of man. [23]Celebrate on that day! Jump for joy! Don't you see: in heaven there is a great reward for you! That's what their ancestors did to the prophets.
[24]'But woe betide you rich: you've had your comfort!
[25]'Woe betide you if you're full today: you'll go hungry!
'Woe betide you if you're laughing today: you'll be mourning and weeping!
[26]'Woe betide you when everyone speaks well of you: that's what their ancestors did to the false prophets.'

Loving your enemies

[27]'But this is my word', Jesus continued, 'for those of you who are listening: love your enemies! Do good to people who hate you! [28]Bless people who curse you! Pray for people who treat you badly!
[29]'If someone hits you on the cheek – offer him the other one! If someone takes away your coat – don't stop him taking your shirt! [30]Give to everyone who asks you, and don't ask for things back when people have taken them.
[31]'Whatever you want people to do to you, do that to them. [32]If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Think about it: even sinners love people who love them. [33]Or again, if you do good only to people who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Sinners do that too. [34]If you lend only to people you expect to get things back from, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners to get paid back. [35]No: love your enemies, do good and lend without expecting any return. Your reward will be great! You will be children of the Highest! He is generous, you see, to the stingy and wicked. [36]You must be merciful, just as your father is merciful.
[37]'Don't judge, and you won't be judged. Don't condemn, and you won't be condemned. Forgive, and you'll be forgiven. [38]Give, and it will be given to you: a good helping, squashed down, shaken in, and overflowing – that's what will land in your lap. Yes: the ration you give to others is the ration you'll get back for yourself.'

Judging others and true obedience

[39]Jesus told them this riddle. 'What do you get when one blind man guides another? Both of them falling in a ditch! [40]Students can't do better than the teacher; when the course is done, they'll all be just like the teacher.
[41]'Why look at the speck of dust in your brother's eye, when you haven't noticed the plank in your own eye? [42]How can you say to your brother, "Dear brother, let me take the speck out of your eye," when you can't see the plank in your own? You're a fraud! First take the plank out of your own eye, and then you'll see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.
[43]'You see, no good tree bears bad fruit; nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. [44]Every tree is known by its fruit. You don't pick figs from thorns; nor do you get grapes from a briar-bush. [45]The good person brings good things out of the good treasure of the heart; the evil person brings evil things out of evil. What comes out of the mouth is what's overflowing in the heart.
[46]'Why do you call me, "Lord, Lord," and don't do what I say? [47]I'll show you what people are like when they come to me, and hear my words, and do them. [48]They are like a wise man building a house: he dug, he went down deep, and he laid a foundation on rock. When a flood came, the river burst its banks all over the house, but it couldn't shake it because it was well built. [49]But when people hear but don't obey – that's like a man who built a house on the ground, without a foundation. When the river burst over it, it fell down at once. The ruin of that house was devastating.'

The healing of the centurion's servant

7 When Jesus had finished saying all these words in the hearing of the people, he went into Capernaum.
[2]There was a centurion who had a slave who was particularly precious to him. This slave was ill, at the point of death. [3]The centurion heard about Jesus, and sent some Jewish elders to him, to ask him to come and rescue his slave. [4]They approached Jesus and begged him eagerly.
'He deserves a favour like this from you,' they said. [5]'He loves our people, and he himself built us our synagogue.'
[6]Jesus went with them.
When he was not far off from the house, the centurion sent friends to him with a further message.
'Master,' he said, 'don't trouble yourself. I don't deserve to have you come under my roof. [7]That's why I didn't think myself worthy to come to you in person. But – just say the word, and my slave will be healed. [8]You see, I'm used to living under authority, and I have soldiers reporting to me. I say to this one, "Go," and he goes; to another one, "Come," and he comes; and to my slave, "Do this," and he does it.'
[9]When Jesus heard this he was astonished.
'Let me tell you,' he said, turning to the crowd that was following him, 'I haven't found faith of this kind, even in Israel.'
[10]The people who had been sent to him went back to the house. There they found the slave in good health.

The raising of the widow's son

[11]Not long afterwards, Jesus went to a town called Nain. His disciples went with him, and so did a large crowd. [12]As he got near to the gate of the city, a young man was being carried out dead. He was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. There was a substantial crowd of the townspeople with her.

[13]When the master saw her, he was very sorry for her. 'Don't cry,' he said to her. [14]Then he went up and touched the bier, and the people carrying it stood still.

'Young fellow,' he said, 'I'm telling you – get up!' [15]The dead man sat up and began to speak, and he gave him to his mother.

[16]Terror came over all of them. They praised God.

'A great prophet has risen among us!' they said. 'God has visited his people!'

[17]This report went out about him in the whole of Judaea and the surrounding countryside.

Jesus and John the Baptist

[18]The disciples of John the Baptist told him about all these things. John called two of these followers [19]and sent them to the master with this message: 'Are you the Coming One, or should we expect someone else?'

[20]The men arrived where Jesus was. 'John the Baptist', they said, 'has sent us to you to say, "Are you the Coming One, or should we expect someone else?"'

[21]Then and there Jesus healed several people of diseases, plagues and possession by unclean spirits; and he gave several blind people back their sight. [22]Then he answered them: 'Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind see, the lame walk, people with virulent skin diseases are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor hear the gospel. [23]And a blessing on the person who isn't shocked by me!'

[24]So off went John's messengers.

Jesus then began to talk to the crowds about John. 'Why did you go out into the desert?' he asked. 'What were you looking for? A reed swaying in the breeze? [25]Well then, what did you go out to see? Someone dressed in silks and satins? See here, if you want to find people who wear fine clothes and live in luxury, you'd better look in royal palaces. [26]So what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes indeed, and more than a prophet. [27]This is the one of whom the Bible says, "Look: I send my messenger before my face; he will get my path ready ahead of me."

[28]'Let me tell you this,' he went on. 'Nobody greater than John has ever been born of women. But the one who is least in God's kingdom is greater than he is.'

[29]When all the people, and the tax-collectors, heard that, they praised God for his faithfulness; they had been baptized with John's baptism. [30]But the Pharisees and the lawyers, who had not been baptized by John, rejected God's plan for them.

[31]'What picture can I use', Jesus continued, 'for the people of this generation? What are they like? [32]They're like children sitting in the square and calling this old riddle to each other:

We piped for you and you didn't dance;
we wailed for you and you didn't cry!

[33]'When John the Baptist came, he didn't eat bread or drink wine, and you say, "He's got a demon!" [34]When the son of man came, eating and drinking, you say, "Look! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!" [35]And wisdom is justified by all her children.'

Jesus anointed by a sinful woman

[36]A Pharisee asked Jesus to dine with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. [37]A woman from the town, a known bad character, discovered that he was there at table in the Pharisee's house. She brought an alabaster jar of ointment. [38]Then she stood behind Jesus' feet, crying, and began to wet his feet with her tears. She wiped them with her hair, kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

[39]The Pharisee who had invited Jesus saw what was going on.

'If this fellow really was a prophet,' he said to himself, 'he'd know what sort of a woman this is who is touching him! She's a sinner!'

[40]'Simon,' replied Jesus, 'I have something to say to you.'

'Go ahead, Teacher,' he replied.

[41]'Once upon a time there was a moneylender who had two debtors. The first owed him five hundred dinars; the second a tenth of that. [42]Neither of them could pay him, and he let them both off. So which of them will love him more?'

[43]'The one he let off the more, I suppose,' replied Simon.

'Quite right,' said Jesus.

[44]Then, turning towards the woman, he said to Simon, 'You see this woman? When I came into your house, you didn't give me water to wash my feet – but she has washed my feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. [45]You didn't give me a kiss, but she hasn't stopped kissing my feet from the moment I came in. [46]You didn't anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment.

[47]'So the conclusion I draw is this: she must have been forgiven many sins! Her great love proves it! But if someone has been forgiven only a little, they will love only a little.'

[48]Then he said to the woman, 'Your sins are forgiven.'

[49]'Who is this', the other guests began to say among themselves, 'who even forgives sins?'

[50]'Your faith has saved you,' said Jesus to the woman. 'Go in peace.'

The parable of the sower

8 Soon afterwards, Jesus went about in person, with the Twelve, through the towns and villages, announcing and telling the
good news of God's kingdom. [2]They were accompanied by various women who had been healed from evil spirits and
diseases: Mary who was called 'Magdalene', from whom seven demons had gone out, [3]Joanna the wife of Chouza (Herod's
steward), and Susanna, and many others. They looked after the needs of Jesus and his companions out of their own pockets.

[4]A large crowd came together, and people came to him from town after town. He spoke to them in parables: [5]'A sower went out
to sow his seed. As he was sowing, some fell by the road, and was trodden on, and the birds of the air ate it up. [6]Other seed fell on
stony ground, and when it came up it withered, because it didn't have any moisture. [7]Other seed fell in among thorns, and when
the thorns grew up they choked it. [8]Other seed again fell into good soil, and came up, and gave a hundredfold yield.'

As he said this, he called out: 'If you've got ears to hear, then hear!'

[9]His disciples asked him what this parable was about.

[10]'You are being let in on the secrets of God's kingdom,' he said, 'but to the rest it happens in parables, so that "they may see
but not perceive, and hear but not understand."

[11]'This is the parable: the seed is the word of God. [12]Those by the roadside are people who hear, but then the devil comes and
takes away the word from their hearts, so that they won't believe it and be saved. [13]Those on the stony ground are those who hear
the word and receive it with delight – but they don't have any root, and so they believe only for a time, and then, when a time of
testing comes, they draw back. [14]The seed that falls in among thorns represents people who hear, but as they go on their way they
are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and they don't bear proper, ripening fruit. [15]But those in the good soil are
the ones who hear the word and hold on to it with an upright and good heart, and who patiently produce fruit.'

Jesus calms the storm

[16]'Nobody lights a lamp', continued Jesus, 'and then hides it under a pot or a bed. They put it on a lampstand, so that people who
come in can see the light. [17]You see, nothing is hidden which won't become visible; nothing is concealed that won't come to light.

[18]'So be careful how you listen. If you've got something, more will be given to you; if you haven't, even what you imagine you
have will be taken away from you.'

[19]His mother and brothers came to him, and couldn't get near him because of the crowd. [20]So they sent a message to him:
'Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you.'

[21]'Mother and brothers, indeed?' replied Jesus. 'Here are my mother and brothers – people who hear God's word and do it!'

[22]One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and suggested that they cross to the other shore. So they set off. [23]As they were
sailing, he fell asleep. A violent wind swept down on the lake, and the boat began to fill dangerously with water.

[24]'Master, Master!' shouted the disciples, coming and waking him up. 'Master, we're lost!'

He got up and scolded the wind and the waves. They stopped, and there was a flat calm.

[25]'Where's your faith?' he asked them.

They were afraid and astonished. 'Who is this, then,' they asked one another, 'if he can give orders to wind and water, and they
obey him?'

The healing of the demoniac

[26]They sailed to the land of the Gerasenes, which is on the other side from Galilee. [27]As he got out on land, a demon-possessed
man from the town met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he didn't live in a house but among the tombs. [28]When
he saw Jesus he screamed and fell down in front of him.

'You and me, Jesus – you and me!' he yelled at the top of his voice. 'What is it with you and me, you son of the Most High
God? Don't torture me – please, please don't torment me!' [29]Jesus was commanding the unclean spirit to come out of the man.
Many times over it had seized him, and he was kept under guard with chains and manacles; but he used to break the shackles, and
the demon would drive him into the desert.

[30]'What's your name?' Jesus asked him.

'Regiment!' replied the man – for many demons had entered him. [31]And they begged him not to order them to be sent into the
pit.

[32]A sizeable herd of pigs was feeding on the hillside, and the demons begged him to allow them to go into them. He gave them
permission. [33]The demons went out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep slope into the lake and
was drowned.

[34]The herdsmen saw what had happened. They took to their heels and spread the news in town and country, [35]and people came
out to see what had happened. They came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone out sitting there at Jesus'
feet, clothed and in his right mind. They were afraid. [36]People who had seen how the demoniac had been healed explained it to
them. [37]The whole crowd, from the surrounding country of the Gerasenes, asked him to go away from them, because great terror
had seized them. So he got into the boat and returned.

[38]The man who had been demon-possessed begged Jesus to let him stay with him. But he sent him away. [39]'Go back to your
home,' he said, 'and tell them what God has done for you.' And he went off round every town, declaring what Jesus had done for
him.

Jairus's daughter and the woman with chronic bleeding

40Jesus returned. A large crowd was waiting for him, and welcomed him back. 41A man named Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue,
came and fell down in front of his feet. He pleaded with him to come to his house, 42because he had an only daughter, twelve
years old, who was dying. So they set off, and the crowd pressed close in around him.
43There was a woman who had had an internal haemorrhage for twelve years. She had spent all she had on doctors, but had not
been able to find a cure from anyone. 44She came up behind Jesus and touched the hem of his robe. Immediately her flow of blood
dried up.
45'Who touched me?' asked Jesus.
Everybody denied it. 'Master,' said Peter, 'the crowds are crushing you and pressing you!'
46'Somebody touched me,' said Jesus. 'Power went out from me, and I knew it.'
47When the woman saw that she couldn't remain hidden, she came up, trembling, and fell down in front of him. She told him,
in front of everyone, why she had touched him, and how she had been healed instantly.
48'Daughter,' said Jesus, 'your faith has saved you. Go in peace.'
49While he was still speaking, someone arrived from the synagogue-ruler's house. 'Your daughter's dead,' he said. 'Don't
bother the teacher any longer.'
50'Don't be afraid,' said Jesus when he heard it. 'Just believe, and she will be rescued.'
51When they got to the house, he didn't let anyone come in with them except Peter, John and James, and the child's father and
mother. 52Everyone was weeping and wailing for her.
'Don't cry,' said Jesus. 'She isn't dead; she's asleep.' 53They laughed at him, knowing that she was dead.
54But he took her by the hand. 'Get up, child,' he called. 55Her spirit returned, and she got up at once. He told them to give her
something to eat. 56Her parents were astounded, but he told them to tell nobody what had happened.

The Twelve sent out and the feeding of the five thousand

9 Jesus called together the Twelve, and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. 2He sent them
out to announce God's kingdom and cure the sick.
3'Don't take anything for the journey,' he said to them, 'no stick, no bag, no bread, no money, no second cloak. 4Whenever you
go into a house, stay there and leave from there. 5If anyone won't receive you, go out of that town and wipe the dust off your feet
as evidence against them.'
6So off they went, and travelled through the villages, announcing the good news and healing people everywhere.
7Herod the Tetrarch heard what was going on, and was very puzzled. Some people were saying that John had been raised from
the dead. 8Others were saying that Elijah had appeared; still others, that one of the old prophets had arisen.
9'I beheaded John,' said Herod, 'but I keep hearing all these things about this other fellow. Who is he?' And he tried to get to
see him.
10The apostles returned and told Jesus what they had done. He took them off and went away privately to a town called
Bethsaida. 11When the crowds discovered, they followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God,
and he healed those who needed it.
12As the day wore on, the Twelve came to Jesus.
'Send the crowd away,' they said, 'so that they can go into the villages and countryside nearby, find somewhere to stay, and get
something to eat. We're in quite a lonely spot here.'
13'You give them something to eat,' he replied.
'All we've got here', they said, 'is five loaves and a couple of fishes – unless you mean we should go ourselves and buy food
for all these people?' 14(There were about five thousand men.)
'Get them to sit down', Jesus said to them, 'in groups of around fifty each.'
15They did so, and everyone sat down. 16Then Jesus took the five loaves and the two fish. He looked up to heaven, blessed the
food, divided it, and gave it to the disciples to pass around the crowd. 17Everyone ate, and was satisfied. They took up twelve
baskets of broken bits left over.

Peter's declaration of Jesus' messiahship

18When Jesus was praying alone, his disciples gathered around him.
'Who do the crowds say I am?' he asked them.
19'John the Baptist,' they responded. 'And others say Elijah. Others say that one of the ancient prophets has arisen.'
20'What about you?' said Jesus. 'Who do you say I am?'
'God's Messiah,' answered Peter.
21He gave them strict and careful instructions not to tell this to anyone.
22'The son of man', he said, 'must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the legal experts.
He must be killed, and raised up on the third day.'
23He then spoke to them all. 'If any of you want to come after me,' he said, 'you must say No to yourselves, and pick up your
cross every day, and follow me. 24If you want to save your life, you'll lose it; but if you lose your life because of me, you'll save
it. 25What good will it do you if you win the entire world, but lose or forfeit your own self? 26If you're ashamed of me and my
words, the son of man will be ashamed of you, when he comes in the glory which belongs to him, and to the father, and to the
holy angels.
27'Let me tell you,' he concluded, 'there are some standing here who won't experience death until they see God's kingdom.'

The transfiguration

[28]About eight days after this conversation, Jesus took Peter, John and James and went up a mountain to pray. [29]And, as he was
praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became shining white. [30]Two men appeared, talking with him: it was
Moses and Elijah, [31]who appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was going to fulfil in Jerusalem.
[32]Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but they managed to stay awake. They saw his glory, and the two
men who were standing there with him.
[33]As they were going away from him, Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it's wonderful for us to be here! Let's make three tents, one
for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah!' He didn't know what he was saying; [34]but as the words were coming out of his mouth
a cloud appeared and overshadowed them. They were afraid as they entered the cloud. [35]And a voice came from the cloud: 'This
is my son, my chosen one: listen to him.' [36]As the voice spoke, there was Jesus by himself. They kept silent, and told nobody at
that time anything of what they had seen.
[37]The next day, as they were going down from the mountain, a large crowd met them. [38]A man from the crowd shouted out,
'Teacher! Please, please have a look at my son! He's my only child, [39]and look what's happening to him! A spirit seizes him, and
suddenly it shrieks and convulses him, so that he foams at the mouth. It goes on savaging him, and it's almost impossible to get it
to leave him. [40]I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they couldn't.'
[41]'You faithless and depraved generation!' said Jesus in reply. 'How long shall I be with you and have to put up with you?
Bring your son here.'
[42]While he was on the way, the demon tore at him and threw him into convulsions. Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the
child, and gave him back to his father. [43]Everyone was astonished at the greatness of God.
While they were all still expressing amazement at everything he had done, Jesus said to his disciples, [44]'Let these words go
right down into your ears: the son of man is to be given over into human hands.' [45]They had no idea what he was talking about. It
was hidden from them, so that they wouldn't perceive it, and they were afraid to ask him about what he had said.

The nature of discipleship

[46]A dispute arose among them about which of them was the greatest. [47]Jesus knew this quarrel was going on in their hearts, so he
took a child and stood it beside him.
[48]'If you receive this child in my name,' he said, 'you receive me. And anyone who receives me, receives the one who sent me.
Whoever is the least among you – that's the one who is great.'
[49]'Master,' commented John, 'we saw someone casting out demons in your name. We told him to stop, because he wasn't part
of our company.'
[50]'Don't stop him,' replied Jesus. 'Anyone who isn't against you is on your side.'
[51]As the time came nearer for Jesus to be taken up, he settled it in his mind to go to Jerusalem. [52]He sent messengers ahead of
him. They came into a Samaritan village to get them ready, [53]and they refused to receive him, because his mind was set on going
to Jerusalem. [54]When the disciples James and John saw it, they said, 'Master, do you want us to call down fire from heaven and
burn them up?' [55]He turned and rebuked them, [56]and they went on to another village.
[57]As they were going along the road a man addressed Jesus.
'Wherever you're going,' he said, 'I'll follow you!'
[58]'Foxes have lairs,' Jesus replied, 'and the birds in the sky have nests; but the son of man doesn't have anywhere to lay his
head.'
[59]To another person he said, 'Follow me.'
'Master,' he replied, 'let me first go and bury my father.'
[60]'Let the dead bury their dead,' said Jesus. 'You must go and announce God's kingdom.'
[61]'I will follow you, Master,' said another, 'but first let me say goodbye to the people at home.'
[62]'Nobody', replied Jesus, 'who begins to plough and then looks over his shoulder is fit for God's kingdom.'

Jesus sends out the seventy

10 After this the master commissioned seventy others, and sent them ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he
was intending to come.
[2]'There's a great harvest out there,' he said to them, 'but there aren't many workers. So plead with the harvest-master to send
out workers for the harvest.
[3]'Off you go now. Remember, I'm sending you out like lambs among wolves. [4]Take no money-bag, no pack, no sandals – and
don't stop to pass the time with anyone on the road. [5]Whenever you go into a house, first say, "Peace on this house." [6]If a child of
peace lives there, your peace will rest on them; but if not, it will return to you.
[7]'Stay in the same house, and eat and drink what they provide. The worker deserves to be paid, you see. Don't go from house to
house. [8]If you go into a town and they welcome you, eat what is provided, [9]heal the sick who are there, and say to them, "God's
kingdom has come close to you." [10]But if you go into a town and they don't welcome you, go out into the streets of the town and
say, [11]"Here is the very dust of your town clinging to our feet – and we're wiping it off in front of your eyes! [12]But you should
know this: God's kingdom has come close to you!" Let me tell you, on that day it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that
town.
[13]'Woe betide you, Chorazin! Woe betide you, Bethsaida! If the powerful deeds done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon,

they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. [14]But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment than for you. [15]And you, Capernaum – you want to be lifted up to heaven, do you? No: you'll be sent down to Hades!
[16]'Anyone who hears you, hears me; anyone who rejects you, rejects me; and anyone who rejects me, rejects the one who sent me.'

The celebration of Jesus

[17]The seventy came back exhilarated.
'Master,' they said, 'even the demons obey us in your name!'
[18]'I saw the satan fall like lightning from heaven,' he replied. [19]'Look: I've given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over every power of the enemy. Nothing will ever be able to harm you. [20]But – don't celebrate having spirits under your authority. Celebrate this, that your names are written in heaven.'
[21]Then and there Jesus celebrated in the holy spirit.
'I thank you, father,' he said, 'Lord of heaven and earth! You hid these things from the wise and intelligent, and revealed them to babies. Yes, father, that was what you graciously decided. [22]Everything has been given me by my father. Nobody knows who the son is except the father, and nobody knows who the father is except the son, and anyone to whom the son wishes to reveal him.'
[23]Jesus then turned to the disciples privately.
'A blessing on the eyes', he said, 'which see what you see! [24]Let me tell you, many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see, and they didn't see it; and to hear what you hear, and they didn't hear it!'

The parable of the good Samaritan

[25]A lawyer got up and put Jesus on the spot.
'Teacher,' he said, 'what should I do to inherit the life of the coming age?'
[26]'Well,' replied Jesus, 'what is written in the law? What's your interpretation of it?'
[27]'You shall love the Lord your God', he replied, 'with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your understanding; and your neighbour as yourself.'
[28]'Well said!' replied Jesus. 'Do that and you will live.'
[29]'Ah,' said the lawyer, wanting to win the point, 'but who is my neighbour?'
[30]Jesus rose to the challenge. 'Once upon a time,' he said, 'a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and was set upon by brigands. They stripped him and beat him and ran off leaving him half dead. [31]A priest happened to be going down that road, and when he saw him he went past on the opposite side. [32]So too a Levite came by the place; he saw him too, and went past on the opposite side.
[33]'But a travelling Samaritan came to where he was. When he saw him he was filled with pity. [34]He came over to him and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine. Then he put him on his own beast, took him to an inn, and looked after him. [35]The next morning, as he was going on his way, he gave the innkeeper two dinars. "Take care of him," he said, "and on my way back I'll pay you whatever else you need to spend on him."
[36]'Which of these three do you think turned out to be the neighbour of the man who was set upon by the brigands?'
[37]'The one who showed mercy on him,' came the reply.
'Well,' Jesus said to him, 'you go and do the same.'

Martha and Mary

[38]On their journey, Jesus came into a village. There was a woman there named Martha, who welcomed him. [39]She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the master's feet and listened to his teaching.
[40]Martha was frantic with all the work in the kitchen.
'Master,' she said, coming in to where they were, 'don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work all by myself? Tell her to give me a hand!'
[41]'Martha, Martha,' he replied, 'you are fretting and fussing about so many things. [42]Only one thing matters. Mary has chosen the best part, and it's not going to be taken away from her.'

The Lord's Prayer

11 Once Jesus was praying in a particular place. When he had finished, one of his disciples approached.
'Teach us to pray, Master,' he said, 'just like John taught his disciples.'
[2]'When you pray,' replied Jesus, 'this is what to say:
'Father, may your name be honoured; may your kingdom come; [3]give us each day our daily bread; [4]and forgive us our sins, since we too forgive all our debtors; and don't put us to the test.
[5]'Suppose one of you has a friend,' he said, 'and you go to him in the middle of the night and say, "My dear friend, lend me three loaves of bread! [6]A friend of mine is on a journey and has arrived at my house, and I have nothing to put in front of him!" [7]He will answer from inside his house, "Don't make life difficult for me! The door is already shut, and my children and I are all in bed! I can't get up and give you anything." [8]Let me tell you, even if he won't get up and give you anything just because you're his friend, because of your shameless persistence he will get up and give you whatever you need.

[9]‘So this is my word to you: ask and it will be given you; search and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you. [10]You see, everyone who asks receives! Everyone who searches finds! Everyone who knocks has the door opened for them! [11]If your son asks you for a fish, is there a father among you who will give him a snake? [12]Or if he asks for an egg, will you give him a scorpion? [13]Face it: you are evil. And yet you know how to give good presents to your children. How much more will your heavenly father give the holy spirit to those who ask him!’

Jesus and Beelzebul

[14]Jesus was casting out a demon that prevented speech. When the demon had gone out, the man who had been silent spoke, and the crowd were amazed. [15]But some of them said, ‘He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons!’ [16]Others, trying to test him out, asked him to produce a sign from heaven.

[17]Jesus knew what they were thinking.

‘Every kingdom split down the middle goes to ruin,’ he said. ‘If a house turns in on itself, it falls. [18]Well then: if even the satan is split down the middle, how can his kingdom last? This’, he added, ‘is because you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul!

[19]‘Now look: supposing I do cast out demons by Beelzebul, whose power are your own people using when they cast them out? Think about it: they will be your judges. [20]But if it’s by God’s finger that I cast out demons, then God’s kingdom has come upon you.

[21]‘Imagine a strong man, armed to the teeth, guarding his palace. Everything he owns is safe and sound. [22]But supposing someone stronger comes and overpowers him, and takes away the armour he was trusting in – then he can help himself and start giving the booty away! [23]If you’re not with me, you’re against me. If you’re not gathering with me, you’re scattering.

[24]‘When the unclean spirit goes out of a person, it roams through desert landscapes looking for a place to rest. When it doesn’t find anywhere, it says to itself, “I shall go back to the house I left behind.” [25]And it finds the place neat and tidy. [26]So it sets off and brings along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and goes back to live there. That person will end up worse off than he began.’

[27]While he was saying these things, a woman from the crowd raised her voice. ‘A blessing on the womb that bore you,’ she shouted, ‘and the breasts that you sucked!’

[28]‘On the contrary,’ replied Jesus. ‘A blessing on those who hear God’s word and keep it!’

The sign of Jonah

[29]The crowds kept increasing. Jesus began to say to them, ‘This generation is an evil generation! It looks for a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.

[30]‘Jonah was a sign to the people of Nineveh; just so, the son of man will be a sign to this generation. [31]The Queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and will condemn them: she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon’s wisdom, and look – something greater than Solomon is here. [32]The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and will condemn it: they repented at Jonah’s preaching, and look – something greater than Jonah is here.

[33]‘Nobody lights a lamp in order to hide it or put it under a jug. They put it on a lampstand, so that people who come in can see the light.

[34]‘Your eye is the lamp of your body. If your eye is focused, your whole body is full of light. But if it’s evil, your body is in darkness. [35]Watch out, then, in case the light inside you turns to darkness. [36]If your whole body is illuminated, with no part in darkness, everything will be illuminated, just as you are by a flash of lightning.’

[37]While he was speaking, a Pharisee invited him to have dinner at his house. So he went in and sat down. [38]The Pharisee, watching him, was surprised that he didn’t first wash before dinner.

[39]‘Now, you Pharisees,’ said the master to him, ‘you clean the outside of the plate and cup, but your insides are full of violent robbery and wickedness. [40]That’s stupid! Didn’t the one who made the outside make the inside as well? [41]You should give for alms what’s inside the bowl, and then everything will be clean for you.’

Woes against the Pharisees

[42]‘But woe betide you Pharisees!’ Jesus continued. ‘You tithe mint and rue and herbs of all kinds; and you have sidestepped justice, mercy and the love of God. You should have done these, without missing out the others.

[43]‘Woe betide you Pharisees! You love the chief seats in the synagogues and greetings in the market-places.

[44]‘Woe betide you! You are like hidden tombs, and people walk over them without knowing it.’

[45]At this, one of the legal experts spoke up. ‘Teacher,’ he said, ‘when you say this you’re insulting us too!’

[46]‘Woe betide you lawyers, too!’ replied Jesus. ‘You give people heavy loads to carry which they can hardly bear, and you yourselves don’t lift a finger to help!

[47]‘Woe betide you! You build the tombs of the prophets, and your ancestors killed them. [48]So you bear witness that you approve of what your ancestors did: they killed them, and you build their tombs.

[49]‘For all this, God’s Wisdom says, “I’m sending you prophets and ambassadors; some of them you will kill and persecute”, [50]so that the blood of all the prophets shed ever since the beginning of the world may be required from this generation – [51]from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zacharias, who died between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, let me tell you, it will all be required from this generation.

[52]‘Woe betide you lawyers! You have taken away the key of knowledge. You didn’t go in yourselves, and you stopped the people who were trying to go in.’

[53]He went outside, and the scribes and Pharisees began to be very threatening towards him. They interrogated him about several things, [54]lying in wait for him to catch him in something he might say.

Further warnings

12 Crowds were gathering in their thousands, so much so that they were trampling on each other. Jesus began to say to his disciples, 'Watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees – I mean, their hypocrisy. This is a matter of first importance.

[2]'Nothing is concealed that won't be uncovered; nothing is hidden that won't be made known. [3]So whatever you say in the darkness will be heard in the light, and whatever you speak indoors into someone's ear will be proclaimed from the housetops.

[4]'So, my friends, I have this to say to you: don't be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more they can do. [5]I will show you who to fear: fear the one who starts by killing and then has the right to throw people into Gehenna. Yes, let me tell you, that's the one to fear!

[6]'How much do five sparrows cost? Two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten in God's presence. [7]But the hairs of your head have all been counted. Don't be afraid! You are worth more than lots of sparrows.

[8]'Let me tell you: if anyone acknowledges me before others, the son of man will acknowledge that person before God's angels. [9]But if anyone denies me before others, that person will be denied before God's angels.

[10]'Everyone who speaks a word against the son of man will have it forgiven; but the one who blasphemes against the holy spirit will not be forgiven.

[11]'When they bring you before synagogues, rulers and authorities, don't worry about how to give an answer or what to say. [12]The holy spirit will teach you what to say at that very moment.'

The parable of the rich fool

[13]Someone from the crowd said to Jesus, 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me!'

[14]'Tell me, my good man,' replied Jesus, 'who appointed me as a judge or arbitrator over you?

[15]'Watch out,' he said to them, 'and beware of all greed! Your life doesn't consist of the sum total of your possessions.'

[16]He told them a parable. 'There was a rich man whose land produced a fine harvest. [17]"What shall I do?" he said to himself. "I don't have enough room to store my crops!

[18]'"I know!" he said. "I'll pull down my barns – and I'll build bigger ones! Then I'll be able to store all the corn and all my belongings there. [19]And I shall say to my soul, Soul, you've got many good things stored up for many years. Take it easy! Eat, drink, have a good time!"

[20]'But God said to him, "Fool! This very night your soul will be demanded of you! Now who's going to have all the things you've got ready?" [21]That's how it is with someone who stores up things for himself and isn't rich before God.

[22]'So let me tell you this,' he said to the disciples. 'Don't be anxious about your life – what you should eat; or about your body – what you should wear. [23]Life is more than food! The body is more than clothing! [24]Think about the ravens: they don't sow seed, they don't gather harvests, they don't have storehouses or barns; and God feeds them. How much more will he feed you! Think of the difference between yourselves and the birds!

[25]'Which of you by being anxious can add a day to your lifetime? [26]So if you can't even do a little thing like that, why worry about anything else? [27]Think about the lilies and the way they grow. They don't work hard, they don't weave cloth; but, let me tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory was dressed up like one of them. [28]So if that's how God clothes the grass in the field – here today, into the fire tomorrow – how much more will he clothe you, you little-faith lot!

[29]'So don't you go hunting about for what to eat or what to drink, and don't be anxious. [30]The nations of the world go searching for all that stuff, and your father knows you need it. [31]This is what you should search for: God's kingdom! Then all the rest will be given you as well. [32]Don't be afraid, little flock. Your father is delighted to give you the kingdom.

[33]'Sell your possessions and give alms. Make yourselves purses that don't wear out, a treasure in heaven that lasts for ever, where the thief doesn't come near and the moth doesn't destroy. [34]Yes: where your treasure is, there your heart will be too.'

Jesus' call to watchfulness

[35]'Make sure you're dressed and ready with your lamps alight,' said Jesus. [36]'You need to be like people waiting for their master when he comes back from the wedding feast, so that when he comes and knocks they will be able to open the door for him at once. [37]A blessing on the servants whom the master finds awake when he comes! I'm telling you the truth: he will put on an apron and sit them down and come and wait on them. [38]A blessing on them if he comes in the second watch of the night, or even the third, and finds them like that!

[39]'But you should know this: if the householder had known what time the thief was coming, he wouldn't have let his house be broken into. [40]You too should be ready, because the son of man is coming at a time you don't expect.'

[41]'Master,' said Peter, 'are you telling this parable for us, or for everyone?'

[42]'Who then is the faithful and wise servant,' said Jesus, 'whom the master will set over all his household, to give them their allowance of food at the proper time? [43]A blessing on the servant that his master, when he comes, finds doing just that! [44]I'm telling you truly, he will install him as manager over all his possessions. [45]But if that servant says in his heart, "My master is taking his time over coming back," and begins to beat the slaves and slave-girls, to eat and drink and get drunk – [46]then the master of that servant will come on a day he doesn't expect him to, and at a moment he didn't imagine, and he will cut him in two. He will give him the same place as the unbelievers.

47‘If a servant knew what the master wanted, and didn’t get ready, or do what was wanted, the punishment will be a severe
beating. 48If the servant didn’t know, and did what deserved a beating, it will be a light beating. Much will be required from one
who is given much; if someone is entrusted with much, even more will be expected in return.’

Reading the signs of the times

49‘I came to throw fire upon the earth,’ Jesus continued, ‘and I wish it were already alight! 50I have a baptism to be baptized with,
and I am under huge pressure until it’s happened!
51‘Do you suppose I’ve come to give peace to the earth? No, let me tell you, but rather division. 52From now on, you see,
families will be split down the middle: three against two in a family of five, and two against three, 53father against son and son
against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law
against mother-in-law.
54‘When you see a cloud rising in the west,’ he said to the crowds, ‘you say at once, “It’s going to rain,” and rain it does.
55When you see the south wind getting up, you say, “It’s going to be very hot,” and that’s what happens. 56You impostors! You
know how to work out what the earth and the sky are telling you; why can’t you work out what’s going on at this very moment?
57‘Why don’t you judge for yourselves what you ought to do? 58When you go with your accuser before a magistrate, do your
best to reach a settlement with him. Otherwise he may drag you in front of the judge, and the judge will hand you over to the
officer, and the officer will throw you into jail. 59Let me tell you, you won’t get out from there until you have paid the last coin.’

The parable of the fig tree

13 At that moment some people came up and told them the news. Some Galileans had been in the Temple, and Pilate had mixed
their blood with that of the sacrifices.
2‘Do you suppose’, said Jesus, ‘that those Galileans suffered such things because they were greater sinners than all other
Galileans? 3No, let me tell you! Unless you repent, you will all be destroyed in the same way.
4‘And what about those eighteen who were killed when the tower in Siloam collapsed on top of them? Do you imagine they
were more blameworthy than everyone else who lives in Jerusalem? 5No, let me tell you! Unless you repent, you will all be
destroyed in the same way.’
6He told them this parable. ‘Once upon a time there was a man who had a fig tree in his vineyard. He came to it looking for
fruit, and didn’t find any. 7So he said to the gardener, “Look here! I’ve been coming to this fig tree for three years hoping to find
some fruit, and I haven’t found any! Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?”
8‘“I tell you what, Master,” replied the gardener; “let it alone for just this one year more. I’ll dig all round it and put on some
manure. 9Then, if it fruits next year, well and good; and if not, you can cut it down.”’

Jesus heals a crippled woman on the sabbath

10One sabbath, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues. 11There was a woman there who had had a spirit of weakness for
eighteen years. She was bent double, and couldn’t stand fully upright. 12Jesus saw her and called to her.
13‘Woman,’ he said, laying his hands on her, ‘you are freed from your affliction.’ And at once she stood upright, and praised
God.
14The synagogue president was angry that Jesus had healed on the sabbath.
‘Look here,’ he said to the crowd, ‘there are six days for people to work! Come on one of those days and be healed, not on the
sabbath day!’
15‘You bunch of hypocrites!’ replied Jesus. ‘You would all be quite happy to untie an ox or a donkey from its stall on the
sabbath day and lead it out for a drink! 16And isn’t it right that this daughter of Abraham, tied up by the satan for these eighteen
years, should be untied from her chains on the sabbath day?’
17At that, all the people who had been opposing him were ashamed. The whole crowd was overjoyed at all the splendid things
he was doing.
18So Jesus said, ‘What is God’s kingdom like? What shall we compare it with? 19It’s like a mustard seed that someone took and
placed in his garden. It grew, and became a tree, and the birds of the sky made nests in its branches.’
20And again he said, ‘What shall we say God’s kingdom is like? 21It’s like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures
of flour, until the whole thing was leavened.’

Entering through the narrow door

22Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he went, making his way towards Jerusalem.
23‘Master,’ somebody said to him, ‘will there be only a few that are saved?’
24‘Struggle hard’, Jesus replied, ‘to get in by the narrow gate. Let me tell you: many will try to get in and won’t be able to.
25When the householder gets up and shuts the door – at that moment you will begin to stand outside and knock at the door and
say, “Master, open the door for us.” Then he will say in response, “I don’t know where you’ve come from.” 26Then you will begin
to say, “We ate with you and drank with you, and you taught in our streets!” 27And he will say to you, “I don’t know where you
people are from. Be off with you, you wicked lot.”
28‘That’s where you’ll find weeping and gnashing of teeth: when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in

God's kingdom, and you yourselves thrown out. [29]People will come from East and West, from North and South, and sit down to feast in God's kingdom. [30]And, listen to this: some who are last will be first, and some of the first will be last.'

Jesus grieves over Jerusalem

[31]Just then some Pharisees came up and spoke to Jesus.
'Get away from here,' they said, 'because Herod wants to kill you.'
[32]'Go and tell that fox,' replied Jesus, '"Look here: I'm casting out demons today and tomorrow, and completing my healings. I'll be finished by the third day. [33]But I have to continue my travels today, tomorrow and the day after that! It couldn't happen that a prophet would perish except in Jerusalem."
[34]'Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets, and stone the people sent to you! How many times did I want to collect your children, like a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would have none of it! [35]Look, your house has been abandoned. Let me tell you this: you will never see me until you are prepared to say, "A blessing upon you! Welcome in the name of the Lord!"'

Jesus and the Pharisee

14 One sabbath, Jesus went to a meal in the house of a leading Pharisee. They were keeping a close eye on him.
[2]There was a man there in front of Jesus who suffered from dropsy. [3]So Jesus asked the lawyers and Pharisees, 'Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath or not?' [4]They remained silent. He took the man, healed him, and dismissed him.
[5]Then he said to them, 'Suppose one of you has a son – or an ox! – that falls into a well. Are you going to tell me you won't pull him out straight away on the sabbath day?' [6]They had no answer for that.
[7]He noticed how the guests chose the best seats, and told them this parable.
[8]'When someone invites you to a wedding feast,' he said, 'don't go and sit in the best seat, in case some other guest more important is invited, [9]and the person who invited you both comes and says to you, "Please move down for this man," and you will go to the end of the line covered with embarrassment. [10]Instead, when someone invites you, go and sit down at the lowest place. Then, when your host arrives, he will say to you, "My dear fellow! Come on higher up!" Then all your fellow guests will show you respect. [11]All who push themselves forward, you see, will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be honoured.'

The parable of the great banquet

[12]He then turned to his host. 'When you give a lunch or a supper,' he said, 'don't invite your friends or your family or relatives, or your rich neighbours. They might ask you back again, and you'd be repaid. [13]When you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind. [14]God will bless you, because they have no way to repay you! You will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.'
[15]One of the guests heard this, and commented, 'A blessing on those who eat food in God's kingdom!'
[16]Jesus said, 'Once a man made a great dinner, and invited lots of guests. [17]When the time for the meal arrived, he sent his servant to say to the guests, "Come now – everything's ready!" [18]But the whole pack of them began to make excuses. The first said, "I've just bought a field, and I really have to go and see it. Please accept my apologies." [19]Another one said, "I've just bought five yoke of oxen, and I've got to go and test them out – please accept my apologies." [20]And another one said, "I've just got married, so naturally I can't come." [21]So the servant went back and told his master all this. The householder was cross, and said to his servant, "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in here the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind." [22]"All right, Master," said the servant, "I've done that – but there's still room." [23]"Well then," said the master to the servant, "go out into the roads and hedgerows and make them come in, so that my house may be full! [24]Let me tell you this: none of those people who were invited will get to taste my dinner."'

The cost of discipleship

[25]A large crowd was gathering around him. Jesus turned to face them.
[26]'If any of you come to me,' he said to them, 'and don't hate your father and your mother, your wife and your children, your brothers and your sisters – yes, and even your own life! – you can't be my disciple. [27]If you don't pick up your own cross and come after me, you can't be my disciple.
[28]'Don't you see? Supposing one of you wants to build a tower; what will you do? You will first of all sit down and work out how much it will cost, to see whether you have enough to finish it. [29]Otherwise, when you've laid the foundation and then can't finish it, everyone who sees it will begin to make fun of you. [30]"Here's a fellow", they'll say, "who began to build but couldn't finish!"
[31]'Or think of a king, on the way to fight a war against another king. What will he do? He will first sit down and discuss with his advisers whether, with ten thousand troops, he is going to be a match for the other side who are coming with twenty thousand! [32]If they decide he isn't, he will send a delegation, while the other one is still a long way away, and sue for peace.
[33]'In the same way, none of you can be my disciple unless you give up all your possessions.
[34]'Salt is good; but if even the salt loses its savour, how can it be made salty again? [35]It's no good for soil and no good for manure. People throw it away. If you have ears, then listen!'

The parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin

15 All the tax-collectors and sinners were coming close to listen to Jesus. [2]The Pharisees and the legal experts were grumbling. 'This fellow welcomes sinners!' they said. 'He even eats with them!'

[3]So Jesus told them this parable. [4]'Supposing one of you has a hundred sheep,' he said, 'and you lose one of them. What will you do? Why, you'll leave the ninety-nine out in the countryside, and you'll go off looking for the lost one until you find it! [5]And when you find it, you'll be so happy – you'll put it on your shoulders [6]and come home, and you'll call your friends and neighbours in. "Come and have a party!" you'll say. "Celebrate with me! I've found my lost sheep!"

[7]'Well, let me tell you: that's how glad they will be in heaven over one sinner who repents – more than over ninety-nine righteous people who don't need repentance.

[8]'Or supposing a woman has ten drachmas and loses one of them. What will she do? Why, she'll light a lamp, and sweep the house, and hunt carefully until she finds it! [9]And when she finds it she'll call her friends and neighbours in. "Come and have a party!" she'll say. "Celebrate with me! I've found my lost coin!"

[10]'Well, let me tell you: that's how glad God's angels feel when a single sinner repents.'

The parable of the Prodigal: the father and the younger son

[11]Jesus went on: 'Once there was a man who had two sons. [12]The younger son said to the father, "Father, give me my share in the property." So he divided up his livelihood between them. [13]Not many days later the younger son turned his share into cash, and set off for a country far away, where he spent his share in having a riotous good time.

[14]'When he had spent it all, a severe famine came on that country, and he found himself destitute. [15]So he went and attached himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into the fields to feed his pigs. [16]He longed to satisfy his hunger with the pods that the pigs were eating, and nobody gave him anything.

[17]'He came to his senses. "Just think!" he said to himself. "There are all my father's hired hands with plenty to eat – and here am I, starving to death! [18]I shall get up and go to my father, and I'll say to him: 'Father; I have sinned against heaven and before you; [19]I don't deserve to be called your son any longer. Make me like one of your hired hands.'" [20]And he got up and went to his father.

'While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and his heart was stirred with love and pity. He ran to him, hugged him tight, and kissed him. [21]"Father," the son began, "I have sinned against heaven and before you; I don't deserve to be called your son any longer." [22]But the father said to his servants, "Hurry! Bring the best clothes and put them on him! Put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet! [23]And bring the calf that we've fattened up, kill it, and let's eat and have a party! [24]This son of mine was dead, and is alive again! He was lost, and now he's found!" And they began to celebrate.'

The parable of the Prodigal: the father and the older son

[25]'The older son was out in the fields. When he came home, and got near to the house, he heard music and dancing. [26]He called one of the servants and asked what was going on.

[27]'"Your brother's come home!" he said. "And your father has thrown a great party – he's killed the fattened calf! – because he's got him back safe and well!"

[28]'He flew into a rage, and wouldn't go in.

'Then his father came out and pleaded with him. [29]"Look here!" he said to his father, "I've been slaving for you all these years! I've never disobeyed a single commandment of yours. And you never even gave me a young goat so I could have a party with my friends. [30]But when this son of yours comes home, once he's finished gobbling up your livelihood with his whores, you kill the fattened calf for him!"

[31]'"My son," he replied, "you're always with me. Everything I have belongs to you. [32]But we had to celebrate and be happy! This brother of yours was dead and is alive again! He was lost, and now he's found!"'

The parable of the shrewd manager

16 Jesus said to his disciples, 'Once there was a rich man who had a steward, and charges were laid against him that he was squandering his property. [2]So he called him and said to him, "What's all this I hear about you? Present an account of your stewardship; I'm not going to have you as my steward any more!"

[3]'At this, the steward said to himself, "What shall I do? My master is taking away my stewardship from me! I can't do manual work, and I'd be ashamed to beg . . .

[4]'"I have an idea what to do! – so that people will welcome me into their households when I am fired from being steward."

[5]'So he called his master's debtors to him, one by one. "How much", he asked the first, "do you owe my master?"

[6]'"A hundred measures of olive oil," he replied.

'"Take your bill," he said to him, "sit down quickly, and make it fifty."

[7]'To another he said, "And how much do you owe?"

'"A hundred measures of wheat," he replied.

'"Take your bill," he said, "and make it eighty."

[8]'And the master praised the dishonest steward because he had acted wisely. The children of this world, you see, are wiser than the children of light when it comes to dealing with their own generation.

[9]'So let me tell you this: use that dishonest stuff called money to make yourselves friends! Then, when it gives out, they will

welcome you into homes that will last.'

Teachings on stewardship

[10]'Someone who is faithful in a small matter', Jesus continued, 'will also be faithful in a large one. Someone who is dishonest in a small matter will also be dishonest in a large one. [11]If you haven't been faithful with that wicked thing called money, who is going to entrust you with true wealth? [12]And if you haven't been faithful in looking after what belongs to someone else, who is going to give you what is your own?

[13]'Nobody can serve two masters. You will end up hating one and loving the other, or going along with the first and despising the other. You can't serve God and money.'

[14]The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this, and mocked Jesus. [15]So he said to them, 'You people let everyone else know that you're in the right – but God knows your hearts. What people call honourable, God calls abominable!

[16]'The law and the prophets lasted until John. From now on, God's kingdom is announced, and everyone is trying to attack it. [17]But it's easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of an "i" to drop out of the law.

[18]'Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and a person who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.'

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus

[19]'There was once a rich man,' said Jesus, 'who was dressed in purple and fine linen, and feasted in splendour every day. [20]A poor man named Lazarus, who was covered with sores, lay outside his gate. [21]He longed to feed himself with the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

[22]'In due course the poor man died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died, and was buried. [23]As he was being tormented in Hades, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom.

[24]'"Father Abraham!" he called out. "Have pity on me! Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue! I'm in agony in this fire!"

[25]'"My child," replied Abraham, "remember that in your life you received good things, and in the same way Lazarus received evil. Now he is comforted here, and you are tormented. [26]Besides that, there is a great chasm standing between us. People who want to cross over from here to you can't do so, nor can anyone get across from the far side to us."

[27]'"Please, then, father," he said, "send him to my father's house. [28]I've got five brothers. Let him tell them about it, so that they don't come into this torture-chamber."

[29]'"They've got Moses and the prophets," replied Abraham. "Let them listen to them."

[30]'"No, father Abraham," he replied, "but if someone went to them from the dead, they would repent!"

[31]'"If they don't listen to Moses and the prophets," came the reply, "neither would they be convinced, even if someone rose from the dead."'

Forgiveness, faith and obedience

17 Jesus said to his disciples, 'There are bound to be things that trip people up; but woe betide the person who brings them about! [2]It would be better to have a millstone hung around your neck, and be thrown into the sea, than to trip up one of these little ones. [3]So watch out for yourselves.

'If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he apologizes, forgive him. [4]Even if he sins against you seven times, and turns round seven times and says "sorry" to you, you must forgive him.'

[5]The apostles said to the master, 'Give us greater faith!'

[6]'If you had faith', replied the master, 'as a grain of mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and be planted in the sea", and it would obey you.

[7]'Supposing one of you has a slave ploughing or keeping sheep out in the field. When he comes in, what will you say? "Come here at once, and sit down for a meal?" [8]No; you will be far more likely to say, "Get something ready for me to eat! Get properly dressed, and wait on me while I eat and drink! After that you can have something to eat and drink yourself." [9]Will you thank the slave because he did what you told him?

[10]'That's how it is with you. When you've done everything you're told, say this: "We're just ordinary slaves. All we've done is what we we were supposed to do."'

Ten men healed

[11]As Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, he passed along the borderlands between Samaria and Galilee. [12]As he was going into one particular village he was met by ten men with virulent skin diseases who stayed at some distance from him.

[13]'Jesus, Master!' they called out loudly. 'Have pity on us!'

[14]When Jesus saw them he said to them, 'Go and show yourselves to the priests.' And as they went, they were healed.

[15]One of them, seeing that he had been healed, turned back and gave glory to God at the top of his voice. [16]He fell on his face in front of Jesus' feet and thanked him. He was a Samaritan.

[17]'There were ten of you healed, weren't there?' responded Jesus. 'Where are the nine? [18]Is it really the case that the only one who had the decency to give God the glory was this foreigner?

[19]‘Get up, and be on your way,’ he said to him. ‘Your faith has saved you.’

The coming of the kingdom

[20]The Pharisees asked Jesus when the kingdom of God was coming.
‘God’s kingdom’, replied Jesus, ‘isn’t the sort of thing you can watch for and see coming. [21]People won’t say “Look, here it is”, or “Look, over there!” No: God’s kingdom is within your grasp.’
[22]Then Jesus said to the disciples, ‘The days are coming when you will long to see one of the days of the son of man, and you won’t see it. [23]They will say to you, “Look, there!” or “Look, here!” Don’t go off or follow them. [24]The son of man in his day will be like lightning that shines from one end of the sky to the other. [25]But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.
[26]‘What will it be like in the days of the son of man? It will be like the days of Noah. [27]People were eating and drinking, they were getting married and giving wedding parties, until the day when Noah went into the ark – and that day the flood came and swept them all away. [28]And it will be like the days of Lot. They were eating and drinking, they were buying and selling, they were planting and building. [29]But on the day when Lot left Sodom, it rained fire and sulphur from the sky and they were all destroyed. [30]That’s what it will be like on the day when the son of man is revealed.
[31]‘On that day anyone up on the roof, with all their possessions in the house, shouldn’t go down to get them. Anyone out in the field shouldn’t go back to get anything. [32]Remember Lot’s wife. [33]If you try to save your life you’ll lose it, but anyone who loses it will keep it.
[34]‘Let me tell you, in that night there will be two people sleeping side by side: one will be taken, and the other left behind. [35]There will be two women working side by side grinding corn: one will be taken, and the other left behind.’
[37]‘Where will this be, master?’ they asked him.
‘Where the body is,’ replied Jesus, ‘there the vultures will gather.’

The parables of the persistent widow and the tax-collector

18 Jesus told them a parable, about how they should always pray and not give up.
[2]‘There was once a judge in a certain town,’ he said, ‘who didn’t fear God, and didn’t have any respect for people. [3]There was a widow in that town, and she came to him and said, “Judge my case! Vindicate me against my enemy!”
[4]‘For a long time he refused. But, in the end, he said to himself, “It’s true that I don’t fear God, and don’t have any respect for people. [5]But because this widow is causing me a lot of trouble, I will put her case right and vindicate her, so that she doesn’t end up coming and giving me a black eye.”
[6]‘Well,’ said the master, ‘did you hear what this unjust judge says? [7]And don’t you think that God will see justice done for his chosen ones, who shout out to him day and night? Do you suppose he is deliberately delaying? [8]Let me tell you, he will vindicate them very quickly. But – when the son of man comes, will he find faith on the earth?’
[9]He told this next parable against those who trusted in their own righteous standing and despised others.
[10]‘Two men’, he said, ‘went up to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, the other was a tax-collector. [11]The Pharisee stood and prayed in this way to himself: “God, I thank you that I am not like the other people – greedy, unjust, immoral, or even like this tax-collector. [12]I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I get.”
[13]‘But the tax-collector stood a long way off, and didn’t even want to raise his eyes to heaven. He beat his breast and said, “God, be merciful to me, sinner that I am.” [14]Let me tell you, he was the one who went back to his house vindicated by God, not the other. Don’t you see? People who exalt themselves will be humbled, and people who humble themselves will be exalted.’

The rich young ruler

[15]People were bringing even tiny babies to Jesus for him to touch them. When the disciples saw it, they forbade them sternly. [16]But Jesus called them. ‘Let the children come to me,’ he said, ‘and don’t stop them! God’s kingdom belongs to the likes of these. [17]I’m telling you the truth: anyone who doesn’t receive God’s kingdom like a child will never get into it.’
[18]There was a ruler who asked him, ‘Good teacher, what must I do to inherit the life of the age to come?’
[19]‘Why call me good?’ said Jesus to him. ‘No one is good except God alone. [20]You know the commandments: Don’t commit adultery, don’t kill, don’t steal, don’t swear falsely, honour your father and mother.’
[21]‘I’ve kept them all’, he said, ‘since I was a boy.’
[22]When Jesus heard that, he said to him, ‘There’s just one thing you’re short of. Sell everything you own, and distribute it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me.’
[23]When he heard that he turned very sad; he was extremely wealthy.
[24]Jesus saw that he had become sad, and said, ‘How hard it is for those with possessions to enter God’s kingdom! [25]Yes: it’s easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter God’s kingdom.’
[26]The people who heard it said, ‘So who can be saved?’
[27]‘What’s impossible for humans’, said Jesus, ‘is possible for God.’
[28]‘Look here,’ said Peter, ‘we’ve left everything and followed you.’
[29]‘I’m telling you the truth,’ said Jesus, ‘everyone who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, because of God’s kingdom, [30]will receive far more in return in the present time – and in the age to come they will receive the life that belongs to that age.’

Jesus heals a blind beggar

31Jesus took the Twelve aside.
'Look,' he said, 'we're going up to Jerusalem. Everything that's written in the prophets about the son of man will be fulfilled.
32Yes: he will be handed over to the pagans; he'll be mocked, abused and spat upon. 33They will beat him and kill him; and on the
third day he'll be raised.'
34They didn't understand any of this. The word was hidden from them, and they didn't know what he meant.
35As they were getting near Jericho there was a blind man sitting by the road, begging. 36When he heard a crowd passing
through the town he asked what was going on.
37'Jesus of Nazareth is coming by,' people said to him.
38So he shouted out, 'Jesus – David's son! Have pity on me!'
39The people who were at the front of the group firmly told him to be silent. But he yelled out all the more, 'David's son! Have
pity on me!'
40Jesus stopped, and told them to bring the man to him. When he came up, he asked him, 41'What d'you want me to do for
you?'
'Master,' he said, 'I want to see again.'
42'Then see again,' said Jesus. 'Your faith has saved you.'
43At once he received his sight again, and followed him, glorifying God. And when all the people saw it, they gave praise to
God.

The calling of Zacchaeus

19 They went into Jericho and passed through. 2There was a man named Zacchaeus, a chief tax-collector, who was very rich.
3He was trying to see who Jesus was, but, being a small man, he couldn't, because of the crowd. 4So he ran on ahead, along
the route Jesus was going to take, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him.
5When Jesus came to the place, he looked up.
'Zacchaeus,' he said to him, 'hurry up and come down. I have to stay at your house today.' 6So he hurried up, came down, and
welcomed him with joy.
7Everybody began to murmur when they saw it. 'He's gone in to spend time with a proper old sinner!' they were saying.
8But Zacchaeus stood there and addressed the master.
'Look, Master,' he said, 'I'm giving half my property to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I'm giving it
back to them four times over.'
9'Today,' said Jesus, 'salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. 10You see, the son of man came to
seek and to save the lost.'

The king, the servants and the money

11While people were listening to this, Jesus went on to tell a parable. They were, after all, getting close to Jerusalem, and they
thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once.
12'There was once a nobleman,' he said, 'who went into a country far away to be given royal authority and then return. 13He
summoned ten of his slaves and gave them ten silver coins. "Do business with these", he said, "until I come back." 14His subjects,
though, hated him, and sent a delegation after him to say, "We don't want this man to be our king."
15'So it happened that when he received the kingship and came back again, he gave orders to summon these slaves who had
received the money, so that he could find out how they had got on with their business efforts. 16The first came forward and said,
"Master, your money has made ten times its value!"
17'"Well done, you splendid servant!" he said. "You've been trustworthy with something small; now you can take command of
ten cities."
18'The second came and said, "Master, your money has made five times its value!"
19'"You too – you can take charge of five cities."
20'The other came and said, "Master, here is your money. I kept it wrapped in this handkerchief. 21You see, I was afraid of you,
because you are a hard man: you profit where you made no investment, and you harvest what you didn't sow."
22'"I'll condemn you out of your own mouth, you wicked scoundrel of a servant!" he replied. "So: you knew that I was a hard
man, profiting where I didn't invest and harvesting where I didn't sow? 23So why didn't you put my money with the bankers?
Then I'd have had the interest when I got back!"
24'"Take the money from him," he said to the bystanders, "and give it to the man who's got it ten times over!" 25("Master,"
they said to him, "he's got ten times that already!")
26'Let me tell you: everyone who has will be given more; but if someone has nothing, even what he has will be taken away
from him. 27But as for these enemies of mine, who didn't want me to be king over them – bring them here and slaughter them in
front of me.'

The triumphal entry

28With these words, Jesus went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.
29As they came close, as near as Bethany and Bethphage, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples

on ahead. [30]‘Go into the village over there,’ he said, ‘and as you arrive you’ll find a colt tied up, one that nobody has ever ridden.
Untie it and bring it here. [31]If anyone says to you, “Why are you untying it?” you should say, “Because the master needs it.”’
[32]The two who were sent went off and found it just as Jesus had said to them. [33]They untied the colt, and its owners said to
them, “Why are you untying the colt?”
[34]“Because the master needs it,” they replied.
[35]They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt, and mounted Jesus on it. [36]As he was going along, people kept
spreading their cloaks on the road.
[37]When he came to the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began to celebrate and praise God at the
tops of their voices for all the powerful deeds they had seen.

[38]‘Welcome, welcome, welcome with a blessing,’ they sang.
‘Welcome to the king in the name of the Lord!
‘Peace in heaven, and glory on high!’

[39]Some of the Pharisees from the crowd said to Jesus, ‘Teacher, tell your disciples to stop that.’
[40]‘Let me tell you,’ replied Jesus, ‘if they stayed silent, the stones would be shouting out!’

Jesus cleanses the Temple

[41]When he came near and saw the city, he wept over it.
[42]‘If only you’d known,’ he said, ‘on this day – even you! – what peace meant. But now it’s hidden, and you can’t see it. [43]Yes,
the days are coming upon you when your enemies will build up earthworks all round you, and encircle you, and squeeze you in
from every direction. [44]They will bring you crashing to the ground, you and your children within you. They won’t leave one
single stone on another, because you didn’t know the moment when God was visiting you.’
[45]He went into the Temple and began to throw out the traders.
[46]‘It’s written,’ he said, ‘my house shall be a house of prayer; but you’ve made it a brigands’ cave.’
[47]He was teaching every day in the Temple. But the chief priests, the scribes and the leading men of the people were trying to
destroy him. [48]They couldn’t find any way to do it, because all the people were hanging on his every word.

The question about Jesus’ authority

20 On one of those days, while Jesus was teaching the people in the Temple, and announcing the good news, the chief priests
and the scribes came up with the elders, and said to him, [2]‘Tell us: by what authority are you doing these things? Or who
gave you this authority?’
[3]‘I’ve got a question for you, too,’ said Jesus, ‘so tell me this: [4]was John’s baptism from God, or was it merely human?’
[5]‘If we say it was from God,’ they said among themselves, ‘he’ll say, So why didn’t you believe him? [6]But if we say “merely
human”, all the people will stone us, since they’re convinced that John was a prophet.’
[7]So they replied that they didn’t know where John and his baptism came from.
[8]‘Very well, then,’ said Jesus. ‘Nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things.’

The parable of the tenants

[9]Jesus began to tell the people this parable. ‘There was a man who planted a vineyard, let it out to tenant farmers, and went abroad
for a long while. [10]When the time came, he sent a slave to the farmers to collect from them some of the produce of the vineyard.
But the farmers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. [11]He then sent a further slave, and they beat him, abused him, and
sent him back empty-handed. [12]Then he sent yet a third, and they beat him up and threw him out.
[13]‘So the master of the vineyard said, “What shall I do? I’ll send my beloved son. They will certainly respect him!” [14]But when
the farmers saw him they said to each other, “This is the heir! Let’s kill him, and then the inheritance will belong to us!” [15]And
they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.
‘So what will the master of the vineyard do? [16]He will come and wipe out those farmers, and give the vineyard to others.’
When they heard this, they said, ‘God forbid!’ [17]But Jesus looked round at them and said, ‘What then does it mean in the Bible
when it says,

The very stone the builders refused
now for the corner’s top is used?

[18]‘Everyone who falls on that stone will be smashed to smithereens; but if it falls on anyone, it will crush them.’
[19]The scribes and the chief priests tried to lay hands on him then and there. But they were afraid of the people, because they
knew that Jesus had told this parable against them.

On paying taxes to Caesar

[20]So the authorities watched Jesus, and sent people to lie in wait for him. They pretended to be upright folk, but were trying to
trap him in something he said, so that they could hand him over to the rule and authority of the governor. [21]So they asked him this

question.
'Teacher,' they said, 'we know that you speak and teach with integrity. You are completely impartial, and you teach God's way and God's truth. [22]So: is it right for us to give tribute to Caesar, or not?'
[23]Jesus knew they were playing a trick.
[24]'Show me a tribute-coin,' he said. 'This image . . . and this inscription . . . who do they belong to?'
'Caesar,' they said.
[25]'Well, then,' replied Jesus, 'you'd better give Caesar back what belongs to him! And give *God* back what belongs to *him*.'
[26]They couldn't catch him in anything he said in front of the people. They were amazed at his answer, and had nothing more to say.

Marriage and the resurrection

[27]Some of the Sadducees came to Jesus to put their question. (The Sadducees deny that there is any resurrection.)
[28]'Teacher,' they said, 'Moses wrote for us that "If a man's brother dies, leaving a widow but no children, the man should marry the widow and raise up a family for his brother." [29]Well, now: there were seven brothers; the eldest married a wife, and died without children. [30]The second [31]and the third married her, and then each of the seven, and they died without children. [32]Finally the woman died as well. [33]So, in the resurrection, whose wife will the woman be? The seven all had her as their wife.'
[34]'The children of this age', replied Jesus, 'marry and are given in marriage. [35]But those who are counted worthy of a place in the age to come, and of the resurrection of the dead, don't marry, and they are not given in marriage. [36]This is because they can no longer die; they are the equivalent of angels. They are children of God, since they are children of the resurrection.
[37]'But when it comes to the dead being raised, Moses too declares it, in the passage about the burning bush, where scripture describes the Lord as "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob". [38]God is God, not of the dead, but of the living. They are all alive to him.'
[39]'That was well said, teacher,' commented some of the scribes, [40]since they no longer dared ask him anything else.

David's son and the widow's mite

[41]Jesus said to them, 'How can people say that the Messiah is the son of David? [42]David himself says, in the book of Psalms,

The Lord says to the Lord of mine
sit here at my right hand;
[43]until I place those foes of thine
right underneath thy feet.

[44]'David, you see, calls him "Lord"; so how can he be his son?'
[45]As all the people listened to him, he said to the disciples, [46]'Watch out for the scribes who like to go about in long robes, and enjoy being greeted in the market-place, sitting in the best seats in the synagogues, and taking the top table at dinners. [47]They devour widows' houses, and make long prayers without meaning them. Their judgment will be all the more severe.'
21 He looked up and saw rich people putting their contributions into the Temple treasury. [2]He also saw an impoverished widow putting in two tiny copper coins.
[3]'I'm telling you the truth,' he said. 'This poor widow has put in more than all of them. [4]They all contributed into the collection out of their plenty, but she contributed out of her poverty, and gave her whole livelihood.'

Signs of the end

[5]Some people were talking about the Temple, saying how wonderfully it was decorated, with its beautiful stones and dedicated gifts.
'Yes,' said Jesus; [6]'but the days will come when everything you see will be torn down. Not one stone will be left standing on another.'
[7]'Teacher,' they asked him, 'when will these things happen? What will be the sign that it's all about to take place?'
[8]'Watch out that nobody deceives you,' said Jesus. 'Yes: lots of people will come using my name, saying "I'm the one!" and "The time has come!" Don't go following them. [9]When you hear about wars and rebellions, don't be alarmed. These things have to happen first, but the end won't come at once.
[10]'One nation will rise against another,' he went on, 'and one kingdom against another. [11]There will be huge earthquakes, famines and plagues in various places, terrifying omens, and great signs from heaven.
[12]'Before all this happens they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will hand you over to the synagogues and prisons. They will drag you before kings and governors because of my name. [13]That will become an opportunity for you to tell your story. [14]So settle it in your hearts not to work out beforehand what tale to tell; [15]I'll give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your opponents will be able to resist or contradict.
[16]'You will be betrayed by parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, and they will kill some of you. [17]You will be hated by everyone because of my name. [18]But no hair of your head will be lost. [19]The way to keep your lives is to be patient.'

The distress of Jerusalem predicted

[20]‘But,’ continued Jesus, ‘when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you will know that her time of desolation has arrived. [21]Then people in Judaea should run off to the hills, people in Jerusalem itself should get out as fast as they can, and people in the countryside shouldn’t go back into the city. [22]Those will be the days of severe judgment, which will fulfil all the biblical warnings. [23]Woe betide pregnant women, and nursing mothers, in those days! There is going to be huge distress on the earth, and divine anger against this people. [24]The hungry sword will eat them up; they will be taken off as prisoners to every nation; and Jerusalem will be trampled by the pagans, until the times of the pagans are done.

[25]‘There will be signs in the sun, the moon and the stars. On earth the nations will be in distress and confusion because of the roaring and swelling of the sea and its waves. [26]People will faint from fear, and from imagining all that’s going to happen to the world. The powers of the heavens will be shaken. [27]Then they will see “the son of man coming on a cloud” with power and great majesty. [28]When all these things start to happen, stand up and lift up your heads, because the time has come for you to be redeemed.’

[29]He told them this parable. ‘Look at the fig tree and all the trees. [30]When they are well into leaf, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is upon you. [31]In the same way, when you see all these things happening, you will know that God’s kingdom is upon you. [32]I’m telling you the truth; this generation won’t be gone before all of this happens. [33]Heaven and earth may disappear, but these words of mine won’t disappear.’

Watching for the son of man

[34]‘So watch out for yourselves,’ said Jesus, ‘that your hearts may not grow heavy with dissipation and drunkenness and the cares of this life, so that that day comes upon you suddenly, [35]like a trap. It will come, you see, on everyone who lives on the face of the earth. [36]Keep awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that will happen, and to stand before the son of man.’

[37]Jesus was teaching in the Temple by day, but at night he went out and stayed in the place called the Mount of Olives. [38]And from early morning all the people flocked to him in the Temple, to hear him.

The Last Supper

22 The time came for the festival of unleavened bread, known as Passover. [2]The chief priests and the scribes looked for a way to assassinate Jesus, a difficult task because of the crowds.

[3]The satan entered into Judas, whose surname was Iscariot, who was one of the company of the Twelve. [4]He went and held a meeting with the chief priests and officers, to discuss how he might hand Jesus over. [5]They were delighted, and promised to pay him. [6]He agreed, and started to look for an opportunity to hand him over to them when the crowds weren’t around.

[7]The day of unleavened bread arrived, the day when people had to kill the Passover lamb. [8]Jesus dispatched Peter and John.

‘Off you go,’ he said, ‘and get the Passover ready for us to eat.’

[9]‘Where d’you want us to prepare it?’ they asked him.

[10]‘Listen carefully,’ said Jesus. ‘As you go into the city a man will meet you carrying a jar of water. Follow him, and when he goes into a house, go after him. [11]Then say to the householder there, “The teacher says, ‘Where is the living-room where I can eat the Passover with my disciples?’” [12]And he will show you a large upstairs room, laid out and ready. Make the preparations there.’

[13]So they went and found it as he had said to them, and they prepared the Passover.

[14]When the time came, Jesus sat down at table, and the apostles with him.

[15]‘I have been so much looking forward to eating this Passover with you before I have to suffer,’ he said to them. [16]‘For – let me tell you – I won’t eat it again until it’s fulfilled in the kingdom of God.’

[17]Then he took a cup, and gave thanks, and said, ‘Take this and share it among yourselves. [18]Let me tell you, from now on I won’t drink from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.’

[19]Then he took some bread. He gave thanks, broke it and gave it to them.

‘This is my body,’ he said, ‘which is given for you. Do this in memory of me.’

[20]So too, after supper, with the cup: ‘This cup’, he said, ‘is the new covenant, in my blood which is shed for you.

[21]‘But look here! The hand of the one who will betray me is with me at this table. [22]The son of man is indeed going, as it is marked out for him; but woe betide that man by whom he is betrayed!’

[23]They began to ask each other which of them was going to do this.

Prediction of Peter’s denial

[24]A quarrel began among them: which of them was to be seen as the most important?

[25]‘Pagan kings lord it over their subjects,’ said Jesus to them, ‘and people in power get themselves called “Benefactors”. [26]That’s not how it’s to be with you. The most important among you ought to be like the youngest. The leader should be like the servant. [27]After all, who is the more important, the one who sits at table or the one who waits on him? The one at table, obviously! But I am with you here like a servant.

[28]‘You are the ones who have stuck it out with me through the trials I’ve had to endure. [29]This is my bequest to you: the kingdom my father bequeathed to me! [30]What does this mean? You will eat and drink at my table, in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

[31]‘Simon, Simon, listen to this. The satan demanded to have you. He wanted to shake you into bits like wheat. [32]But I prayed for you; I prayed that you wouldn’t run out of faith. And, when you turn back again, you must give strength to your brothers.’

[33]‘Master,’ replied Simon, ‘I’m ready to go with you to prison – or to death!’
[34]‘Let me tell you, Peter,’ replied Jesus, ‘the cock won’t crow today before you have three times denied that you know me.
[35]‘When I sent you out,’ Jesus said to them, ‘without purse or bag or sandals, were you short of anything?’
‘Nothing,’ they replied.
[36]‘But now,’ he said, ‘anyone who has a purse should take it, and the same with a bag. And anyone who doesn’t have a sword should sell his cloak and buy one. [37]Let me tell you this: when the Bible says, “He was reckoned with the lawless”, it must find its fulfilment in me. Yes; everything about me must reach its goal.’
[38]‘Look, Master,’ they said, ‘we’ve got a couple of swords here.’
‘That’s enough!’ he said to them.

Jesus is arrested

[39]So off they went. Jesus headed, as usual, for the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him.
[40]When he came to the place, he said to them, ‘Pray that you won’t come into the trial.’
[41]He then withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and knelt down to pray.
[42]‘Father,’ he said, ‘if you wish it – please take this cup away from me! But it must be your will, not mine.’ [43]An angel appeared to him from heaven, strengthening him. [44]By now he was in agony, and he prayed very fervently. And his sweat became like clots of blood, falling on the ground. [45]Then he got up from praying, and came to the disciples and found them asleep because of sorrow.
[46]‘Why are you sleeping?’ he said to them. ‘Get up and pray, so that you won’t come into the trial.’
[47]While he was still speaking, a crowd appeared. The man named Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He came towards Jesus to kiss him, [48]but Jesus said to him, ‘Judas! Are you going to betray the son of man with a kiss?’
[49]Jesus’ followers saw what was about to happen.
‘Master!’ they said. ‘Shall we go in with the swords?’ [50]And one of them struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear.
[51]‘Enough of that!’ said Jesus, and healed the ear with a touch.
[52]Then Jesus spoke to the chief priests, the Temple guardsmen, and the elders who had come after him.
‘Anyone would think I was a brigand,’ he said, ‘for you to come out with swords and clubs! [53]Every day I’ve been in the Temple with you and you never laid hands on me. But your moment has come at last, and so has the power of darkness.’

Peter denies Jesus

[54]So they arrested Jesus, took him off, and brought him into the high priest’s house. Peter followed at a distance. [55]They lit a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat around it, and Peter sat in among them.
[56]A servant-girl saw him sitting by the fire. She stared hard at him. ‘This fellow was with him!’ she said.
[57]Peter denied it. ‘I don’t know him, woman,’ he said.
[58]After a little while another man saw him and said, ‘You’re one of them!’
‘No, my friend, I’m not,’ replied Peter.
[59]After the space of about an hour, another man insisted, ‘It’s true! This man was with him; he’s a Galilean too!’
[60]‘My good fellow,’ said Peter, ‘I don’t know what you’re talking about.’ And at once, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. [61]The master turned and looked at Peter, and Peter called to mind the words the master had spoken to him: ‘Before the cock crows, this very day, you will deny me three times.’ [62]And he went outside and wept bitterly.
[63]The men who were holding Jesus began to make fun of him and knock him about. [64]They blindfolded him.
‘Prophesy!’ they told him. ‘Who is it that’s hitting you?’
[65]And they said many other scandalous things to him.
[66]When the day broke, the official assembly of the people, the chief priests and the scribes came together, and they took him off to their council.
[67]‘If you are the Messiah,’ they said, ‘tell us!’
‘If I tell you,’ he said to them, ‘you won’t believe me. [68]And if I ask you a question, you won’t answer me. [69]But from now on the son of man will be seated at the right hand of God’s power.’
[70]‘So you’re the son of God, are you?’ they said.
‘You say that I am,’ he said to them.
[71]‘Why do we need any more witnesses?’ they said. ‘We’ve heard it ourselves, from his own mouth!’

Jesus before Pilate and Herod

23 The whole crowd of them got up and took Jesus to Pilate.
[2]They began to accuse him. ‘We found this fellow’, they said, ‘deceiving our nation! He was forbidding people to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he is the Messiah – a king!’
[3]So Pilate asked Jesus, ‘You are the king of the Jews?’
‘You said it,’ replied Jesus.
[4]‘I find no fault in this man,’ said Pilate to the chief priests and the crowds. [5]But they became insistent.
‘He’s stirring up the people,’ they said, ‘teaching them throughout the whole of Judaea. He began in Galilee, and now he’s

come here.'
[6]When Pilate heard that, he asked if the man was indeed a Galilean. [7]When he learned that he was from Herod's jurisdiction he sent him to Herod, who happened also to be in Jerusalem at that time.
[8]When Herod saw Jesus he was delighted. He had been wanting to see him for quite some time now, since he'd heard about him, and hoped to see him perform some sign or other. [9]He questioned him this way and that, but Jesus gave no answer at all. [10]The chief priests and the scribes stood by, accusing him vehemently. [11]Herod and his soldiers treated Jesus with contempt; they ridiculed him by dressing him up in a splendid robe, and sent him back to Pilate. [12]And so it happened, that very day, that Herod and Pilate became friends with each other. Up until then, they had been enemies.

Pilate pressured by the crowds

[13]So Pilate called the chief priests, the rulers and the people.
[14]'You brought this man before me,' he said to them, 'on the grounds that he was leading the people astray. Look here, then: I examined him in your presence and I found no evidence in him of the charges you're bringing against him. [15]Nor did Herod; he sent him back to me. Look: there is no sign that he's done anything to deserve death. [16]So I'm going to flog him and let him go.'
[18]'Take him away!' they shouted out all together. 'Release Barabbas for us!' [19](Barabbas had been thrown into prison because of an uprising that had taken place in the city, and for murder.) [20]Pilate spoke to them again, with the intention of letting Jesus go, [21]but they shouted back, 'Crucify him! Crucify him!'
[22]'Why?' he said for the third time. 'What's he done wrong? I can't find anything he's done that deserves death, so I'm going to beat him and let him go.'
[23]But they went on shouting out at the tops of their voices, demanding that he be crucified; and eventually their shouts won the day. [24]Pilate gave his verdict that their request should be granted. [25]He released the man they asked for, the one who'd been thrown into prison because of rebellion and murder, and gave Jesus over to their demands.
[26]As they led him away, they grabbed a man from Cyrene called Simon, who was coming in to the city from outside, and they forced him to carry the crossbeam behind Jesus.

The crucifixion

[27]A great crowd of the people followed Jesus, including women who were mourning and wailing for him. [28]Jesus turned and spoke to them.
'Daughters of Jerusalem,' he said, 'don't cry for me. Cry for yourselves instead! Cry for your children! [29]Listen: the time is coming when you will say, "A blessing on the barren! A blessing on wombs that never bore children, and breasts that never nursed them!" [30]At that time people will start to say to the mountains, "Fall on us", and to the hills, "Cover us"! [31]Yes: if this is what they do with the green tree, what will happen to the dry one?'
[32]Two other criminals were taken away with him to be executed. [33]When they came to the place called The Skull, they crucified him there, with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left.
[34]'Father,' said Jesus, 'forgive them! They don't know what they're doing!'
They divided his clothes, casting lots for them.
[35]The people stood around watching. The rulers hurled abuse at him.
'He rescued others,' they said, 'let him try rescuing himself, if he really is the Messiah, God's chosen one!'
[36]The soldiers added their taunts, coming up and offering him cheap wine.
[37]'If you're the king of the Jews,' they said, 'rescue yourself!'
[38]The charge was written above him: 'This is the King of the Jews.'
[39]One of the bad characters who was hanging there began to insult him. 'Aren't you the Messiah?' he said. 'Rescue yourself – and us, too!'
[40]But the other one told him off. 'Don't you fear God?' he said. 'You're sharing the same fate that he is! [41]In our case it's fair enough; we're getting exactly what we asked for. But this fellow hasn't done anything out of order.
[42]'Jesus,' he went on, 'remember me when you finally become king.'
[43]'I'm telling you the truth,' replied Jesus, 'you'll be with me in paradise, this very day.'

The death and burial of Jesus

[44]By the time of the sixth hour, darkness came over all the land. [45]The sunlight vanished until the ninth hour. The veil of the Temple was ripped down the middle. [46]Then Jesus shouted out at the top of his voice, 'Here's my spirit, father! You can take care of it now!' And with that he died.
[47]The centurion saw what happened, and praised God.
'This fellow', he said, 'really was in the right.'
[48]All the crowds who had come together for the spectacle saw what happened, and they went away beating their breasts. [49]Those who knew Jesus, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, remained at a distance and watched the scene.
[50]Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the council. He was a good and righteous man, [51]and had not given his consent to the court's verdict or actions. He was from Arimathea, a town in Judaea, and he was longing for God's kingdom. [52]He approached Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. [53]He took it down, wrapped it in a shroud, and put it in a tomb hollowed out of the

rock, where no one had ever been laid. [54]It was the day of Preparation, and the sabbath was beginning.
[55]The women who had followed Jesus, the ones who had come with him from Galilee, saw the tomb and how the body was laid. [56]Then they went back to prepare spices and ointments. On the sabbath they rested, as the commandment specified.

The resurrection

24 The women went to the tomb in the very early morning of the first day of the week, carrying the spices they had prepared.
[2]They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, [3]and when they went in they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus.
[4]As they were at a loss what to make of it all, suddenly two men in shining clothes stood beside them. [5]The women were terrified, and bowed their faces towards the ground.
But the men said to them, 'Why look for the living with the dead? [6]He isn't here – he's been raised! Don't you remember? While you were still in Galilee he told you that [7]the son of man must be handed over into the hands of sinners, and be crucified, and rise again on the third day.'
[8]And they remembered his words.
[9]They went back, away from the tomb, and told all this to the eleven and all the others. [10]It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and the others with them. They said this to the apostles; [11]and this message seemed to them just stupid, useless talk, and they didn't believe them.
[12]Peter, though, got up and ran to the tomb. He stooped down and saw only the grave-clothes. He went back home, perplexed at what had happened.

On the road to Emmaus

[13]That very day, two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, which lay about seven miles from Jerusalem. [14]They were discussing with each other all the various things that had taken place. [15]As they were discussing, and arguing with each other, Jesus himself approached and walked with them. [16]Their eyes, though, were prevented from recognizing him.
[17]'You're obviously having a very important discussion on your walk,' he said; 'what's it all about?'
They stood still, a picture of gloom. [18]Then one of them, Cleopas by name, answered him.
'You must be the only person around Jerusalem', he said, 'who doesn't know what's been going on there these last few days.'
[19]'What things?' he asked.
'To do with Jesus of Nazareth,' they said to him. 'He was a prophet. He acted with power and he spoke with power, before God and all the people. [20]Our chief priests and rulers handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. [21]But we were hoping that he was going to redeem Israel!
'And now, what with all this, it's the third day since it happened. [22]But some women from our group have astonished us. They went to his tomb very early this morning, [23]and didn't find his body. They came back saying they'd seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. [24]Some of the folk with us went off to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they didn't see *him*.'
[25]'You are so senseless!' he said to them. 'So slow in your hearts to believe all the things the prophets said to you! Don't you see? [26]This is what *had* to happen: the Messiah had to suffer, and then come into his glory!'
[27]So he began with Moses, and with all the prophets, and explained to them the things about himself throughout the whole Bible.

Jesus revealed at Emmaus

[28]They drew near to the village where they were heading. Jesus gave the impression that he was going further, [29]but they urged him strongly not to.
'Stay with us,' they said. 'It's nearly evening; the day is almost gone.' And he went in to stay with them.
[30]As he was sitting at table with them he took the bread and gave thanks. He broke it and gave it to them. [31]Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight.
[32]Then they said to each other, 'Do you remember how our hearts were burning inside us, as he talked to us on the road, as he opened up the Bible for us?'
[33]And they got up then and there and went back to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven, and the people with them, gathered together.
[34]They were saying, 'The Lord really has been raised! He's appeared to Simon!' [35]Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Jesus' promise and ascension

[36]As they were saying this, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and said, 'Peace be with you.' [37]They were terrified and alarmed, and thought they were seeing a ghost.
[38]'Why are you so disturbed?' he said. 'Why do these questionings come up in your hearts? [39]Look at my hands and feet; it really is me, myself. Touch me and see! Ghosts don't have flesh and bones like you can see I have.'
[40]With these words, he showed them his hands and feet.
[41]While they were still in disbelief and amazement from sheer joy, he said to them, 'Have you got something here to eat?'

[42]They gave him a piece of baked fish, [43]which he took and ate in front of them.

[44]Then he said to them, ‘This is what I was talking to you about when I was still with you. Everything written about me in the law of Moses, and in the prophets and the Psalms, had to be fulfilled.’ [45]Then he opened their minds to understand the Bible.

[46]‘This is what is written,’ he said. ‘The Messiah must suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, [47]and in his name repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, must be announced to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. [48]You are the witnesses for all this. [49]Now, look: I’m sending upon you what my father has promised. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.’

[50]Then he took them out as far as Bethany, and lifted up his hands and blessed them. [51]As he was blessing them, he was separated from them and carried into heaven.

[52]They worshipped him, and went back to Jerusalem in great joy. [53]They spent all their time in the Temple, praising God.

John

People used to say that John gave us the 'divine' Jesus while the other gospels gave us the 'human' Jesus. But this is clearly wrong, since the others also see Jesus as embodying the one God, and John sees Jesus weeping, troubled in spirit, thirsting and dying, and, still more importantly, playing the role in the divine purposes that was marked out for *humans* from the start. Perhaps a better way to express the difference might be to say that John has put into the first paragraph of his book what the others want their readers to work out step by step.

Certainly John's first paragraph (1.1–18) is one of the most visionary short pieces in the whole history of Christian writing. 'In the beginning was the Word . . . and the Word became flesh.' What does John think he is doing?

He is writing a new Genesis. His whole book is about how the world's creator has come at last to remake that world: chapter 20 is about Jesus' resurrection, but every sentence breathes the life of 'the first day of the week', the start of new creation. But if John's Prologue is a new Genesis 1, then the equivalent of the climax of that great chapter, the creation of humans in the divine image, is precisely the Word becoming flesh. John 1.14 corresponds to Genesis 1.26–28: the one through whom the world was made now becoming the one through whom the world is rescued and remade. This theme runs throughout the gospel, reaching its own climax in 19.5 when Pilate declares 'Here's the man!'

But John is also writing a new Exodus – and this provides the other major clue to his book. Moses led the people out of Egypt and gave them the Torah, to prepare them for God coming in person to dwell with them, in the Tabernacle, and lead them to their inheritance. Now 'the Word became flesh and [literally] "tabernacled in our midst"' (1.14). Jesus is the place where the one God has come to dwell among us and to reveal his true glory. The whole gospel resonates with this Temple-theme, reaching a climax in the 'Farewell Discourses' (chapters 13—17) when Jesus' followers, too, become Temple-people by the promise of the indwelling spirit.

John's gospel divides neatly into two. The first twelve chapters offer a mixture of 'signs' and discourses; the two go together, leading the eye up to the raising of Lazarus in chapter 11 and then the dramatic statement of purpose in chapter 12: Jesus, going to the cross, is going to pass judgment on the 'ruler of the world' and rescue the captives from all the nations (12.23–33). This then leads to the second half, which opens with a statement as important as the Prologue itself: Jesus 'had always loved his own people in the world; now he loved them right through to the end' (13.1). The divine glory and the divine love turn out to be two ways of saying the same thing. Jesus explains to his disciples what it all means, how they in turn must be people of love and unity; then he goes to face 'the ruler of the world' and bear witness to the reality of God's kingdom, the real truth, and the ultimate power (18.33—19.16). Jesus' last words, 'It's all done' (19.30), echo the 'finished' of Genesis 2.1–2. Creation has been rescued. New creation can now begin.

Nobody knows when John's gospel was written. Scholars have suggested dates as late as AD 120 and as early as the middle 30s. It doesn't matter. The revelation of divine love and glory in the true Man, Jesus, continues to evoke faith and life, as John intended that it should (20.31).

The Word made flesh

1 In the beginning was the Word. The Word was close beside God, and the Word was God. [2]In the beginning, he was close beside God.

[3]All things came into existence through him; not one thing that exists came into existence without him. [4]Life was in him, and this life was the light of the human race. [5]The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

[6]There was a man called John, who was sent from God. [7]He came as evidence, to give evidence about the light, so that everyone might believe through him. [8]He was not himself the light, but he came to give evidence about the light.

[9]The true light, which gives light to every human being, was coming into the world. [10]He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world did not know him. [11]He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. [12]But to anyone who did accept him, he gave the right to become God's children; yes, to anyone who believed in his name. [13]They were not born from blood, or from fleshly desire, or from the intention of a man, but from God.

[14]And the Word became flesh, and lived among us. We gazed upon his glory, glory like that of the father's only son, full of grace and truth.

[15]John gave evidence about him, loud and clear.

'This is the one', he said, 'that I was speaking about when I told you, "The one who comes after me ranks ahead of me, because he was before me."'

[16]Yes; it's out of his fullness that we have all received, grace indeed on top of grace. [17]The law, you see, was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus the Messiah. [18]Nobody has ever seen God. The only-begotten God, who is intimately close to the father – he has brought him to light.

The evidence of John

[19]This is the evidence John gave, when the Judaeans sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?'

[20]He was quite open about it; he didn't try to deny it. He said, quite openly, 'I am not the Messiah.'

[21]'What then?' they asked. 'Are you Elijah?'

'No, I'm not,' he replied.

'Are you the Prophet?'

'No.'

[22]‘Well, then, who *are* you?’ they said. ‘We’ve got to take some kind of answer back to the people who sent us. Who do you claim to be?’
[23]‘I’m a voice calling in the desert,’ he said, ‘“Straighten out the road for the master!”’ – just as the prophet Isaiah said.
[24]The people who had been sent were from the Pharisees. [25]They continued to question him.
‘So why are you baptizing’, they asked, ‘if you aren’t the Messiah, or Elijah, or the Prophet?’
[26]‘I’m baptizing with water,’ John replied. ‘But there is someone standing among you that you don’t know, [27]someone who is to come after me. I’m not good enough to undo his sandal-strap.’
[28]This took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

The lamb and the spirit

[29]The next day, John saw Jesus coming towards him.
‘Look!’ he said. ‘There’s God’s lamb! He’s the one who takes away the world’s sin! [30]He’s the one I was speaking about when I said, “There’s a man coming after me who ranks ahead of me, because he was before me!” [31]I didn’t know who it would be, but this was the reason I came to baptize with water – so that he could be revealed to Israel.’
[32]So John gave this evidence: ‘I saw the spirit coming down like a dove out of heaven and remaining on him. [33]I didn’t know who it would be; but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, “When you see the spirit coming down and resting on someone, that’s the person who will baptize with the holy spirit.” [34]Well, that’s what I saw, and I’ve given you my evidence: he is the son of God.’

The first disciples

[35]The following day John was again standing there, with two of his disciples. [36]He saw Jesus walking by, and said, ‘Look! There goes God’s lamb!’
[37]The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.
[38]Jesus turned and saw them following him.
‘What do you want?’ he asked.
‘Rabbi,’ they said (the word means ‘teacher’), ‘where are you staying?’
[39]‘Come and see,’ he replied.
So they came, and saw where he was staying, and stayed with him that day. It was late in the afternoon.
[40]One of the two who heard what John said and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. [41]The first person he found was his own brother Simon.
‘We’ve found the Messiah!’ he said (that means ‘the anointed one’, like our word ‘Christ’). [42]He brought him to Jesus.
Jesus looked at him.
‘So,’ he said, ‘you’re Simon, John’s son, are you? We’d better call you Cephas!’ (That means ‘the Rock’, like our word ‘Peter’.)

Philip and Nathanael

[43]The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee, where he found Philip.
‘Follow me,’ he said to him.
[44]Philip came from Bethsaida, the town where Andrew and Peter hailed from. [45]Philip found Nathanael.
‘We’ve found him!’ he said. ‘The one Moses wrote about in the law! And the prophets, too! We’ve found him! It’s Jesus, Joseph’s son, from Nazareth!’
[46]‘Really?’ replied Nathanael. ‘Are you telling me that something good can come out of Nazareth?’
‘Come and see,’ replied Philip.
[47]Jesus saw Nathanael coming towards him.
‘Here he comes,’ he said. ‘Look at him! He’s a real Israelite. Genuine through and through.’
[48]‘How did you get to know me?’ asked Nathanael.
‘Oh,’ replied Jesus, ‘I saw you under the fig tree, before Philip spoke to you.’
[49]‘Rabbi,’ replied Nathanael, ‘you’re the son of God! You’re the king of Israel!’
[50]‘Wait a minute,’ said Jesus. ‘Are you telling me that you believe just because I told you I saw you under the fig tree? You’ll see a lot more than that!
[51]‘In fact,’ he went on, ‘I’m telling you the solemn truth. You’ll see heaven opened, and God’s angels going up and down upon the son of man.’

Water into wine

2 On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there, [2]and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding.
[3]The wine ran out.
Jesus’ mother came over to him.
‘They haven’t got any wine!’ she said.
[4]‘Oh, Mother!’ replied Jesus. ‘What’s that got to do with you and me? My time hasn’t come yet.’

[5]His mother spoke to the servants.
'Do whatever he tells you,' she said.
[6]Six stone water-jars were standing there, ready for use in the Jewish purification rites. Each held about twenty or thirty gallons.
[7]'Fill the jars with water,' said Jesus to the servants. And they filled them, right up to the brim.
[8]'Now draw some out', he said, 'and take it to the chief steward.' They did so.
[9]When the chief steward tasted the water that had turned into wine (he didn't know where it had come from, but the servants who had drawn the water knew), he called the bridegroom.
[10]'What everybody normally does', he said, 'is to serve the good wine first, and then the worse stuff when people have had plenty to drink. But you've kept the good wine till now!'
[11]This event, in Cana of Galilee, was the first of Jesus' signs. He displayed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.
[12]After this, he went down to Capernaum, with his mother, his brothers and his disciples. He remained there for a few days.

Jesus in the Temple

[13]It was nearly time for the Judaean Passover, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.
[14]In the Temple he found people selling cows, sheep and doves, and the money-changers sitting there. [15]He made a whip out of cords and drove them all out of the Temple, sheep, cows and all. He spilt the money-changers' coins onto the ground, and knocked over their tables.
[16]'Take these things away!' he said to the people selling doves. 'You mustn't turn my father's house into a market!'
[17]His disciples remembered that it was written, 'The zeal of your house has eaten me up.'
[18]The Judaeans had this response for him.
'What sign are you going to show us', they said, 'to explain why you're doing this?'
[19]'Destroy this Temple,' replied Jesus, 'and I'll raise it up in three days.'
[20]'It's taken forty-six years to build this Temple,' responded the Judaeans, 'and are you going to raise it up in three days?'
[21]But he was speaking about the 'temple' of his body. [22]So when he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Bible and the word which Jesus had spoken.
[23]While he was in Jerusalem during the Passover festival, several people came to trust in his name, because they had seen the signs he did. [24]But Jesus didn't entrust himself to them. He knew everything, [25]and had no need for anyone to give him information about people. He himself knew what was inside people.

Jesus and Nicodemus

3 There was a man of the Pharisees called Nicodemus, a ruler of the Judaeans. [2]He came to Jesus by night.
'Rabbi,' he said to him. 'We know that you're a teacher who's come from God. Nobody can do these signs that you're doing, unless God is with him.'
[3]'Let me tell you the solemn truth,' replied Jesus. 'Unless someone has been born from above, they won't be able to see God's kingdom.'
[4]'How can someone possibly be born', asked Nicodemus, 'when they're old? You're not telling me they can go back a second time into the mother's womb and be born, are you?'
[5]'I'm telling you the solemn truth,' replied Jesus. 'Unless someone is born from water and spirit, they can't enter God's kingdom. [6]Flesh is born from flesh, but spirit is born from spirit. [7]Don't be surprised that I said to you, You must be born from above. [8]The wind blows where it wants to, and you hear the sound it makes; but you don't know where it's coming from or where it's going to. That's what it's like with someone who is born from the spirit.'
[9]'How can this be so?' asked Nicodemus.
[10]'Well, well!' replied Jesus. 'You're a teacher of Israel, and yet you don't know about all this? [11]I'm telling you the solemn truth: we're talking about things we know about. We're giving evidence about things we've seen. But you won't admit our evidence. [12]If I told you earthly things and you don't believe, how will it be if I tell you heavenly things? Are you going to believe then? [13]And nobody has gone up into heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the son of man.'

The snake and the love of God

[14]'So, just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, in the same way the son of man must be lifted up, [15]so that everyone who believes in him may share in the life of God's new age. [16]This, you see, is how much God loved the world: enough to give his only, special son, so that everyone who believes in him should not be lost but should share in the life of God's new age. [17]After all, God didn't send the son into the world to condemn the world, but so that the world could be saved by him.
[18]'Anyone who believes in him is not condemned. But anyone who doesn't believe is condemned already, because they didn't believe in the name of God's only, special son. [19]And this is the condemnation: that light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light, because what they were doing was evil. [20]For everyone who does evil hates the light; people like that don't come to the light, in case their deeds get shown up and reproved. [21]But people who do the truth come to the light, so that it can become clear that what they have done has been done in God.'

The bridegroom and his friend

[22]After this, Jesus and his disciples went into the countryside of Judaea, and he stayed there with them and baptized. [23]John, too, was baptizing at Aenon, close to Salim. There was plenty of water there, and people came to him and were baptized. [24]This, of course, was before John had been put into prison.

[25]There was, perhaps inevitably, a dispute between the disciples of John and a Judaean, on the subject of purification. [26]They came to John.

'Rabbi,' they said. 'Remember the man who was with you beyond the Jordan, the one you gave evidence about? Well, look! He's baptizing, and everyone's going to him!'

[27]'Nobody can receive anything unless heaven first gives it,' replied John. [28]'You yourselves can bear me out that I said I wasn't the Messiah, but that I was sent ahead of him. [29]It's the bridegroom who gets the bride. The bridegroom's friend, who stands nearby and hears him, is very, very happy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. So, you see, my joy is now complete. [30]He must increase, but I must decrease.'

[31]The one who comes from above is over everything. The one who is from the earth has an earthly character, and what he says has 'earth' written all over it. The one who comes from heaven is above all. [32]He gives evidence about what he has heard and seen, and nobody accepts his evidence. [33]The one who does accept his evidence has put his signature to the fact that God is true. [34]The one God sent, you see, speaks God's words, because he gives the spirit lavishly. [35]The father loves the son and has given everything into his hand. [36]Anyone who believes in the son shares in the life of God's new age. Anyone who doesn't believe in the son won't see life, but God's wrath rests on him.

The woman of Samaria

4 So when Jesus knew that the Pharisees had heard that he was making more disciples than John, and was baptizing them [2](Jesus himself didn't baptize people; it was his disciples who were doing it), [3]he left Judaea and went back to Galilee.

[4]He had to go through Samaria, [5]and he came to a town in Samaria named Sychar. It was near the place which Jacob gave to his son Joseph. [6]Jacob's well was there. So Jesus, tired from the journey, sat down there by the well. It was about midday.

[7]A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus spoke to her.

'Give me a drink,' he said. [8](The disciples had gone off into the town to buy food.)

[9]'What!' said the Samaritan woman. 'You, a Jew, asking for a drink from me, a woman, and a Samaritan at that?' (Jews, you see, don't have any dealings with Samaritans.)

[10]'If only you'd known God's gift,' replied Jesus, 'and who it is that's saying to you, "Give me a drink", you'd have asked him, and he would have given you living water.'

[11]'But sir,' replied the woman, 'you haven't got a bucket! And the well's deep! So how were you thinking of getting living water? [12]Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself, with his sons and his animals?'

[13]'Everyone who drinks this water', Jesus replied, 'will get thirsty again. [14]But anyone who drinks the water I'll give them won't ever be thirsty again. No: the water I'll give them will become a spring of water welling up to the life of God's new age.'

[15]'Sir,' the woman said, 'give me this water! Then I won't be thirsty any more, and I won't have to come here to draw from the well.'

Jesus and the woman

[16]'Well then,' said Jesus to the woman, 'go and call your husband and come here.'

[17]'I haven't got a husband,' replied the woman.

'You're telling me you haven't got a husband!' replied Jesus. [18]'The fact is, you've had five husbands, and the one you've got now isn't your husband. You were speaking the truth!'

[19]'Well, sir,' replied the woman, 'I can see you're a prophet . . . [20]Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain. And you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.'

[21]'Believe me, woman,' replied Jesus, 'the time is coming when you won't worship the father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. [22]You worship what you don't know. We worship what we do know; salvation, you see, is indeed from the Jews. [23]But the time is coming – indeed, it's here already! – when true worshippers will worship the father in spirit and in truth. Yes; that's the kind of worshippers the father is looking for. [24]God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.'

[25]'I know that Messiah is coming,' said the woman, 'the one they call "the anointed". When he comes, he'll tell us everything.'

[26]'I'm the one – the one speaking to you right now,' said Jesus.

Sower and reaper rejoice together

[27]Just then Jesus' disciples came up. They were astonished that he was talking with a woman; but nobody said 'What did you want?' or 'Why were you talking with her?' [28]So the woman left her water-jar, went into the town and spoke to the people.

[29]'Come on!' she said. 'Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! You don't think he can be the Messiah, do you?'

[30]So they left the town and were coming out to him.

[31]Meanwhile the disciples were nagging him.

'Come on, rabbi!' they were saying. 'You must have something to eat!'

[32]'I've got food to eat that you know nothing about,' he said.

[33]'Nobody's brought him anything to eat, have they?' said the disciples to one another.

[34]‘My food’, replied Jesus, ‘is to do the will of the one who sent me, and to finish his work! [35]Don’t you have a saying, “Another four months, then comes harvest”? Well, let me tell you, raise your eyes and see! The fields are white! It’s harvest time already! [36]The reaper earns his pay, and gathers crops for the life of God’s coming age, so that sower and reaper can celebrate together. [37]This is where that saying comes true, “One sows, another reaps”. [38]I sent you to reap what you didn’t work for. Others did the hard work, and you’ve come into the results.’

[39]Several Samaritans from that town believed in Jesus because of what the woman said in evidence about him, ‘He told me everything I did.’ [40]So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them. And he stayed there two days.

[41]Many more believed because of what he said.

[42]‘We believe, too,’ they said to the woman, ‘but it’s no longer because of what you told us. We’ve heard him ourselves! We know that he really is the one! He’s the saviour of the world!’

The official’s son

[43]After the two days in Samaria, Jesus went off from there to Galilee. [44]Jesus himself gave evidence, after all, that a prophet isn’t honoured in his own country. [45]So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him. They had seen all the things he had done in Jerusalem at the festival, since they had been at the festival too.

[46]So he went once more to Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine.

There was a royal official in Capernaum whose son was ill. [47]He heard that Jesus had come from Judaea into Galilee, and he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, since he was at the point of death.

[48]‘Unless you see signs and miracles,’ replied Jesus, ‘you won’t ever believe.’

[49]‘Sir,’ replied the official, ‘come down before my child dies!’

[50]‘Off you go!’ said Jesus. ‘Your son will live!’

The man believed the word which Jesus had spoken to him, and he set off. [51]But while he was still on his way down to Capernaum, his servants met him with the news that his son was alive and well.

[52]So he asked them what time he had begun to get better.

‘Yesterday afternoon, about one o’clock,’ they said. ‘That’s when the fever left him.’

[53]So the father knew that it had happened at the very moment when Jesus had said to him, ‘Your son will live!’ He himself believed, and so did all his household.

[54]This was now the second sign Jesus did, when he came out of Judaea into Galilee.

The healing of the disabled man

5 After this there was a Jewish festival, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

[2]In Jerusalem, near the Sheep Gate, there is a pool which is called, in Hebrew, Bethesda. It has five porticoes, [3]where there were several sick people lying. They were blind, lame and paralysed.

[5]There was a man who had been there, in the same sick state, for thirty-eight years. [6]Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had been there a long time already.

‘Do you want to get well?’ he asked him.

[7]‘Well, sir,’ the sick man replied, ‘I don’t have anyone to put me into the pool when the water gets stirred up. While I’m on my way there, someone else gets down before me.’

[8]‘Get up,’ said Jesus, ‘pick up your mattress and walk!’

[9]At once the man was healed. He picked up his mattress and walked.

God’s son breaks the sabbath!

The day all this happened was a sabbath. [10]So the Judaeans confronted the man who had been healed.

‘It’s the sabbath!’ they said. ‘You shouldn’t be carrying your mattress!’

[11]‘Well,’ he replied, ‘the man who cured me told me to pick up my mattress and walk!’

[12]‘Oh, really?’ they said. ‘And who is this man, who told you to pick it up and walk?’

[13]But the man who’d been healed didn’t know who it was. Jesus had gone away, and the place was crowded.

[14]After this Jesus found the man in the Temple.

‘Look!’ he said. ‘You’re better again! Don’t sin any more, or something worse might happen to you!’

[15]The man went off and told the Judaeans that it was Jesus who had healed him. [16]This was why the Judaeans began to persecute Jesus, because he did these things on the sabbath.

[17]This was Jesus’ response to them.

‘My father’, he said, ‘is going on working, and so am I!’

[18]So for this reason the Judaeans were all the more eager to kill him, because he not only broke the sabbath, but spoke of God as his own father, making himself equal to God.

The coming judgment

[19]So Jesus made this response to them.

‘I’m telling you the solemn truth,’ he said. ‘The son can do nothing by himself. He can only do what he sees the father doing. Whatever the father does, the son does too, and in the same way. [20]The father loves the son, you see, and shows him all the things

that he's doing. Yes: he will show him even greater things than these, and that'll amaze you! [21]For, just as the father raises the dead and gives them life, in the same way the son gives life to anyone he chooses.

[22]'The father doesn't judge anyone, you see; he has handed over all judgment to the son, [23]so that everyone should honour the son just as they honour the father. Anyone who doesn't honour the son doesn't honour the father who sent him.

[24]'I'm telling you the solemn truth: anyone who hears my word, and believes in the one who sent me, has the life of God's coming age. Such a person won't come into judgment; they will have passed out of death into life. [25]I'm telling you the solemn truth: the time is coming – in fact, it's here already! – when the dead will hear the voice of God's son, and those who hear it will live. [26]You see, just as the father has life in himself, in the same way he has given the son the privilege of having life in himself. [27]He has even given him authority to pass judgment, because he is the son of man.

[28]'Don't be surprised at this. The time is coming, you see, when everyone in the tombs will hear his voice. [29]They will come out – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment.'

The evidence in support of Jesus

[30]'I can't do anything on my own authority,' Jesus went on. 'I judge on the basis of what I hear. And my judgment is just, because I'm not trying to carry out my own wishes, but the wishes of the one who sent me.

[31]'If I give evidence about myself, my evidence isn't true. [32]There is someone else who gives evidence about me, and I know that the evidence which he brings about me is true. [33]You sent messengers to John, and he gave evidence about the truth. [34]Not that I need evidence from human beings; but I'm saying this so that you may be saved.

[35]'John was a burning, bright lamp, and you were happy to celebrate in his light for a while. [36]But I have greater evidence on my side than that of John. The works which the father has given me to complete – these works, which I'm doing, will provide evidence about me, evidence that the father has sent me. [37]And the father who sent me has given evidence about me. You've never heard his voice; you've never seen his form. [38]What's more, you haven't got his word abiding in you, because you don't believe in the one he sent.'

Jesus and Moses

[39]'You study the Bible', Jesus continued, 'because you suppose that you'll discover the life of God's coming age in it. In fact, it's the Bible which gives evidence about me! [40]But you won't come to me so that you can have life.

[41]'I'm not accepting glory from human beings; [42]but I know that you haven't got the love of God within you. [43]I have come in the name of my father, and you won't receive me. If someone else comes in his own name, you will receive him! [44]How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another, and you're not looking for the glory which comes from the one and only God?

[45]'Don't think that I'm going to accuse you to the father. There is someone who accuses you: it's Moses, the one you've put your hope in! [46]You see, if you'd believed Moses, you would have believed me – because it was me he was writing about. [47]But if you don't believe his writings, how are you going to believe my words?'

Feeding the five thousand

6 After this Jesus went away to beside the sea of Galilee, that is, the sea of Tiberias. [2]A large crowd followed him, because they saw the signs he was doing in healing the sick. [3]Jesus went up into the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. [4]It was nearly time for the Passover, a Jewish festival.

[5]Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming to him.

'Where are we going to buy bread,' he said to Philip, 'so that they can have something to eat?' [6](He said this to test him. He himself knew what he intended to do.)

[7]'Even with six months' pay', replied Philip, 'you wouldn't be able to buy enough bread for each of them to have just a little!'

[8]One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, joined in.

[9]'There's a lad here', he said, 'who's got five barley loaves and two fish. But what use are they with this many people?'

[10]'Make the men sit down,' said Jesus.

There was a lot of grass where they were, so the men sat down, about five thousand in all. [11]So Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks and gave them to the people sitting down, and then did the same with the fish, as much as they wanted.

[12]When they were satisfied, he called the disciples.

'Collect up the bits and pieces left over,' he said, 'so that we don't lose anything.'

[13]So they collected it up, and filled twelve baskets with broken pieces of the five barley loaves left behind by the people who had eaten.

[14]When the people saw the sign that Jesus had done, they said, 'This really is the Prophet, the one who is to come into the world.' [15]So when Jesus realized that they were intending to come and seize him to make him king, he withdrew again, by himself, up the mountain.

Jesus walking on the water

[16]When it was evening, Jesus' disciples went down to the seashore. [17]They got into a boat, and went across the sea towards Capernaum. It was already getting dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. [18]A strong wind blew up, and the sea began to get rough. [19]They had been rowing for about three or four miles when they saw Jesus walking on the sea, coming towards the boat.

They were terrified.
[20]But he spoke to them.
'It's me!' he said. 'Don't be afraid!'
[21]Then they were eager to take him into the boat; and at once the boat arrived at the land they had been making for.
[22]The next day the crowd that had remained on the far side of the lake saw that there had only been the one boat there. They knew that Jesus hadn't gone with his disciples, but that the disciples had set off by themselves. [23]But other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. [24]When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and came to Capernaum looking for Jesus.
[25]When they found him beside the sea, they said to him, 'Rabbi, when did you come here?'

Bread from heaven

[26]This was Jesus' reply.
'I'm telling you the solemn truth,' he said. 'You aren't looking for me because you saw signs, but because you ate as much bread as you could. [27]You shouldn't be working for perishable food, but for food that will last to the life of God's coming age – the food which the son of man will give you, the person whom God the father has stamped with the seal of his approval.'
[28]'What should we be doing,' they asked him, 'so that we can be doing the work God wants?'
[29]'This is the work God wants of you,' replied Jesus, 'that you believe in the one he sent.'
[30]'Well, then,' they said to him, 'what sign are you going to do, so that we can see it and believe you? What work are *you* doing? [31]Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; it says in the Bible that "he gave them bread from heaven to eat".'
[32]'I'm telling you the solemn truth,' Jesus replied. 'It wasn't Moses who gave you the bread from heaven. It was my father who gave you the true bread from heaven. [33]God's bread, you see, is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.'
[34]'Master,' they said, 'give us this bread – give it to us always!'
[35]'I am the bread of life,' replied Jesus. 'Anyone who comes to me will never be hungry! Anyone who believes in me will never be thirsty!'

The father's will

[36]'But I told you', Jesus continued, 'that you have indeed seen me – and still you don't believe! [37]All that the father gives me will come to me; and I won't reject anyone who comes to me, [38]because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me. [39]And this is the will of the one who sent me, that I should lose nothing out of everything that he has given me, but that I should raise it up on the last day. [40]This is the will of my father, you see: that all who see the son and believe in him should have the life of God's coming age; and I will raise them up on the last day.'
[41]The Judaeans then grumbled about him because he had said, 'I am the bread which came down from heaven.'
[42]'Isn't this Jesus, Joseph's son?' they said. 'We know his father and mother, don't we? So how can he say "I came down from heaven"?'
[43]'Don't grumble among yourselves,' answered Jesus. [44]'No one can come to me unless the father who sent me draws them – and I will raise them up on the last day. [45]It is written in the prophets, "They shall all be taught by God." Everyone who listens to what comes from the father, and learns from it, comes to me. [46]Not that anyone has seen the father except the one who is from God; he has seen the father.'

Eating and drinking the son of man

[47]'I'm telling you the solemn truth,' Jesus went on. 'Anyone who believes in me has the life of God's coming age. [48]I am the bread of life. [49]Your ancestors in the wilderness ate the manna, and they died. [50]This is the bread which comes down from heaven, so that people can eat it and not die. [51]I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats from this bread, they will live for ever. And the bread which I shall give is my flesh, given for the life of the world.'
[52]This caused a squabble among the Judaeans.
'How can this fellow give us his flesh to eat?' they asked.
[53]'I'm telling you the solemn truth,' Jesus replied. 'If you don't eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, you have no life in yourselves. [54]Anyone who feasts upon my flesh and drinks my blood has the life of God's coming age, and I will raise them up on the last day. [55]My flesh is true food, you see, and my blood is true drink. [56]Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I remain in them. [57]Just as the living father sent me, and I live because of the father, so the one who eats me will live because of me. [58]This is the bread which came down from heaven; it isn't like the bread which the ancestors ate, and died. The one who eats this bread will share the life of God's new age.'
[59]He said this in the synagogue, while he was teaching in Capernaum.

Division among Jesus' followers

[60]When they heard this, many of Jesus' disciples said, 'This is difficult stuff! Who can bear to listen to it?'
[61]Jesus knew in himself that his disciples were grumbling about what he'd said.
'Does this put you off?' he said. [62]'What if you were to see the son of man ascending to where he was before? [63]It's the spirit

that gives life; the flesh is no help. The words that I have spoken to you – they are spirit, they are life. [64]But there are some of you who don't believe.'

Jesus knew from the beginning, you see, those who didn't believe, and the one who was going to betray him.

[65]'That's why I said', he went on, 'that no one can come to me unless it is given to them by the father.'

[66]From that time on, several of his disciples drew back, and no longer went about with him.

[67]Jesus turned to the Twelve.

'You don't want to go away too, do you?' he asked.

[68]Simon Peter spoke up.

'Master,' he said, 'who can we go to? You're the one who's got the words of the life of the coming age! [69]We've come to believe it – we've come to know it! – that you are God's holy one.'

[70]'Well,' replied Jesus, 'I chose you twelve, didn't I? And one of you is an accuser!'

[71]He was referring to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. He was one of the Twelve, and he was going to betray him.

Jesus and his brothers

7 After this, Jesus went about in Galilee. He didn't want to go about in Judaea, because the Judaeans were after his blood.

[2]The time came for the Jewish festival of Tabernacles. [3]So Jesus' brothers approached him.

'Leave this place', they said, 'and go to Judaea! Then your disciples will see the works you're doing. [4]Nobody who wants to become well known does things in secret. If you're doing these things, show yourself to the world!'

[5]Even his brothers, you see, didn't believe in him.

[6]'My time isn't here yet,' replied Jesus, 'but your time is always here. [7]The world can't hate you, but it hates me, because I am giving evidence against it, showing that its works are evil. [8]I tell you what: you go up to the feast. I'm not going up to this feast; my time is not yet complete.'

[9]With these words, he stayed behind in Galilee.

Disputes about Jesus

[10]But when Jesus' brothers had gone up to the festival, then he himself went up, not openly, but, so to speak, in secret. [11]The Judaeans were looking for him at the feast.

'Where is he?' they were saying.

[12]There was considerable dispute about him among the crowds.

'He's a good man!' some were saying.

'No, he isn't,' others would reply. 'He's deceiving the people!'

[13]But nobody dared speak about him openly, for fear of the Judaeans.

[14]About the middle of the feast, Jesus went up into the Temple and began to teach. [15]The Judaeans were astonished.

'Where does this fellow get all his learning from?' they asked. 'He's never been trained!'

[16]'My teaching isn't my own,' replied Jesus. 'It comes from the one who sent me! [17]If anyone wants to do what God wants, they will know whether this teaching is from God, or whether I'm just speaking on my own account. [18]Anyone who speaks on his own behalf is trying to establish his own reputation. But if what he's interested in is the reputation of the one who sent him, then he is true, and there is no injustice in him.'

Moses and the Messiah

[19]'Moses gave you the law, didn't he?' Jesus continued. 'But none of you obeys the law. Why are you wanting to kill me?'

[20]The crowd responded to this.

'You must have a demon inside you!' they said. 'Who is trying to kill you?'

[21]'Look here,' replied Jesus. 'I did one single thing, and you are all amazed. [22]Moses commanded you to practise circumcision (not that it starts with Moses, of course; it comes from the patriarchs), and you circumcise a man on the sabbath. [23]Well, then, if a man receives circumcision on the sabbath, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, how can you be angry with me if I make an entire man healthy on the sabbath? [24]Don't judge by appearances! Judge with proper and right judgment!'

[25]Some Jerusalem residents commented, 'Isn't this the man they're trying to kill? [26]Look – he's speaking quite openly, and nobody is saying anything to him. You don't suppose our rulers really know he's the Messiah, do you? [27]The thing is, we know where he comes from – but when the Messiah appears, nobody will know where he comes from.'

[28]As Jesus was teaching in the Temple, he shouted out, 'You know me! You know where I come from! I haven't come on my own behalf – but the one who sent me is true, and you don't know him! [29]I know him, because I come from him, and he sent me!'

[30]So they tried to arrest him. But nobody laid hands on him, because his time had not yet come.

Rivers of living water

[31]Many people from the crowd believed in Jesus.

'When the Messiah comes,' they were saying, 'will he do more signs than this man has done?'

[32]The Pharisees heard that the crowd was full of this rumour about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent servants to arrest him.

[33]So Jesus said, 'I'm just with you for a little while, and then I'm going to the one who sent me. [34]You will look for me and you

won't find me, and you can't come where I am.'
35'Where does he think he's going,' said the Judaeans to one another, 'if we won't be able to find him? He's not going to go off
abroad, among the Greeks, is he, and teach the Greeks? 36What does he mean when he says, "You'll look for me and you won't
find me", and "Where I am, you can't come"?'
37On the last day of the festival, the great final celebration, Jesus stood up and shouted out, 'If anybody's thirsty, they should
come to me and have a drink! 38Anyone who believes in me will have rivers of living water flowing out of their heart, just like the
Bible says!'
39He said this about the spirit, which people who believed in him were to receive. The spirit wasn't available yet, because Jesus
was not yet glorified.

Where does the Messiah come from?

40When they heard these words, some people in the crowd said, 'This man really is "the Prophet"!'
41'He's the Messiah!' said some others.
But some of them replied, 'The Messiah doesn't come from Galilee, does he? 42Doesn't the Bible say that the Messiah is
descended from David, and comes from Bethlehem, the city where David was?'
43So there was a division in the crowd because of him. 44Some of them wanted to arrest him, but nobody laid hands on him.
45So the servants went back to the chief priests and the Pharisees.
'Why didn't you get him?' they asked.
46'No man ever spoke like this!' the servants replied.
47'You don't mean to say you've been taken in too?' answered the Pharisees. 48'None of the rulers or the Pharisees have
believed in him, have they? 49But this rabble that doesn't know the law – a curse on them!'
50Nicodemus, who went to Jesus earlier, and who was one of their own number, spoke up.
51'Our law doesn't condemn a man, does it, unless first you hear his side of the story and find out what he's doing?'
52'Oh, so you're from Galilee too, are you?' they answered him. 'Check it out and see! No prophet ever rises up from Galilee!'

Adultery and hypocrisy

53They all went off home,
8 and Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. 2In the morning he went back to the Temple. All the people came to him, and he sat
down and taught them.
3The scribes and Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught out in adultery. They stood her out in the middle.
4'Teacher,' they said to him. 'This woman was caught in the very act of adultery. 5In the law, Moses commanded us to stone
people like this. What do you say?'
6They said this to test him, so that they could frame a charge against him.
Jesus squatted down and wrote with his finger on the ground. 7When they went on pressing the question, he got up and said to
them, 'Whichever of you is without sin should throw the first stone at her.'
8And once again he squatted down and wrote on the ground.
9When they heard that, they went off one by one, beginning with the oldest. Jesus was left alone, with the woman still standing
there.
10Jesus looked up.
'Where are they, woman?' he asked. 'Hasn't anybody condemned you?'
11'Nobody, sir,' she replied.
'Well, then,' said Jesus, 'I don't condemn you either! Off you go – and from now on don't sin again!'

The light of the world

12Jesus spoke to them again.
'I am the light of the world,' he said. 'People who follow me won't go around in the dark; they'll have the light of life!'
13'You're giving evidence in your own case!' said the Pharisees. 'Your evidence is false!'
14'Even if I do give evidence about myself,' replied Jesus to them, 'my evidence is true, because I know where I came from and
where I'm going to. But you don't know where I come from or where I'm going to. 15You are judging in merely human terms; I
don't judge anyone. 16But even if I do judge, my judgment is true, because I'm not a lone voice; I have on my side the father who
sent me. 17It is written in your law that the evidence of two people is true. 18I'm giving evidence about myself, and the father who
sent me is giving evidence about me.'
19'Where is your father?' they said to him.
'You don't know me,' replied Jesus, 'and you don't know my father! If you had known me, you would have known my father
as well.'
20He said all this in the treasury, while he was teaching in the Temple. Nobody arrested him, though, because his time hadn't
yet come.

From below or from above

[21]So Jesus spoke to them once more.
'I am going away,' he said. 'You will look for me, and you will die in your sin. You can't come where I'm going.'
[22]'Is he going to kill himself?' asked the Judaeans. 'Is that what he means when he says we can't come where he's going?'
[23]'You come from below,' Jesus said to them, 'but I come from above. You are from this world, I am not from this world. [24]I told you that you would die in your sins; you see, that's what will happen to you if you don't believe that I am the one.'
[25]'Who are you?' they asked.
'What I've been telling you from the beginning,' replied Jesus. [26]'There are plenty of things I could say about you, yes, and against you too! But the one who sent me is true, and I tell the world what I heard from him.'
[27]They didn't understand that he was talking about the father.
[28]So Jesus said to them, 'When you've lifted up the son of man, then you will know that I'm the one, and that I never act on my own initiative; I say exactly what the father taught me. [29]And the one who sent me is with me. He hasn't left me alone, because I always do what pleases him.'

The truth will make you free

[30]As Jesus said all this, several people believed in him.
[31]So Jesus spoke to the Judaeans who had believed in him.
'If you remain in my word,' he said, 'you will truly be my disciples, [32]and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.'
[33]'We are Abraham's descendants!' they replied. 'We've never been anyone's slaves! How can you say that "You'll become free"?'
[34]'I'm telling you the solemn truth,' Jesus replied. 'Everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin. [35]The slave doesn't live in the house for ever; the son lives there for ever. [36]So, you see, if the son makes you free, you will be truly free.'

Children of Abraham – or of the devil

[37]'I know you're Abraham's descendants,' Jesus went on. 'But you're trying to kill me, because my word doesn't find a place among you. [38]I am speaking of what I have seen with the father; and you, too, are doing what you heard from your father.'
[39]'Abraham is our father!' they replied.
'If you really were Abraham's children,' replied Jesus, 'you would do what Abraham did! [40]But now you're trying to kill me – me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God! That's not what Abraham did. [41]You're doing the works of *your* father.'
'There wasn't anything immoral about the way *we* were born!' they replied. 'We've got one father, and that's God!'
[42]'If God really was your father,' replied Jesus, 'you would love me, because I came from God, and here I am. I didn't come on my own initiative, you see, but he sent me. [43]Why don't you understand what I'm saying? It can only be because you can't hear my word. [44]You are from your father – the devil! And you're eager to get on with what he wants. He was a murderer from the beginning, and he's never remained in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells lies, he speaks what comes naturally to him, because he is a liar – in fact, he's the father of lies! [45]But because I speak the truth, you don't believe me. [46]Which of you can bring a charge of sin against me? If I speak the truth, why don't you believe me? [47]The one who is from God speaks God's words. That's why you don't listen, because you're not from God.'

Before Abraham, 'I Am'

[48]This was the Judaeans' response to Jesus.
'Haven't we been right all along,' they said, 'in saying you're a Samaritan, and that you've got a demon inside you?'
[49]'I haven't got a demon!' replied Jesus. 'I am honouring my father, and you are dishonouring me. [50]I'm not looking for my own glory; there is one who is looking after that, and he will be the judge. [51]I'm telling you the solemn truth: anyone who keeps my word will never, ever see death.'
[52]'Now we know that you really *have* got a demon!' replied the Judaeans. 'Look here: Abraham died! So did the prophets! And here are you, saying, "Anyone who keeps my word will never, ever taste death." [53]You're not suggesting, are you, that you're greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets! Who are you making yourself out to be?'
[54]'If I do give myself glory,' replied Jesus, 'my glory is nothing. My father is the one who brings me glory – the one you say is "our God"; [55]and you don't know him! I know him, though. If I were to say I didn't know him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him, and I keep his word. [56]Your father Abraham celebrated the fact that he would see my day. He saw it and was delighted.'
[57]'You're not yet fifty years old!' responded the Judaeans. 'Have you seen Abraham?'
[58]'I'm telling you the solemn truth,' replied Jesus. 'Before Abraham existed, I Am.'
[59]So they picked up stones to throw at him. But Jesus hid, and left the Temple.

The man born blind

9 As Jesus was going along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth.
[2]'Teacher,' his disciples asked him, 'whose sin was it that caused this man to be born blind? Did he sin, or did his

parents?'
[3]'He didn't sin,' replied Jesus, 'nor did his parents. It happened so that God's works could be seen in him. [4]We must work the works of the one who sent me as long as it's still daytime. The night is coming, and nobody can work then! [5]As long as I'm in the world, I'm the light of the world.'
[6]With these words, he spat on the ground, and made some mud out of his spittle. He spread the mud on the man's eyes.
[7]'Off you go', he said to him, 'and wash in the pool of Siloam' (which means 'sent'). So he went off and washed. When he came back, he could see.
[8]His neighbours, and the people who used to see him begging, remarked on this.
'Isn't this the man', they said, 'who used to sit here and beg?'
[9]'Yes, it's him!' said some of them.
'No, it isn't!' said some others. 'It's somebody like him.'
But the man himself spoke.
'Yes, it's me,' he said.
[10]'Well, then,' they said to him, 'how did your eyes get opened?'
[11]'It was the man called Jesus!' he replied. 'He made some mud, then he spread it on my eyes, and told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went, and washed, and I could see!'
[12]'Where is he?' they asked.
'I don't know,' he replied.

The blind man's parents

[13]They took the man who had been blind and brought him to the Pharisees. ([14]The day Jesus had made the mud, and opened his eyes, was a sabbath.) [15]So the Pharisees began to ask him again how he had come to see.
'He put some mud on my eyes,' he said, 'and I washed, and now I can see!'
[16]'The man can't be from God,' some of the Pharisees began to say. 'He doesn't keep the sabbath!'
'Well, but,' replied some of the others, 'how can a man who is a sinner do signs like these?'
And they were divided.
[17]So they spoke to the blind man again.
'What have you got to say about him?' they asked. 'He opened your eyes, after all.'
'He's a prophet,' he replied.
[18]The Judaeans didn't believe that he really had been blind and now could see. So they called the parents of the newly sighted man, [19]and put the question to them.
'Is this man really your son,' they asked, 'the one you say was born blind? How is it that he can now see?'
[20]'Well,' replied his parents, 'we know that he is indeed our son, and that he was born blind. [21]But we don't know how it is that he can now see, and we don't know who it was that opened his eyes. Ask him! He's grown up. He can speak for himself.'
[22]His parents said this because they were afraid of the Judaeans. The Judaeans, you see, had already decided that if anyone declared that Jesus was the Messiah, they should be put out of the synagogue. [23]That's why his parents said, 'He's grown up, so you should ask him.'

Is Jesus from God?

[24]So for the second time they called the man who had been blind.
'Give God the glory!' they said. 'We know that this man is a sinner.'
[25]'I don't know whether he's a sinner or not,' replied the man. 'All I know is this: I used to be blind, and now I can see.'
[26]'What did he do to you?' they asked. 'How did he open your eyes?'
[27]'I told you already,' replied the man, 'and you didn't listen. Why d'you want to hear it again? You don't want to become his disciples too, do you?'
[28]'You're his disciple,' they scoffed, 'but we are Moses's dis¬ciples. [29]We know that God spoke to Moses, but we don't know where this man comes from.'
[30]'Well, here's a fine thing!' replied the man. 'You don't know where he's from, and he opened my eyes! [31]We know that God doesn't listen to sinners; but if anyone is devout, and does his will, he listens to them. [32]It's never, ever been heard of before that someone should open the eyes of a person born blind. [33]If this man wasn't from God, he couldn't do anything.'
[34]'You were born in sin from top to toe,' they replied, 'and are *you* going to start teaching *us*?' And they threw him out.

Seeing and not seeing

[35]Jesus heard that they had thrown the man out. He found him and spoke to him.
'Do you believe in the son of man?' he asked.
[36]'Who is he, sir,' asked the man, 'so that I can believe in him?'
[37]'You have seen him,' replied Jesus. 'In fact, it's the person who's talking to you.'
[38]'Yes, sir,' said the man; 'I do believe.' And he worshipped him.
[39]'I came into the world for judgment,' said Jesus, 'so that those who can't see would see, and so that those who can see would become blind.'
[40]Some of the Pharisees were nearby, and they heard this.

‘So!’ they said. ‘We’re blind too, are we?’
41‘If you were blind,’ replied Jesus, ‘you wouldn’t be guilty of sin. But now, because you say, “We can see”, your sin remains.’

The good shepherd

10 ‘I’m telling you the solemn truth,’ said Jesus. ‘Anyone who doesn’t come into the sheepfold by the gate, but gets in by some other way, is a thief and a brigand. 2But the one who comes in through the gate is the sheep’s own shepherd. 3The doorkeeper will open up for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out. 4When he has brought out all that belong to him, he goes on ahead of them. The sheep follow him, because they know his voice. 5They won’t follow a stranger; instead, they will run away from him, because they don’t know the stranger’s voice.’
6Jesus spoke this parable to them, but they didn’t understand what it was he was saying to them.
7So he spoke to them again.
‘I’m telling you the solemn truth,’ he said. ‘I am the gate of the sheep. 8All the people who came before me were thieves and brigands, but the sheep didn’t listen to them. 9I am the gate. If anyone comes in by me, they will be safe, and will go in and out and find pasture. 10The thief only comes to steal, and kill, and destroy. I came so that they could have life – yes, and have it full to overflowing.’

The shepherd and the sheep

11‘I am the good shepherd,’ Jesus continued. ‘The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12But supposing there’s a hired servant, who isn’t himself the shepherd, and who doesn’t himself own the sheep. He will see the wolf coming, and leave the sheep, and run away. Then the wolf will snatch the sheep and scatter them. 13He’ll run away because he’s only a hired servant, and doesn’t care about the sheep.
14‘I am the good shepherd. I know my own sheep, and my own know me – 15just as the father knows me and I know the father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. 16And I have other sheep, too, which don’t belong to this sheepfold. I must bring them, too, and they will hear my voice. Then there will be one flock, and one shepherd.
17‘That’s why the father loves me, because I lay down my life, so that I can take it again. 18Nobody takes it from me; I lay it down of my own accord. I have the right to lay it down, and I have the right to receive it back again. This is the command I received from my father.’

The Messiah and the father

19So there was again a division among the Judaeans because of what Jesus had said.
20‘He’s demon-possessed!’ some were saying. ‘He’s raving mad! Why listen to him?’
21‘No,’ said some others, ‘that’s not how demon-possessed people talk. Anyway, how could a demon open a blind man’s eyes?’
22It was the Feast of the Dedication in Jerusalem. It was winter, 23and Jesus was walking in the Temple, in Solomon’s Porch. 24The Judaeans surrounded him.
‘How much longer are you going to keep us in suspense?’ they asked. ‘If you are the Messiah, say so out loud!’
25‘I told you,’ replied Jesus, ‘and you didn’t believe. The works which I’m doing in my father’s name give evidence about me. 26But you don’t believe, because you don’t belong to my sheep.
27‘My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. 28I give them the life of the coming age. They will never, ever perish, and nobody can snatch them out of my hand. 29My father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and nobody can snatch them out of my father’s hand. 30I and the father are one.’

Blasphemy!

31So the Judaeans once more picked up stones to stone him.
32‘I’ve shown you many fine deeds from the father,’ Jesus replied to them. ‘Which of these deeds are you stoning me for?’
33‘We’re not stoning you for good deeds,’ replied the Judaeans, ‘but because of blasphemy! Here you are, a mere man, and you’re making yourself into God!’
34‘It’s written in your law, isn’t it,’ replied Jesus to them, ‘“I said, you are gods?” 35Well, if the law calls people “gods”, people to whom God’s word came (and you can’t set the Bible aside), 36how can you accuse someone of blasphemy when the father has placed him apart and sent him into the world, and he says, “I am the son of God”?
37‘If I’m not doing the works of my father, don’t believe me. 38But if I am doing them, well – even if you don’t believe me, believe the works! That way you will know and grasp that the father is in me, and I am in the father.’
39So again they tried to arrest him. But Jesus managed to get away from them.
40He went off once more across the Jordan, to the place where John had been baptizing at the beginning, and he stayed there. 41Several people came to him.
‘John never did any signs,’ they said, ‘but everything that John said about this man was true.’
42And many believed in him there.

The death of Lazarus

11 There was a man in Bethany named Lazarus, and he became ill. Bethany was the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ([2]Thi
was the Mary who anointed the Lord with myrrh, and wiped his feet with her hair; Lazarus, who was ill, was her brother.)
[3]So the sisters sent messengers to Jesus.
'Master,' they said, 'the man you love is ill.'
[4]When Jesus got the message, he said, 'This illness won't lead to death. It's all about the glory of God! The son of God will be glorified through it.'
[5]Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. [6]So when he heard that he was ill, he stayed where he was, to begin with, for two days.
[7]Then, after that, he said to the disciples, 'Let's go back to Judaea.'
[8]'Teacher,' replied the disciples, 'the Judaeans were trying to stone you just now! Surely you don't want to go back *there*!'
[9]'There are twelve hours in the day, aren't there?' replied Jesus. 'If you walk in the day, you won't trip up, because you'll see the light of this world. [10]But if anyone walks in the night, they will trip up, because there is no light in them.'
[11]When he had said this, Jesus added: 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep. But I'm going to wake him up.'
[12]'Master,' replied the disciples, 'if he's asleep, he'll be all right.'
([13]They thought he was referring to ordinary sleep; but Jesus had in fact been speaking of his death.)
[14]Then Jesus spoke to them plainly.
'Lazarus', he said, 'is dead. [15]Actually, I'm glad I wasn't there, for your sakes; it will help your faith. But let's go to him.'
[16]Thomas, whose name was the Twin, addressed the other disciples.
'Let's go too,' he said. 'We may as well die with him.'

The resurrection and the life

[17]So when Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. [18]Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. [19]Many of the Judaeans had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother.
[20]When Martha heard that Jesus had arrived, she went to meet him. Mary, meanwhile, stayed sitting at home.
[21]'Master!' said Martha to Jesus. 'If only you'd been here! Then my brother wouldn't have died! [22]But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask him for.'
[23]'Your brother will rise again,' replied Jesus.
[24]'I know he'll rise again,' said Martha, 'in the resurrection on the last day.'
[25]'I am the resurrection and the life,' replied Jesus. 'Anyone who believes in me will live, even if they die. [26]And anyone who lives and believes in me will never, ever die. Do you believe this?'
[27]'Yes, Master,' she said. 'This is what I've come to believe: that you are the Messiah, the son of God, the one who was to come into the world.'

Jesus goes to the tomb

[28]With these words, Martha went back and called her sister Mary.
'The teacher has come,' she said to her privately, 'and he's asking for you.'
[29]When she heard that, she got up quickly and went to him. [30]Jesus hadn't yet got into the village. He was still in the place where Martha had met him.
[31]The Judaeans who were in the house with Mary, consoling her, saw her get up quickly and go out. They guessed that she was going to the tomb to weep there, and they followed her.
[32]When Mary came to where Jesus was, she saw him and fell down at his feet.
'Master!' she said. 'If only you'd been here, my brother wouldn't have died!'
[33]When Jesus saw her crying, and the Judaeans who had come with her crying, he was deeply stirred in his spirit, and very troubled.
[34]'Where have you laid him?' he asked.
'Master,' they said, 'come and see.'
[35]Jesus burst into tears.
[36]'Look,' said the Judaeans, 'see how much he loved him!'
[37]'Well, yes,' some of them said, 'but he opened the eyes of a blind man, didn't he? Couldn't he have done something to stop this fellow from dying?'

The raising of Lazarus

[38]Jesus was once again deeply troubled within himself. He came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was placed in front of it.
[39]'Take away the stone,' said Jesus.
'But, Master,' said Martha, the dead man's sister, 'there'll be a smell! It's the fourth day already!'
[40]'Didn't I tell you', said Jesus, 'that if you believed you would see God's glory?'
[41]So they took the stone away.
Jesus lifted up his eyes.
'Thank you, father,' he said, 'for hearing me! [42]I know you always hear me, but I've said this because of the crowd standing

around, so that they may believe that you sent me.'
[43]With these words, he gave a loud shout: 'Lazarus – come out!'
[44]And the dead man came out. He was tied up, hand and foot, with strips of linen, and his face was wrapped in a cloth.
'Untie him,' said Jesus, 'and let him go.'
[45]The result of all this was that several of the Judaeans who had come to Mary, and who had seen what he had done, believed in him. [46]But some of them went off to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

The plan of Caiaphas

[47]So the chief priests and the Pharisees called an assembly.
'What are we going to do?' they asked. 'This man is performing lots of signs. [48]If we let him go on like this, everyone is going to believe in him! Then the Romans will come and take away our holy place, and our nation!'
[49]But one of them, Caiaphas, the high priest that year, addressed them.
'You know nothing at all!' he said. [50]'You haven't worked it out! This is what's best for you: let one man die for the people, rather than the whole nation being wiped out.'
[51]He didn't say this of his own accord. Since he was high priest that year, it was a prophecy. It meant that Jesus would die for the nation; [52]and not only for the nation, but to gather into one the scattered children of God. [53]So from that day on they plotted how to kill him.
[54]So Jesus didn't go around openly any longer among the Judaeans. He went away from there to the region by the desert, to a town called Ephraim. He stayed there with the disciples.
[55]The time came for the Judaeans' Passover. Lots of people went up to Jerusalem from the countryside, before the Passover, to purify themselves. [56]They were looking for Jesus. As they stood there in the Temple, they were discussing him with one another.
'What d'you think?' they were saying. 'Do you suppose he won't come to the festival?'
[57]The chief priests and the Pharisees had given the order that if anyone knew where he was, they should tell them, so that they could arrest him.

Mary and her ointment

12 Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany. Lazarus was there, the man he had raised from the dead. [2]So they made a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was among the company at table with him.
[3]Then Mary took a pound of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She anointed Jesus' feet with it, and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the smell of the perfume.
[4]At this, Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was going to betray him), spoke up.
[5]'Why wasn't this ointment sold?' he asked. 'It would have fetched a year's wages! You could have given it to the poor!'
([6]He didn't say this because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief. He kept the common purse, and used to help himself to what was in it.)
[7]'Let her alone,' replied Jesus. 'She's been keeping it for the day of my burial! [8]You always have the poor with you, but you won't always have me.'

Jesus enters Jerusalem

[9]When the great crowd of Judaeans discovered that Jesus was there, they came to Bethany not just because of Jesus, but to see Lazarus, the one he had raised from the dead. [10]So the chief priests planned to kill Lazarus as well, [11]because many of the Judaeans were leaving their side on account of him, and were believing in Jesus.
[12]On the next day, the large crowd that had come up for the festival heard that Jesus had come to Jerusalem. [13]They took palm branches and went out to meet him.
'Hosanna!' they shouted. 'Welcome in the name of the Lord! Welcome to Israel's king!'
[14]Jesus found a little donkey and sat on it. As the Bible says,

> [15]Do not fear, daughter of Zion!
> Look! Your king is coming now;
> sitting on a donkey's colt.

[16]His disciples didn't understand this to begin with. But when Jesus was glorified, they remembered that these things had been written about him, and that these things had been done to him. [17]The crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb, and raised him from the dead, told their story. [18]That's why the crowd went out to meet him, because they heard that he had done this sign.
[19]The Pharisees conferred.
'You see?' they said to each other. 'It's impossible. There's nothing you can do. Look – the world has gone off after him!'

The seed must die

[20]Some Greeks had come up with all the others to worship at the festival. [21]They went to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee.

‘Sir,’ they said, ‘we would like to see Jesus.’
22Philip went and told Andrew, and Andrew and Philip went together to tell Jesus.
23‘The time has come,’ said Jesus in reply. ‘This is the moment for the son of man to be glorified. 24I’m telling you the solemn truth: unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains all by itself. If it dies, though, it will produce lots of fruit. 25If you love your life, you’ll lose it. If you hate your life in this world, you’ll keep it for the life of the coming age.
26‘If anyone serves me, they must follow me. Where I am, my servant will be too. If anyone serves me, the father will honour them.’

The hour has come

27‘Now my heart is troubled,’ Jesus went on. ‘What am I going to say? “Father, save me from this moment?” No! It was because of this that I came to this moment. 28Father, glorify your name!’
‘I have glorified it,’ came a voice from heaven, ‘and I will glorify it again.’
29‘That was thunder!’ said the crowd, standing there listening.
‘No,’ said others. ‘It was an angel, talking to him.’
30‘That voice came for your sake, not mine,’ replied Jesus. 31‘Now comes the judgment of this world! Now this world’s ruler is going to be thrown out! 32And when I’ve been lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself.’
33He said this in order to point to the kind of death he was going to die.
34So the crowd spoke to him again.
‘We heard in the law’, they said, ‘that the Messiah will last for ever. How can you say that the son of man must be lifted up? Who is this “son of man”?’
35‘The light is among you a little while longer,’ replied Jesus. ‘Keep walking while you have the light, in case the darkness overcomes you. People who walk in the dark don’t know where they’re going. 36While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may be children of light.’
With these words, Jesus went away and was hidden from them.

Glory and blindness

37They didn’t believe in him, even though he had done so many signs in front of their eyes. 38This was so that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled:

Lord, who believed the story we told?
Your powerful arm – who saw it unveiled?

39That’s why they couldn’t believe. As Isaiah again put it,

40He has caused their eyes to be blind,
and caused their hearts to be hard;
so they wouldn’t see with their eyes,
or understand with their hearts,
or turn, so that I could heal them.

41Isaiah said this because he saw his glory, and spoke about him.
42Even so, however, quite a few of the rulers did believe in him. But, because of the Pharisees, they didn’t declare their faith, for fear of being put out of the synagogue. 43This was because they loved the praise of other people more than the praise of God.

The final challenge

44‘Anyone who believes in me’, shouted Jesus in a loud voice, ‘doesn’t believe in me, but in the one who sent me! 45Anyone who sees me sees the one who sent me! 46I’ve come into the world as light, so that everyone who believes in me won’t need to stay in the dark.
47‘If anyone hears my words and doesn’t keep them, I’m not going to judge them. That wasn’t why I came. I came to save the world, not to judge it. 48Anyone who rejects me and doesn’t hold on to my words has a judge. The word which I have spoken will judge them on the last day.
49‘I haven’t spoken on my own authority. The father who sent me gave me his own command about what I should say and speak. 50And I know that his command is the life of the coming age. What I speak, then, is what the father has told me to speak.’

Washing the disciples’ feet

13 It was before the festival of Passover. Jesus knew that his time had come, the time for him to leave this world and go to the father. He had always loved his own people in the world; now he loved them right through to the end.
2It was supper-time. The devil had already put the idea of betraying him into the heart of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. 3Jesus knew that the father had given everything into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God. 4So he got up from the supper-table, took off his clothes, and wrapped a towel around himself. 5Then he poured water into a bowl, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel he was wrapped in.

[6]He came to Simon Peter.
'Master,' said Peter, 'what's this? You, washing my feet?'
[7]'You don't understand yet what I'm doing,' replied Jesus, 'but you'll know afterwards.'
[8]'I'm not going to have you washing my feet!' said Peter. 'Never!'
'If I don't wash you,' replied Jesus, 'you don't belong to me.'
[9]'All right then, Master,' said Simon Peter, 'but not only my feet – wash my hands and my head as well!'
[10]'Someone who has washed', said Jesus to him, 'doesn't need to wash again, except for their feet. They are clean all over. And you are clean – but not all of you.'
[11]Jesus knew, you see, who was going to betray him. That's why he said, 'You are not all clean.'

Like master, like servant

[12]So when he had washed their feet, he put on his clothes and sat down again.
'Do you know what I've done to you?' he asked. [13]'You call me "teacher", and "master", and you're right. That's what I am. [14]Well, then: if I, as your master and teacher, washed your feet just now, you should wash each other's feet. [15]I've given you a pattern, so that you can do things in the same way that I did to you.
[16]'I'm telling you the solemn truth,' he continued. 'The slave isn't greater than the master. People who are sent are not greater than the person who sends them. [17]If you know these things, God's blessing on you if you do them.
[18]'I'm not talking about all of you,' he went on. 'I know the ones I have chosen. What the Bible says has to come true: "The person who ate my bread lifted up his heel against me." [19]I'm telling you this now, before it happens, so that when it does happen you may believe that I am who I am. [20]I'm telling you the solemn truth: anyone who welcomes someone I send, welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me, welcomes the one who sent me.'

Judas goes out

[21]After saying this, Jesus was troubled in spirit. He told them why.
'I'm telling you the solemn truth,' he said. 'One of you will betray me.'
[22]The disciples looked at each other in shock, wondering who he could be talking about. [23]One of the disciples, the one Jesus specially loved, was reclining at table close beside him. [24]Simon Peter motioned to him to ask who it was he was talking about. [25]So, leaning back against Jesus' chest, he asked him, 'Who is it, Master?'
[26]'It's the one I'm going to give this piece of bread to', said Jesus, 'when I've dipped it in the dish.'
So he dipped the piece of bread, and gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. [27]After the bread, the satan entered into him.
'Do it quickly, won't you?' said Jesus to him.
[28]None of the others at the table knew what he meant. [29]Because Judas kept the common purse, some were thinking that he meant, 'Buy what we need for the festival', or that he was to give something to the poor.
[30]So when Judas had taken the bread, he went out at once. It was night.

Love one another

[31]When Judas had gone out, Jesus began to speak.
'Now the son of man is glorified!' he said. 'Now God is glorified in him! [32]And if God is glorified in him, God will glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. [33]Children, I'm only with you a little longer. You will look for me, and, as I said to the Judaeans that where I was going they couldn't come, so I'm saying the same to you now.
[34]'I'm giving you a new commandment, and it's this: love one another! Just as I have loved you, so you must love one another. [35]This is how everybody will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for each other.'
[36]Simon Peter spoke up.
'Master,' he said, 'where are you going?'
'Where I'm going', replied Jesus, 'you can't follow me just now. You will follow later, though.'
[37]'Master,' Peter replied, 'why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you!'
[38]'Will you really lay down your life for me?' smiled Jesus. 'I'm telling you the solemn truth: by the time the cock crows you will have disowned me three times.'

The way, the truth, the life

14 'Don't let your hearts be troubled,' Jesus continued. 'Trust God – and trust me, too! [2]There is plenty of room to live in my father's house. If that wasn't the case, I'd have told you, wouldn't I? I'm going to get a place ready for you! [3]And if I do go and get a place ready for you, I will come back and take you to be with me, so that you can be there, where I am. [4]And as to where I'm going – you know the way!'
[5]'Actually, Master,' said Thomas to him, 'we don't know where you're going, so how can we know the way?'
[6]'I am the way,' replied Jesus, 'and the truth and the life! Nobody comes to the father except through me. [7]If you had known me, you would have known my father. From now on you do know him! You have seen him.'
[8]'Just show us the father, then, Master,' said Philip to Jesus, 'and that'll be good enough for us!'
[9]'Have I been with you for such a long time, Philip,' replied Jesus, 'and still you don't know me? Anyone who has seen me has

seen the father! How can you say, “Show us the father”? [10]Don’t you believe that I am in the father, and the father is in me? The words I’m speaking to you, I’m not speaking on my own initiative. It’s the father, who lives within me, who is doing his own works. [11]You must trust me that I am in the father and the father is in me. If not, then trust because of all the things you’ve seen done.’

Another helper

[12]‘I’m telling you the solemn truth,’ Jesus continued. ‘Anyone who trusts in me will also do the works that I’m doing. In fact, they will do greater works than these, because I’m going to the father! [13]And whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, so that the father may be glorified in the son. [14]If you ask anything in my name, I will do it.

[15]‘If you love me,’ he went on, ‘you will keep my commands. [16]And I will ask the father, and he will give you another helper, to be with you for ever. [17]This other helper is the spirit of truth. The world can’t receive him, because it doesn’t see him or know him. But you know him, because he lives with you, and will be in you.

[18]‘I’m not going to leave you bereft. I am coming to you. [19]Not long from now, the world won’t see me any more; but you will see me. Because I live, you will live too. [20]On that day you will know that I am in my father, and you in me, and I in you.

[21]‘Anyone who has my commandments and keeps them – that’s the person who loves me. Anyone who loves me will be loved by my father, and I will love them and show myself to them.’

My peace I give to you

[22]Judas spoke up. (This was the other Judas, not Iscariot.)

‘Master,’ he said, ‘how will it be that you will show yourself to us and not to the world?’

[23]‘If anyone loves me,’ Jesus replied, ‘they will keep my word. My father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. [24]Anyone who doesn’t love me won’t keep my word. And the word which you hear isn’t mine. It comes from the father, who sent me.

[25]‘I’ve said all this to you while I’m here with you. [26]But the helper, the holy spirit, the one the father will send in my name, he will teach you everything. He will bring back to your mind everything I’ve said to you.

[27]‘I’m leaving you peace. I’m giving you my own peace. I don’t give gifts in the way the world does. Don’t let your hearts be troubled; don’t be fearful. [28]You heard that I said to you, “I’m going away, and I’m coming back to you.” If you loved me, you would be happy that I’m going to the father – because the father is greater than me. [29]And now I’ve told you before it happens, so that when it does happen, you may believe.

[30]‘I haven’t got much more to say to you. The ruler of the world is coming. He has nothing to do with me. [31]But all this is happening so that the world may know that I love the father, and that I’m doing what the father has told me to do.

‘Get up. Let’s be going.’

The true vine

15 ‘I am the true vine’, said Jesus, ‘and my father is the gardener. [2]He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn’t bear fruit; and he prunes every branch that does bear fruit, so that it can bear more fruit. [3]You are already clean. That’s because of the word that I’ve spoken to you.

[4]‘Remain in me, and I will remain in you! The branch can’t bear fruit by itself, but only if it remains in the vine. In the same way, you can’t bear fruit unless you remain in me. [5]I am the vine, you are the branches. People who remain in me, and I in them, are the ones who bear plenty of fruit. Without me, you see, you can’t do anything.

[6]‘If people don’t remain in me, they are thrown out, like a branch, and they wither. People collect the branches and put them on the fire, and they are burned. [7]If you remain in me, and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want, and it will happen for you. [8]My father is glorified in this: that you bear plenty of fruit, and so become my disciples.’

Obeying and loving

[9]‘As the father loved me,’ Jesus continued, ‘so I loved you. Remain in my love. [10]If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my father’s commands, and remain in his love. [11]I’ve said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and so that your joy may be full.

[12]‘This is my command: love one another, in the same way that I loved you. [13]No one has a love greater than this, to lay down your life for your friends. [14]You are my friends, if you do what I tell you. [15]I’m not calling you “servants” any longer; servants don’t know what their master is doing. But I’ve called you “friends”, because I’ve let you know everything I heard from my father.

[16]‘You didn’t choose me. I chose you, and I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. Then the father will give you whatever you ask in my name. [17]This is my command to you: love one another.’

If the world hates you

[18]‘If the world hates you,’ Jesus went on, ‘know that it hated me before it hated you. [19]If you were from the world, the world would be fond of its own. But the world hates you for this reason: that you’re not from the world. No: I chose you out of the world.

[20]‘Remember the word that I said to you: servants are not greater than their masters. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you too. If they kept my word, they will keep yours too. [21]But they will do all these things to you because of my name, because they don’t know the one who sent me.
[22]‘If I hadn’t come and spoken to them, they wouldn’t be guilty of sin. But now they have no excuse for their sin. [23](Anyone who hates me, hates my father as well!) [24]If I hadn’t done, there in the middle of them, the works which nobody else did, they wouldn’t be guilty of sin. But now they have seen me, and my father – and they’ve hated us both! [25]All this has happened, however, so that the word written in their law might be fulfilled: “They hated me for no reason.”
[26]‘When the helper comes – the one I shall send you from the father, the spirit of truth who comes from the father – he will give evidence about me. [27]And you will give evidence as well, because you have been with me from the start.’

The spirit and the world

16 ‘I’ve said these things to you’, Jesus went on, ‘to stop you from being tripped up. [2]They will put you out of the synagogues. In fact, the time is coming when anyone who kills you will suppose that they are in that way offering worship to God. [3]They will do these things because they haven’t known the father, or me. [4]But I have been talking to you about these things so that, when their time comes, you will remember that I told you about them.
‘I didn’t say these things to you from the start, because I was with you. [5]But now I’m going to the one who sent me. None of you asks me, “Where are you going?” [6]But because I’ve said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. [7]However, it’s the truth that I’m telling you: it’s better for you that I should go away. If I don’t go away, you see, the helper won’t come to you. But if I go away, I will send him to you.
[8]‘When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong on three counts: sin, justice and judgment. [9]In relation to sin – because they don’t believe in me. [10]In relation to justice – because I’m going to the father, and you won’t see me any more. [11]In relation to judgment – because the ruler of this world is judged.’

Your hearts will rejoice

[12]‘There are many things I still have to say to you,’ Jesus continued, ‘but you’re not yet strong enough to take them. [13]When the spirit of truth comes, though, he will guide you in all the truth. He won’t speak on his own account, you see, but he will speak whatever he hears. He will announce to you what’s to come. [14]He will glorify me, because he will take what belongs to me and will announce it to you. [15]Everything that the father has is mine. That’s why I said that he would take what is mine and announce it to you.
[16]‘Not long from now, you won’t see me any more. Then again, not long after that, you will see me!’
[17]‘What’s he talking about?’ some of his disciples asked each other. ‘What’s this business about “not long from now, you won’t see me, and again not long after that you will see me”? And what’s this about “going to the father”?’
[18]They kept on saying it.
‘What is this “not long”?’
‘What’s it all about?’
‘We don’t know what he means!’
[19]Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him.
‘You’re discussing with each other what I meant, aren’t you?’ he said. ‘You want to know what I meant by saying, “Not long from now, you won’t see me; and then again, not long after that, you will see me.” That’s it, isn’t it? [20]Well, I’m going to tell you the solemn truth.
‘You will weep and wail, but the world will celebrate. You will be overcome with sorrow, but your sorrow will turn into joy. [21]When a woman is giving birth she is in anguish, because her moment has come. But when the child is born, she no longer remembers the suffering, because of the joy that a human being has been born into the world. [22]In the same way, you have sorrow now. But I shall see you again, and your hearts will celebrate, and nobody will take your joy away from you.’

Ask, and you will receive

[23]‘On that day,’ Jesus went on, ‘you won’t ask me for anything. I’m telling you the solemn truth: whatever you ask the father in my name, he will give you. [24]Up to now, you haven’t asked for anything in my name. Ask, and you will receive, so that your joy may be full!
[25]‘I’ve been saying all this to you in picture-language. The time is coming when I won’t speak in pictures any more. Instead, I’ll tell you about the father quite plainly. [26]On that day you will ask in my name. I won’t say I will ask the father on your behalf, [27]because the father himself loves you! That’s because you have loved me, and have believed that I came from God. [28]I came from the father, and I’ve come into the world. Now I’m leaving the world, and going back to the father.’
[29]‘Ah!’ said his disciples. ‘Now you’re speaking plainly! You’re not talking in pictures. [30]Now we know that you know all things, and you don’t need to have anybody ask you anything. This makes us trust that you came from God.’
[31]‘So you do now believe, do you?’ replied Jesus. [32]‘Look here: the time is coming (in fact, it’s now arrived!) when you will be scattered, each of you to his own place. You will leave me alone – though I’m not alone, because the father is with me. [33]I’ve said these things to you so that you can have peace in me. You’ll have trouble in the world. But cheer up! I have defeated the world!’

Glorify the son

17 After Jesus had said this, he lifted up his eyes to heaven.
'Father,' he said, 'the moment has come. Glorify your son, so that your son may glorify you. [2]Do this in the same way as you did when you gave him authority over all flesh, so that he could give the life of God's coming age to everyone you gave him. [3]And by "the life of God's coming age" I mean this: that they should know you, the only true God, and Jesus the Messiah, the one you sent.
[4]'I glorified you on earth, by completing the work you gave me to do. [5]So now, father, glorify me, alongside yourself, with the glory which I had with you before the world existed.
[6]'I revealed your name to the people you gave me out of the world. They belonged to you; you gave them to me; and they have kept your word. [7]Now they know that everything which you gave me comes from you. [8]I have given them the words you gave me, and they have received them. They have come to know, in truth, that I came from you. They have believed that you sent me.'

Jesus prays for his people

[9]'I'm praying for them. I'm not praying for the world, but for the people you've given me. They belong to you. [10]All mine are yours; all yours are mine; and I'm glorified in them.
[11]'I'm not in the world any longer, but they're still in the world; I'm coming to you. Holy father, keep them in your name, the name you've given to me, so that they may be one, just as we are one.
[12]'When I was with them, I kept them in your name, the name you've given me. I guarded them, and none of them has been destroyed (except the son of destruction; that's what the Bible said would happen). [13]But now I'm coming to you. I'm speaking these things in the world, so that they can have my joy fulfilled in them.
[14]'I have given them your word. The world hated them, because they are not from the world, just as I am not from the world. [15]I'm not asking that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil one. [16]They didn't come from the world, just as I didn't come from the world. [17]Set them apart for yourself in the truth; your word is truth. [18]Just as you sent me into the world, so I sent them into the world. [19]And on their account I set myself apart for you, so that they, too, may be set apart for you in the truth.'

That they may be one

[20]'I'm not praying simply for them. I'm praying, too, for the people who will come to believe in me because of their word. [21]I am praying that they may all be one – just as you, father, are in me, and I in you, that they too may be in us, so that the world may believe that you sent me.
[22]'I have given them the glory which you have given to me, so that they may be one, just as we are one. [23]I in them, and you in me; yes, they must be completely one, so that the world may know that you sent me, and that you loved them just as you loved me.
[24]'Father, I want the ones you've given me to be with me where I am. I want them to see my glory, the glory which you've given me, because you loved me before the foundation of the world.
[25]'Righteous father, even the world didn't know you. But I have known you, and these ones have known that you sent me. [26]I made your name known to them – yes, and I will make it known; so that the love with which you loved me may be in them, and I in them.'

The arrest of Jesus

18 With these words, Jesus went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden. He and his disciples went in.
[2]Judas, his betrayer, knew the place, because Jesus often used it as a meeting-place with his disciples. [3]So Judas took a band of soldiers, with some servants of the chief priests and the Pharisees, and came there with torches, lights and weapons.
[4]Jesus knew everything that was going to happen to him. He went out to meet them.
'Who are you looking for?' he asked.
[5]'Jesus of Nazareth,' they answered.
'I'm the one,' he said to them.
Judas, his betrayer, was standing there with them. [6]So when he said, 'I'm the one,' they went back a few paces, and fell down on the ground.
[7]Jesus repeated his question.
'Who are you looking for?' he asked.
'Jesus of Nazareth,' they said.
[8]'I told you, I'm the one!' said Jesus. 'So, if you're looking for me, let these people go.' ([9]He said this so as to fulfil the word he had spoken, when he said, 'I haven't lost any of the people you gave me.')
[10]Simon Peter had a sword. He drew it and hit the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.
[11]'Put your sword back in its sheath!' said Jesus to Peter. 'Do you imagine I'm not going to drink the cup my father has given me?'
[12]So the band of soldiers, with the officer and the Judaean attendants, arrested Jesus and tied him up. [13]They led him off first to Annas; he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. [14]It was Caiaphas who had given advice to the Judaeans that the best thing would be for one man to die for the people.

Peter denies Jesus

[15]Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. That other disciple was known to the high priest; he went in to the high priest's courtyard along with Jesus, [16]while Peter stood outside by the gate. So the other disciple, being known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the woman on the gate. Then he brought Peter inside.
[17]The woman on the gate spoke to Peter.
'You're not one of that man's disciples too, are you?' she asked.
'No, I'm not,' he replied.
[18]It was cold. The slaves and the attendants had made a charcoal fire, and they were standing round it, warming themselves. Peter was standing there with them and warming himself.
[19]The high priest asked Jesus about his disciples, and about his teaching.
[20]'I've spoken to the world quite openly,' replied Jesus. 'I always taught in the synagogue and in the Temple, where all the Judaeans gather. I didn't say anything in secret. [21]Why are you asking me? There were people who listened to me. Ask them what I said to them. Don't you see? They know what I said.'
[22]When Jesus said that, one of the attendants standing there gave him a slap on the face.
'Is that how you answer the high priest?' he said.
[23]'If I've said something wrong,' replied Jesus, 'give evidence about what was wrong with it. But if what I said was true, why are you hitting me?'
[24]So Annas sent him off, still tied up, to Caiaphas the high priest.
[25]Simon Peter, meanwhile, was standing there and warming himself.
'You're not one of his disciples, are you?' they asked him.
He denied it. 'No, I'm not,' he said.
[26]Then one of the high priest's slaves, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, spoke up.
'Didn't I see you in the garden with him?' he said.
[27]Peter denied it once more. Instantly, the cock crowed.

Pilate and the Judaeans

[28]So they took Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, the governor's residence. It was early in the morning. They didn't themselves go inside the Praetorium. They were anxious not to pollute themselves, so that they would still be able to eat the Passover.
[29]So Pilate went outside and spoke to them.
'What's the charge, then?' he asked. 'What have you got against this fellow?'
[30]'If he wasn't doing wicked things,' they replied, 'we wouldn't have handed him over to you.'
[31]'Take him yourselves,' said Pilate to them, 'and judge him by your own law.'
'We're not allowed to put anyone to death,' replied the Judaeans. [32](This was so that the word of Jesus might come true, when he had indicated what sort of death he was going to die.)

My kingdom is not from this world

[33]So Pilate went back in to the Praetorium and spoke to Jesus.
'Are you the King of the Jews?' he asked.
[34]'Was it *your* idea to ask that?' asked Jesus. 'Or did other people tell you about me?'
[35]'I'm not a Jew, am I?' retorted Pilate. 'Your own people, and the chief priests, have handed you over to me! What have you done?'
[36]'My kingdom isn't the sort that grows in this world,' replied Jesus. 'If my kingdom were from this world, my supporters would have fought, to stop me being handed over to the Judaeans. So then, my kingdom is not the sort that comes from here.'
[37]'So!' said Pilate. 'You *are* a king, are you?'
'You're the one who's calling me a king,' replied Jesus. 'I was born for this; I've come into the world for this: to give evidence about the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.'
[38]'Truth!' said Pilate. 'What's that?'
With those words, he went back out to the Judaeans.
'I find this man not guilty!' he said to them. [39]'But look here: you've got this custom that I should let someone free at Passover-time. So what about it? Would you like me to release "The King of the Jews"?'
[40]'No!' they shouted. 'We don't want him! Give us Barabbas!'
Now Barabbas was a brigand.

Here's the man!

19 So Pilate then took Jesus and had him flogged. [2]The soldiers wove a crown of thorns, put it on his head, and dressed him up in a purple robe. [3]Then they came up to him and said, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' And they slapped him.
[4]Pilate went out again.
'Look,' he said to them, 'I'm bringing him out to you, so that you'll know I find no guilt in him.'
[5]So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple cloak.

‘Look!’ said Pilate. ‘Here’s the man!’
[6]So when the chief priests and their attendants saw him, they gave a great shout.
‘Crucify him!’ they yelled. ‘Crucify him!’
‘Take him yourselves and crucify him!’ said Pilate. ‘I find him not guilty!’
[7]‘We’ve got a law,’ replied the Judaeans, ‘and according to that law he deserves to die! He made himself the son of God!’

No king but Caesar

[8]When Pilate heard that, he was all the more afraid. [9]He went back into the Praetorium and spoke to Jesus.
‘Where do you come from?’ he asked.
But Jesus gave him no answer.
[10]So Pilate addressed him again.
‘Aren’t you going to speak to me?’ he said. ‘Don’t you know that I have the authority to let you go, and the authority to crucify you?’
[11]‘You couldn’t have any authority at all over me’, replied Jesus, ‘unless it was given to you from above. That’s why the person who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.’
[12]From that moment on, Pilate tried to let him go.
But the Judaeans shouted at him.
‘If you let this fellow go,’ they said, ‘you are no friend of Caesar! Everyone who sets himself up as a king is speaking against Caesar!’
[13]So when Pilate heard them saying that, he brought Jesus out and sat down at the official judgment seat, called The Pavement (in Hebrew, ‘Gabbatha’). [14]It was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and it was about midday.
‘Look,’ said Pilate, ‘here is your king!’
[15]‘Take him away!’ they shouted. ‘Take him away! Crucify him!’
‘Do you want me to crucify your king?’ asked Pilate.
‘We have no king’, the chief priests replied, ‘except Caesar!’
[16]Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

The King of the Jews

So they took Jesus away. [17]He carried his own cross, and went to the spot called ‘Skull Place’ (in Hebrew, ‘Golgotha’). [18]That was where they crucified him. They also crucified two others, one on either side of him, with Jesus in the middle.
[19]Pilate wrote a notice and had it placed on the cross:

JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS

[20]Lots of the Judaeans read this notice, because the place where Jesus was crucified was close to the city. It was written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek.
[21]So the chief priests said to Pilate, ‘Don’t write “The King of the Jews”! Write that he *said,* “I am the King of the Jews”!’
[22]‘What I’ve written,’ replied Pilate, ‘I’ve written.’
[23]When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, giving each soldier one part. When they came to his tunic, they found that it was a single piece of cloth, woven from top to bottom.
[24]‘Let’s not tear it,’ they said to each other. ‘Let’s throw lots for it, to see who’s going to have it.’
This was so that the Bible would be fulfilled, when it says,

They took my clothes and divided them up,
they threw the dice to decide on my garments.

And that’s what the soldiers did.

The death of Jesus

[25]Jesus’ mother was standing beside his cross. So was her sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, with Mary Magdalene too. [26]Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple he specially loved, standing there.
‘Mother,’ he said. ‘Look! there’s your son.’
[27]Then he spoke to the disciple.
‘Look!’ he said. ‘There’s your mother.’
From that time, the disciple welcomed her into his own home.
[28]After this, Jesus knew that everything had at last been completed.
‘I’m thirsty,’ he said (fulfilling what the Bible had said).
[29]There was a jar there full of sour wine. So they put a sponge filled with the sour wine on a hyssop rod and lifted it to his mouth. [30]Jesus drank it.
‘It’s all done!’ he said.
Then he let his head drop, and gave up his spirit.

Blood and water

[31]It was the day of Preparation. The coming sabbath was a very special one, and the Judaeans were anxious that the bodies should not remain on the cross during the sabbath. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken, and their bodies taken away.
[32]So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the men who were crucified with Jesus, first the one, then the other. [33]But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they didn't break his legs. [34]Instead, one of the soldiers thrust a spear into his side, and blood and water came out. [35](The one who saw it is giving evidence, and his evidence is true. He knows he's speaking the truth, so that you too may believe.) [36]These things, you see, came about so that the Bible might come true: 'No bone of his will be broken.' [37]And, again, another passage in the Bible says, 'They shall look on the one whom they pierced.'

The burial of Jesus

[38]After this, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate if he could take Jesus' body away. He was a disciple of Jesus, but he kept it secret because he was afraid of the Judaeans. Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took his body. [39]Nicodemus came too (the man who, at first, had visited Jesus by night). He brought a concoction of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds in weight. [40]They took Jesus' body, and wrapped it up in cloths with the spices, according to the normal Judaean burial custom.
[41]There was a garden in the place where he was crucified. In the garden, there was a new tomb in which nobody had ever been buried. [42]So, because the tomb was nearby, and because of the Judaean day of Preparation, they buried Jesus there.

The empty tomb

20 On the first day of the week, very early, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb while it was still dark.
She saw that the stone had been rolled away from the tomb. [2]So she ran off, and went to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, the one Jesus loved.
'They've taken the master out of the tomb!' she said. 'We don't know where they've put him!'
[3]So Peter and the other disciple set off and went to the tomb. [4]Both of them ran together. The other disciple ran faster than Peter, and got to the tomb first. [5]He stooped down and saw the linen cloths lying there, but he didn't go in. [6]Then Simon Peter came up, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, [7]and the napkin that had been around his head, not lying with the other cloths, but folded up in a place by itself.
[8]Then the other disciple, who had arrived first at the tomb, went into the tomb as well. He saw, and he believed. [9]They did not yet know, you see, that the Bible had said he must rise again from the dead.

[10]Then the disciples returned to their homes.

Mary Magdalene and the risen Jesus

[11]But Mary stood outside the tomb, crying. As she wept, she stooped down to look into the tomb. [12]There she saw two angels, clothed in white, one at the head and one at the feet of where Jesus' body had been lying.
[13]'Woman,' they said to her, 'why are you crying?'
'They've taken away my master,' she said, 'and I don't know where they've put him!'
[14]As she said this she turned round, and saw Jesus standing there. She didn't know it was Jesus.
[15]'Woman,' Jesus said to her, 'why are you crying? Who are you looking for?'
She guessed he must be the gardener.
'Sir,' she said, 'if you've carried him off somewhere, tell me where you've put him, and I will take him away.'
[16]'Mary!' said Jesus.
She turned and spoke in Aramaic.
'Rabbouni!' she said (which means 'Teacher').
[17]'Don't cling to me,' said Jesus. 'I haven't yet gone up to the father. But go to my brothers and say to them, "I'm going up to my father and your father – to my God and your God."'
[18]Mary Magdalene went and told the disciples, 'I've seen the master!' and that he had said these things to her.

Jesus and the disciples

[19]On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Judaeans. Jesus came and stood in the middle of them.
'Peace be with you,' he said.
[20]With these words, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were overjoyed when they saw the master.
[21]'Peace be with you,' Jesus said to them again. 'As the father has sent me, so I'm sending you.'
[22]With that, he breathed on them.
'Receive the holy spirit,' he said. [23]'If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven. If you retain anyone's sins, they are retained.'

Jesus and Thomas

[24]One of the Twelve, Thomas (also known as Didymus), wasn't with them when Jesus came. [25]So the other disciples spoke to

him.
‘We’ve seen the master!’ they said.
‘Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands,’ replied Thomas, ‘and put my finger into the nail-marks, and put my hand into his side – I’m not going to believe!’
[26]A week later the disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut. Jesus came and stood in the middle of them.
‘Peace be with you!’ he said.
[27]Then he addressed Thomas.
‘Bring your finger here’, he said, ‘and inspect my hands. Bring your hand here and put it into my side. Don’t be faithless! Just believe!’
[28]‘My Lord,’ replied Thomas, ‘and my God!’
[29]‘Is it because you’ve seen me that you believe?’ replied Jesus. ‘God’s blessing on people who don’t see, and yet believe!’
[30]Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which aren’t written in this book. [31]But these ones are written so that you may believe that the Messiah, the son of God, is none other than Jesus; and that, with this faith, you may have life in his name.

Jesus on the beach

21 After this, Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the sea of Tiberias. This was how he showed himself.
[2]Simon Peter, Thomas (known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples, were all together.
[3]Simon Peter spoke up.
‘I’m going fishing,’ he said.
‘We’ll go with you,’ they replied.
So they went off and got into the boat; but that night they caught nothing.
[4]As dawn was breaking, Jesus stood beside the seashore, but the disciples didn’t know that it was Jesus.
[5]‘Children,’ said Jesus to them, ‘haven’t you got anything to eat?’
‘No!’ they replied.
[6]‘Cast the net on the right side of the boat,’ he said, ‘and you’ll find something.’
So they cast the net; and now they couldn’t draw it in because of the weight of the fish.
[7]So the disciple that Jesus loved spoke to Peter.
‘It’s the master!’ he said.
When Simon Peter heard that it was the master, he wrapped his cloak around him (he had been naked for work), and threw himself into the sea. [8]The other disciples brought the boat in to land, dragging the net full of fish. They weren’t far from shore, about a hundred yards away.

Breakfast by the shore

[9]When they came to land, they saw a charcoal fire laid there, with fish and bread on it.
[10]Jesus spoke to them.
‘Bring some of the fish you’ve just caught,’ he said.
[11]So Simon Peter went and pulled the net onto the shore. It was full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three in all. The net wasn’t torn, even though there were so many.
[12]‘Come and have breakfast,’ said Jesus to them.
None of the disciples dared ask him, ‘Who are you?’ They knew it was the master.
[13]Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so also with the fish. [14]This was now the third time that Jesus had appeared to the disciples after he had been raised from the dead.

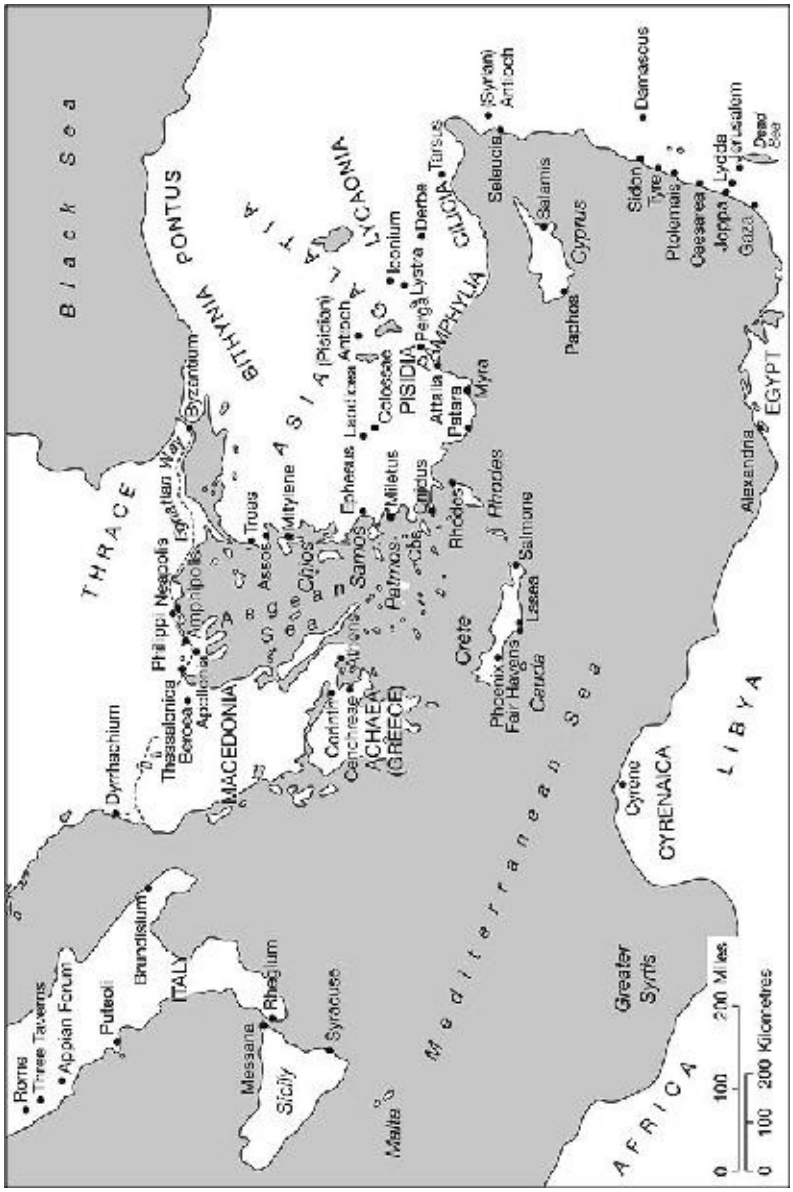
Jesus and Peter

[15]So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus spoke to Simon Peter.
‘Simon, son of John,’ he said, ‘do you love me more than these?’
‘Yes, Master,’ he said. ‘You know I’m your friend.’
‘Well, then,’ he said, ‘feed my lambs.’
[16]‘Simon, son of John,’ said Jesus again, for a second time, ‘do you love me?’
‘Yes, Master,’ he said. ‘You know I’m your friend.’
‘Well, then,’ he said, ‘look after my sheep.’
[17]‘Simon, son of John,’ said Jesus a third time, ‘are you my friend?’
Peter was upset that on this third time Jesus asked, ‘Are you my friend?’
‘Master,’ he said, ‘you know everything! You know I’m your friend!’
‘Well, then,’ said Jesus, ‘feed my sheep.
[18]‘I’m telling you the solemn truth,’ he went on. ‘When you were young, you put on your own clothes and went about wherever you wanted. But when you are old, you’ll stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you up and take you where you don’t want to go.’
[19]He said this to indicate the sort of death by which Peter would bring God glory. And when he had said this, he added, ‘Follow

me!’

The beloved disciple

[20]Peter turned and saw, following them, the disciple that Jesus loved. This was the disciple who had leaned back against Jesus’ chest at the supper, and had asked, ‘Master, who is it that’s going to betray you?’
[21]‘Master,’ said Peter to Jesus, seeing him there, ‘what about him?’
[22]‘If it’s my intention’, replied Jesus, ‘that he should remain here until I come, what’s that got to do with you? You must follow me!’
[23]So the rumour went around the Christian family that this disciple wouldn’t die. But Jesus didn’t say he wouldn’t die. What he said, rather, was this: ‘If it’s my intention that he should remain here until I come, what’s that got to do with you?’
[24](This is the disciple who is giving evidence about these things, and who wrote them down. We know that his evidence is true.)
[25]There are many other things which Jesus did. If they were written down one by one, I don’t think the world itself would be able to contain the books that would be written.



The eastern Mediterranean in the first century AD

The Acts of the Apostles

The story of the four gospels is continued in the Acts of the Apostles, written by Luke as 'part two' of his earlier work. He refers back to his gospel as the story of 'everything Jesus began to do and teach' (1.1); the story he now tells is of what Jesus *continued* to do and to teach, through the presence and power of the holy spirit. The story moves outwards: beginning in Jerusalem, the news about Jesus spreads to Judaea, then into the contested territory of Samaria, and then onwards into the wider world, ending up with Paul in Rome announcing God as King and Jesus as Lord openly and unhindered under the nose of Caesar himself. It is easy to be disappointed when reading Acts because the second half tells the story of Paul's missionary journeys, and when he gets to Rome under armed guard to have his appeal heard by Caesar the reader naturally wants to know, 'What happened next?' But the hero of Luke's story is not Paul, but the Jesus-gospel itself. All roads in Luke's world led not only *to* Rome but *from* Rome. Once the gospel has taken root there, it will spread to the rest of the world.

The spirit turns the family of Jesus-followers into a strange kind of new Temple. The Jerusalem Temple was the place where heaven and earth met; many Jews longed for a new event in which the divine glory would fill the 'house' once more, as (for instance) in Exodus 40 or 1 Kings 8. The wind and fire of Pentecost (Acts 2) answer to this expectation, indicating that now the Temple is a community, not a building – which is why, in much of the rest of the book, the moments when the early church clashes with the authorities in Jerusalem and the wider world are often focused on temples. The implicit early Christian claim was that the one God had opened up a new heaven-and-earth reality, which was bound to be a threat to existing structures and authorities.

This leads to suffering and martyrdom. The church which was founded through the kingdom-bringing death and resurrection of the Messiah must itself make its way in the world through the same shadowed valley. There will be opposition, too, from within the movement itself: Acts is not shy about describing sharp disagreements among the early leaders. But, as in the biblical books upon which Luke is drawing, the reader is tacitly invited to see the work of divine providence throughout the strange events. And, as with the four gospels, those who hear and read this story are drawn into it, to face the question of vocation: what will it look like *today* to follow Jesus and make his kingdom known?

Here comes the sequel!

1 Dear Theophilus,

The previous book which I wrote had to do with everything Jesus began to do and teach. [2]I took the story as far as the day when he was taken up, once he had given instructions through the holy spirit to his chosen apostles.

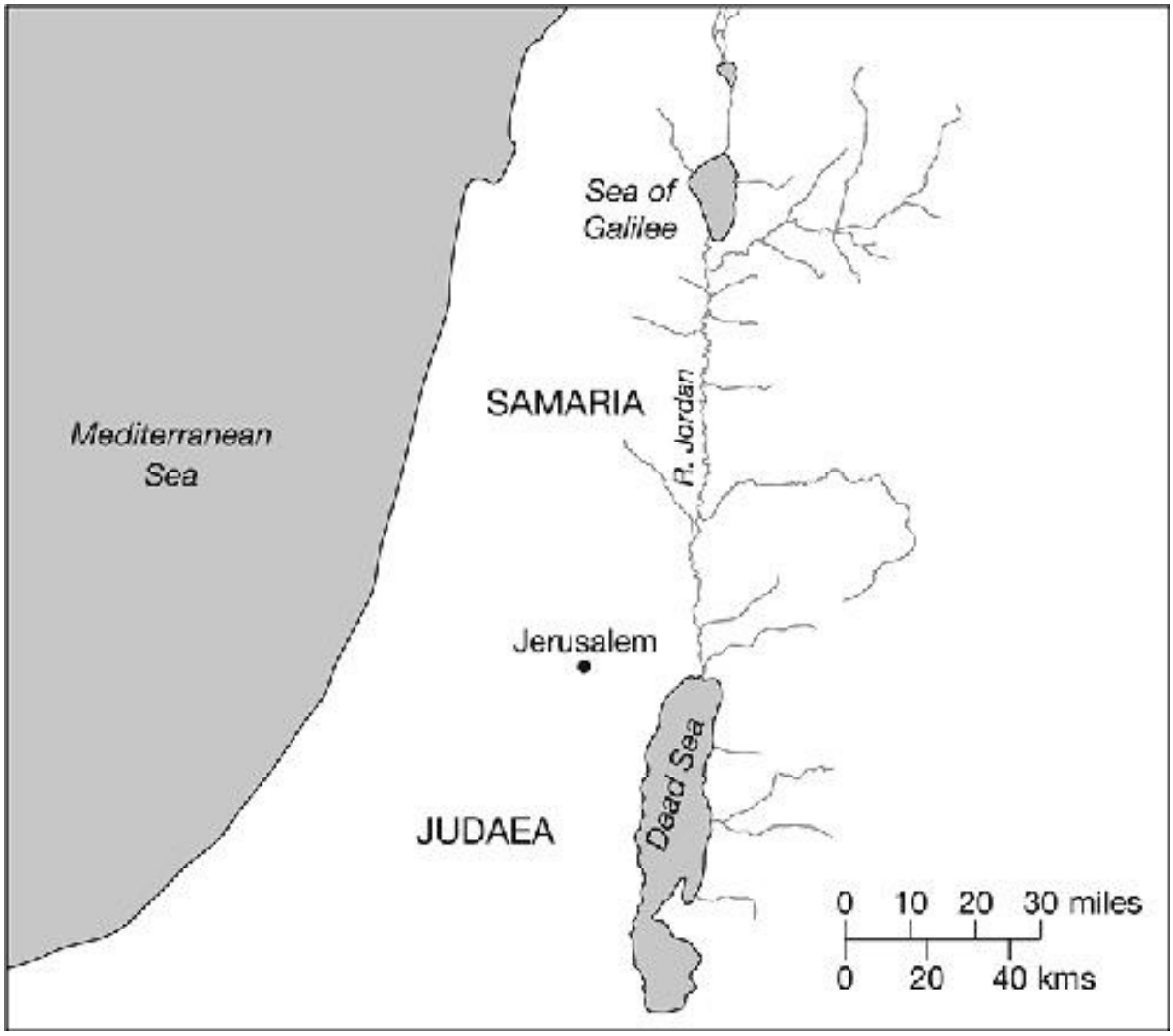
[3]He showed himself to them alive, after his suffering, by many proofs. He was seen by them for forty days, during which he spoke about God's kingdom. [4]As they were having a meal together, he told them not to go away from Jerusalem, but to wait, as he put it, 'for the father's promise, which I was telling you about earlier. [5]John baptized with water, you see; but in a few days from now you will be baptized with the holy spirit.'

When, what and how?

[6]So when the apostles came together, they put this question to Jesus.

'Master,' they said, 'is this the time when you are going to restore the kingdom to Israel?'

[7]'It's not your business to know about times and dates,' he replied. 'The father has placed all that under his own direct authority. [8]What will happen, though, is that you will receive power when the holy spirit comes upon you. Then you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judaea and Samaria, and to the very ends of the earth.'



Acts 1.6–8

Ascension!

9As Jesus said this, he was lifted up while they were watching, and a cloud took him out of their sight. 10They were gazing into heaven as he disappeared. Then, lo and behold, two men appeared, dressed in white, standing beside them.

11‘Galileans,’ they said, ‘why are you standing here staring into heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you saw him go into heaven.’

12Then they went back to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, which is close to Jerusalem, about the distance you could travel on a sabbath. 13They then entered the city (‘they’ here means Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the zealot, and Judas the son of James) and went to the upstairs room where they were staying. 14They all gave themselves single-heartedly to prayer, with the women, including Mary, Jesus’ mother, and his brothers.

Restoring the Twelve

15Around that time Peter stood up in the middle of the gathering, which by this stage numbered about a hundred and twenty.

16‘My dear family,’ he said, ‘the holy spirit spoke long ago, through the mouth of David, about Judas, who became a guide to the people who arrested Jesus. There it is in the Bible, and it had to come true. 17He was counted along with us, and he had his own share in the work we’ve been given.’

(18Judas, you see, had bought a field with the money his wickedness had brought him, where he fell headlong and burst open, with all his innards gushing out. 19This became known to everyone who lived in Jerusalem, so that the field was called, in their local language, ‘Akeldamach’, which means ‘Blood-place’.)

20‘For this is what it says in the book of the Psalms:

Let his home become desolate
and let nobody live in it;

and again,

Let someone else receive his overseeing task.

[21]‘So this is what has to be done. There are plenty of people who have gone about with us all the time that our master Jesus was coming and going among us, [22]starting from John’s baptism until the day he was taken from us. Let one of them be chosen to be alongside us as a special witness of his resurrection.’
[23]So they chose two: Joseph who was called Barsabbas, with the surname Justus, and Matthias.
[24]‘Lord,’ they prayed, ‘you know the hearts of all people. Show us which one of these two you have chosen [25]to receive this particular place of service and apostleship, from which Judas went away to go to his own place.’
[26]So they cast lots for them. The lot fell on Matthias, and he was enrolled along with the eleven apostles.

Here comes the power

2 When the day of Pentecost had finally arrived, they were all together in the same place. [2]Suddenly there came from heaven a noise like the sound of a strong, blowing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. [3]Then tongues, seemingly made of fire, appeared to them, moving apart and coming to rest on each one of them. [4]They were all filled with the holy spirit, and began to speak in other languages, as the spirit gave them the words to say.

New words for new news

[5]There were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem at that time. [6]When they heard this noise they came together in a crowd. They were deeply puzzled, because every single one of them could hear them speaking in his or her own native language. [7]They were astonished and amazed.
‘These men who are doing the speaking are all Galileans, aren’t they?’ they said. [8]‘So how is it that each of us can hear them in our own mother tongues? [9]There are Parthians here, and Medians, Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judaea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, [10]Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya that belong to Cyrene; there are people from Rome, [11]proselytes as well as Jews; there are Cretans and Arabs. We can hear them telling us about the powerful things God has done – *in our own languages!*’
[12]Everyone was astonished and perplexed.
‘What does it all mean?’ they were asking each other.
[13]But some sneered.
‘They’re full of new wine!’ they said.

Rome
ITALY
Black Sea
PONTUS
Sicily
ASIA
PHRYGIA
CAPPADOCIA
MEDES
Mediterranean Sea
PAMPHYLIA
Crete
MESOPOTAMIA
PARTHIA
R. Euphrates
R. Tigris
Cyrene
CYRENAICA
ELAM
AFRICA
LIBYA
JUDAEA
EGYPT
R. Nile
ARABIA
0 100 200 miles
0 100 200 kms

Acts 2.5–13

It's all coming true at last!

[14]Then Peter got up, with the eleven. He spoke to them in a loud voice.
'People of Judaea!' he began. 'All of you staying here in Jerusalem! There's something you have to know! Listen to what I'm saying! [15]These people aren't drunk, as you imagine. It's only nine o'clock in the morning! [16]No, this is what the prophet Joel was talking about, when he said,

[17]In the last days, declares God, I will pour out my spirit on all people.
Your sons and your daughters will prophesy;
your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams;
[18]yes, even on slaves, men and women alike, will I pour out my spirit in those days, and they shall prophesy.
[19]And I will give signs in the heavens above, and portents on earth beneath,
blood and fire and clouds of smoke.
[20]The sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood,
before the day of the Lord comes, the great and glorious day.
[21]And then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

David speaks of Jesus' resurrection

[22]'You people of Israel,' Peter continued, 'listen to this. Jesus of Nazareth was a man marked out for you by God through the mighty works, signs and portents which God performed through him right here among you, as you all know. [23]He was handed over in accordance with God's determined purpose and foreknowledge – and you used people outside the law to nail him up and kill him.
[24]'But God raised him from the dead! Death had its painful grip on him; but God released him from it, because it wasn't possible for him to be mastered by it. [25]This, you see, is how David speaks of him:

I set the Lord before me always;
because he is at my right hand, I won't be shaken.
[26]So my heart was happy, and my tongue rejoiced,
and my flesh, too, will rest in hope.
[27]For you will not leave my soul in Hades,
nor will you allow your Holy One to see corruption.
[28]You showed me the path of life,
you filled me with gladness in your presence.

[29]'My dear family, I can surely speak freely to you about the patriarch David. He died and was buried, and his tomb is here with us to this day. [30]He was of course a prophet, and he knew that God had sworn an oath to him to set one of his own physical offspring on his throne. [31]He foresaw the Messiah's resurrection, and spoke about him 'not being left in Hades', and about his flesh 'not seeing corruption'. [32]This is the Jesus we're talking about! God raised him from the dead, and all of us here are witnesses to the fact! [33]Now he's been exalted to God's right hand; and what you see and hear is the result of the fact that he is pouring out the holy spirit, which had been promised, and which he has received from the father.
[34]'David, after all, did not ascend into the heavens. This is what he says:

The Lord said to my Lord,
sit at my right hand,
[35]until I place your enemies
underneath your feet.

[36]'So the whole house of Israel must know this for a fact: God has made him Lord and Messiah – this Jesus, the one you crucified.'

God's rescue plan

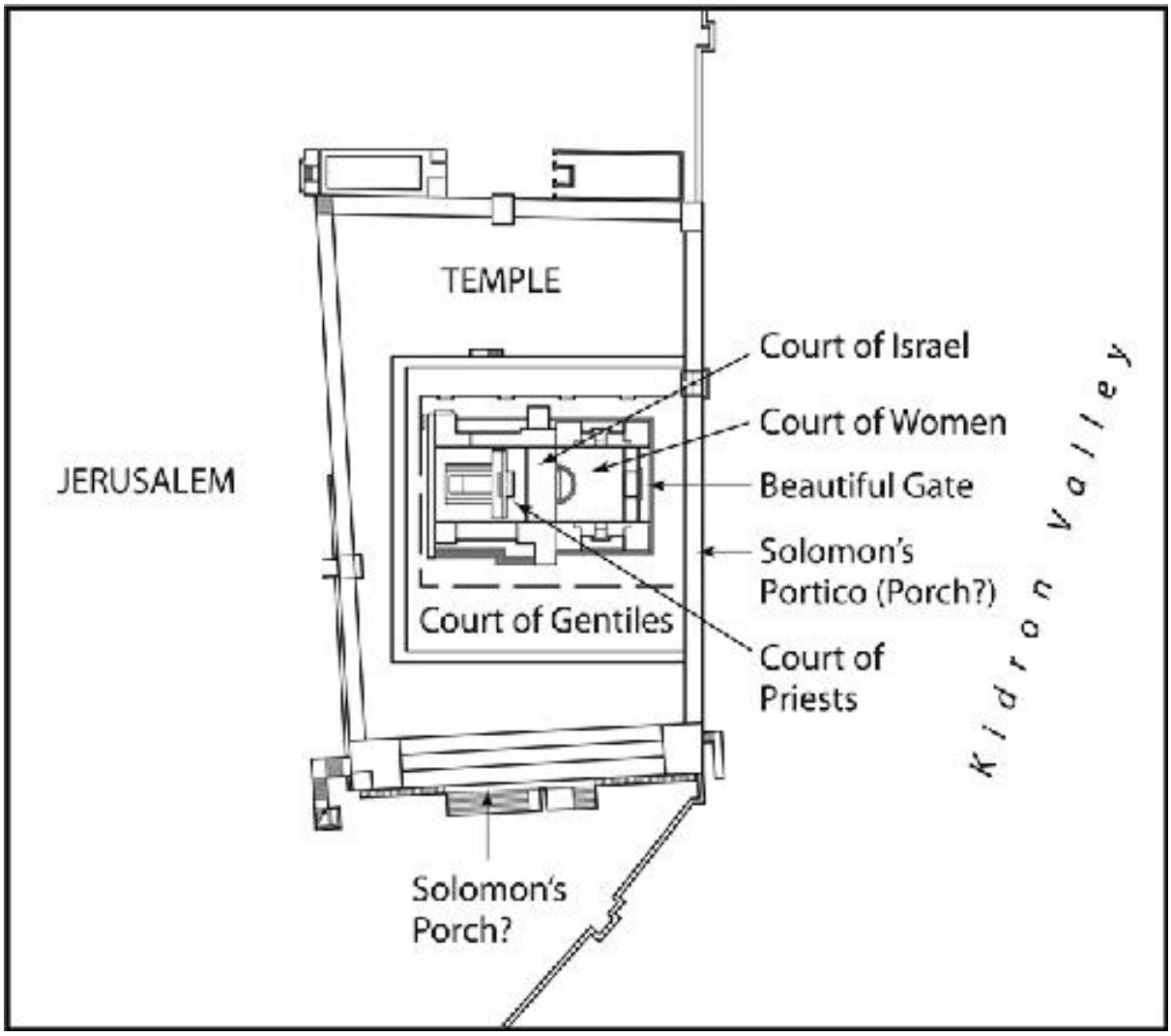
[37]When they heard this, the people in the crowd were cut to the heart.
'Brothers,' they said to Peter and the other apostles, 'what shall we do?'
[38]'Turn back!' replied Peter. 'Be baptized – every single one of you – in the name of Jesus the Messiah, so that your sins can be forgiven, and you will receive the gift of the holy spirit. [39]The promise is for you and for your children, and for everyone who is far away, as many as the Lord our God will call.'
[40]He carried on explaining things to them with many other words.
'Let God rescue you', he was urging them, 'from this wicked generation!'
[41]Those who welcomed his word were baptized. About three thousand people were added to the community that day.

The new family

[42]They all gave full attention to the teaching of the apostles and to the common life, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.
[43]Great awe fell on everyone, and many remarkable deeds and signs were performed by the apostles.
[44]All of those who believed came together, and held everything in common. [45]They sold their possessions and belongings and divided them up to everyone in proportion to their various needs. [46]Day by day they were all together attending the Temple. They broke bread in their various houses, and ate their food with glad and sincere hearts,[47]praising God and standing in favour with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being rescued.

More than he bargained for

3 One day, Peter and John were going up to the Temple at three o'clock in the afternoon, the time for prayer. [2]There was a man being carried in who had been lame since birth. People used to bring him every day to the Temple gate called 'Beautiful', so that he could ask for alms from folk on their way in to the Temple. [3]When he saw Peter and John going in to the Temple, he asked them to give him some money. [4]Peter, with John, looked hard at him.
'Look at us,' he said.
[5]The man stared at them, expecting to get something from them.
[6]'I haven't got any silver or gold', Peter said, 'but I'll give you what I have got. In the name of the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, get up and walk!'
[7]He grabbed the man by his right hand and lifted him up. At once his feet and ankles became strong, [8]and he leaped to his feet and began to walk. He went in with them into the Temple, walking and jumping up and down and praising God. [9]All the people saw him walking and praising God, [10]and they recognized him as the man who had been sitting begging for alms by the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. They were filled with amazement and astonishment at what had happened to him.



Acts 3.1–10, 11–16

An explanation is called for

[11]All the people ran together in astonishment towards Peter and John, and the man who was clinging onto them. They were in the

part of the Temple known as ‘Solomon’s Porch’. [12]Peter saw them all and began to speak.
‘Fellow Israelites,’ he said, ‘why are you amazed at this? Why are you staring at us as though it was our own power or piety that made this man walk? [13]“The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob – the God of our ancestors” – he has glorified his child Jesus, the one you handed over and denied in the presence of Pilate, although he had decided to let him go. [14]But you denied the Holy One, the Just One, and requested instead to have a murderer given to you; [15]and so you killed the Prince of Life. But God raised him from the dead, and we are witnesses to the fact. [16]And it is his name, working through faith in his name, that has given strength to this man, whom you see and know. It is faith which comes through him that has given him this new complete wholeness in front of all of you.’

Restoration and refreshment

[17]‘Now, my dear family,’ Peter continued, ‘I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did. [18]But this is how God has fulfilled what he promised through the mouth of all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. [19]So now repent, and turn back, so that your sins may be blotted out, [20]so that times of refreshment may come from the presence of the Lord, and so that he will send you Jesus, the one he chose and appointed to be his Messiah. [21]He must be received in heaven, you see, until the time which God spoke about through the mouth of his holy prophets from ancient days, the time when God will restore all things. [22]Moses said, “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me, one from among your own brothers; whatever he says to you, you must pay attention to him. [23]And everyone who does not listen to that prophet will be cut off from the people.” [24]All the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors, spoke about these days too. [25]You are the children of the prophets, the children of the covenant which God established with your ancestors when he said to Abraham, “In your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” [26]When God raised up his servant he sent him to you first, to bless you by turning each of you away from your wicked deeds.’

Resurrection plus the name of Jesus equals trouble

4 As they were speaking to the people, along came the priests, the chief of the Temple police, and the Sadducees. [2]They were thoroughly annoyed that they were teaching the people and proclaiming that ‘the resurrection of the dead’ had begun to happen in Jesus. [3]They seized them and put them under guard until the next day, since it was already evening. [4]But a large number of the people who had heard the message believed it, and the number of men grew to five thousand.
[5]On the next day their rulers, the elders and the scribes gathered in Jerusalem, [6]along with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, Alexander and all the members of the high-priestly family. [7]They stood them in the midst.
‘How did you do this?’ they asked them. ‘What power did you use? What name did you invoke?’
[8]Peter was filled with the holy spirit. ‘Rulers of the people and elders,’ he said, [9]‘if the question we’re being asked today is about a good deed done for a sick man, and whose power it was that rescued him, [10]let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man stands before you fit and well because of the name of the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, whom you crucified, but whom God raised from the dead. [11]He is the stone which you builders rejected, but which has become the head cornerstone. [12]Rescue won’t come from anybody else! There is no other name given under heaven and among humans by which we must be rescued.’

The clash of loyalties

[13]When they saw how boldly Peter and John were speaking, and realized that they were untrained, ordinary men, they were astonished, and they recognized them as people who had been with Jesus. [14]And when they saw the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in reply. [15]They ordered them to be put out of the assembly while they conferred among themselves.
[16]‘What can we do to these men?’ they said. ‘This is a spectacular sign that has happened through them. All Jerusalem knows it, and we can’t deny it! [17]But we certainly don’t want it to spread any further among the people. So let’s threaten them with awful consequences if they speak any more in this name to anybody.’
[18]So they called them in and gave them orders not to speak at all, or to teach, in the name of Jesus.
[19]But Peter and John gave them this reply.
‘You judge’, they said, ‘whether it’s right before God to listen to you rather than to God! [20]As far as we’re concerned, we can’t stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.’
[21]Then they threatened them some more, and let them go. They couldn’t find any way to punish them because of the people, since everyone was glorifying God for what had happened. [22]After all, the man to whom this sign of healing had happened was over forty years old.

Look upon their threats

[23]When they had been released, they went back to their own people, and told them everything that the chief priests and the elders had said. [24]When they heard it, they all together lifted up their voices to God.
‘Sovereign Master,’ they said, ‘you made heaven and earth, and the sea, and everything in them. [25]And you said through the holy spirit, by the mouth of our ancestor David, your servant,

Why did the nations fly into a rage,

and why did the peoples think empty thoughts?
[26]The kings of the earth arose
and the rulers gathered themselves together
against the Lord and against his anointed Messiah.

[27]'It's true: Herod and Pontius Pilate, together with the nations and the peoples of Israel, gathered themselves together in this very city against your holy child Jesus, the one you anointed, [28]to do whatever your hand and your plan had foreordained to take place. [29]So now, Master, look on their threats; and grant that we, your servants, may speak your word with all boldness, [30]while you stretch out your hand for healing, so that signs and wonders may come about through the name of your holy child Jesus.'
[31]When they had prayed, the place where they were gathered was shaken. They were all filled with the holy spirit, and they boldly spoke the word of God.

Signs of the new covenant

[32]The company of those who believed had one heart and soul. Nobody said that they owned their property; instead, they had everything in common. [33]The apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power, and great grace was upon all of them. [34]For there was no needy person among them, since any who possessed lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sale, [35]and placed it at the feet of the apostles, who then gave to each according to their need.
[36]Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, to whom the apostles gave the surname 'Barnabas' (which means 'son of encouragement'), [37]sold some land which belonged to him, brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Disaster

5 There was, however, a man named Ananias, married to a woman called Sapphira. He sold some property, [2]and, with his wife's knowledge, kept back part of the price. He brought the rest and laid it at the apostles' feet.
[3]'Ananias!' said Peter. 'Why did the satan fill your heart, to make you tell a lie to the holy spirit and to keep back part of the price of the land? [4]While it was still yours, it belonged to you, didn't it? And, when you sold it, it was still in your power! Why did you get such an idea in your heart? It isn't humans that you've lied to: it's God!'
[5]When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and died. Everyone who heard about it was scared out of their wits. [6]The young men got up, took him away, wrapped up his body and buried him.
[7]After an interval of about three hours, his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.
[8]Peter spoke to her.
'Tell me,' he said, 'did you sell the land for this much?'
'Yes,' she replied, 'that was the price.'
[9]'So why', Peter answered, 'did you agree together to put the holy spirit to the test? Look: the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door – and they will carry you out too!'
[10]At once she fell down at his feet and died. The young men were just coming in, and they found her dead, so they took her out and buried her beside her husband. [11]Great fear came upon the whole gathering, and on all who heard about these things.

Healed by Peter's shadow

[12]Many signs and wonders were performed by the apostles among the people. They were all together in Solomon's Porch, [13]while none of the others dared to join them, though the people spoke highly of them. [14]But more people, a crowd both of men and women, believed in the Lord, and were added to their number. [15]They used to bring the sick into the streets, and place them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on them as he went by. [16]Crowds gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing people who were sick, or infested with unclean spirits. All of them were cured.

The words of this life

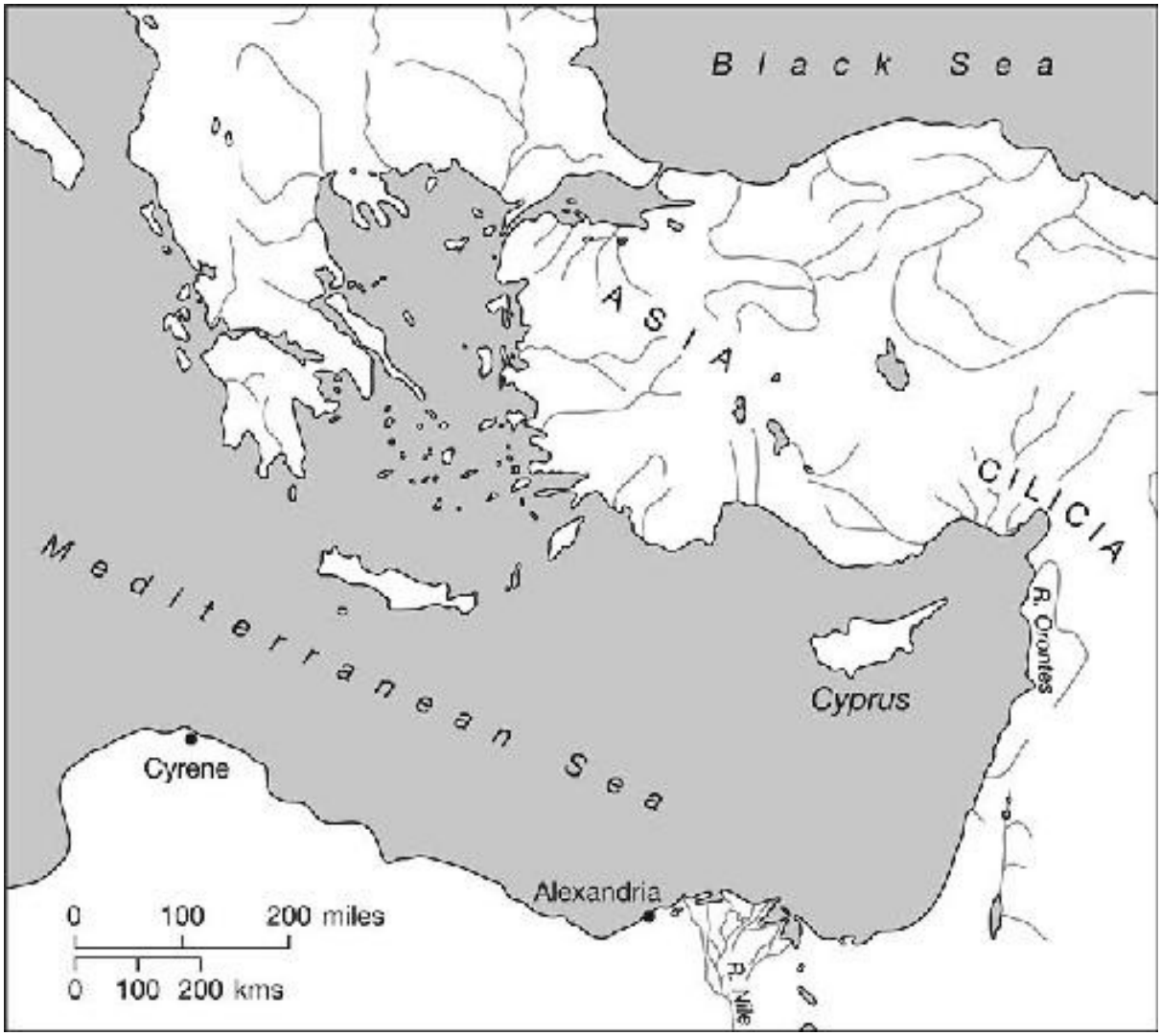
[17]Then the high priest got up, and all who were with him, namely the group called the 'Sadducees'. They were filled with righteous indignation, [18]and seized the apostles and put them in the public jail. [19]But an angel of the Lord came in the night, opened the prison doors, and brought them out.
[20]'Go and take your stand in the Temple', he said, 'and speak all the words of this Life to the people.'
[21]When they heard this, they went in at early morning and began to teach.
When the high priest arrived with his entourage, they called the official Assembly and all the elders of the children of Israel, and they sent to the prison to have the apostles brought in. [22]But when the attendants went, they didn't find them in the prison. So they came and reported back.
[23]'We found the jail shut up with maximum security', they said, 'and the guards were standing in front of the doors. But when we opened up we found nobody inside.'
[24]When they heard these words, the commander of the Temple police and the chief priests were at a loss about them, with no idea what had happened. [25]But then someone came with a message for them.
'Look!' he said. 'The men you put in prison are standing in the Temple and teaching the people!'
[26]Then the commander went with his attendants and brought them. They didn't use force, though, because they were afraid that the people might stone them.

Human inventions and divine instructions

[27]So they brought them and stood them in the Assembly. The high priest questioned them.
[28]‘We gave you strict orders, didn’t we?’ he demanded. ‘We told you not to teach in this Name, and look what you’re doing! You have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you’re trying to bring this man’s blood on us!’
[29]‘We must obey God, not human beings!’ responded Peter and the apostles. [30]‘The God of our ancestors raised Jesus, after you had laid violent hands on him and hanged him on a tree. [31]God exalted him to his right hand as Leader and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. [32]We are witnesses of these things, and so is the holy spirit, which God gave to those who obey him.’
[33]When they heard this, they were infuriated, and wanted to kill them. [34]But then a Pharisee by the name of Gamaliel stood up in the Assembly. He was a law-teacher, highly respected by all the people. He ordered the men to be put outside for a short while.
[35]‘Men of Israel,’ he said to the gathering, ‘be careful what you do to these men. [36]Before these times Theudas rose up, claiming to be someone special, and about four hundred men went off to join him. But he was killed, and all the people who had trusted him were dispersed. The movement came to nothing. [37]After that, Judas the Galilean arose, in the days of the Census, and drew a crowd after himself. But he was killed, and all those who trusted him were scattered. [38]So my advice to you now is this. Leave off from these men; let them be. You see, if this plan or this work is of merely human origin, it will come to ruin. [39]But if it’s from God – well, you won’t be able to stop them. You might even be found to be fighting against God!’
They were persuaded by him, [40]and they called the apostles back in. They beat them and told them not to speak in the name of Jesus. Then they let them go. [41]They, however, went out from the presence of the Assembly celebrating, because they had been reckoned worthy to suffer disgrace for the Name. [42]And all day, in the Temple and from house to house, they did not stop teaching and proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah.

Problems of family living

6 Around that time, as the number of disciples increased, the ‘Hellenists’ raised a dispute with the ‘Hebrews’ because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. [2]So the Twelve called the whole crowd of disciples together.
‘Listen,’ they said. ‘It wouldn’t be right for us to leave the word of God to wait on tables. [3]So, brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among yourselves who are well spoken of and filled with the spirit and wisdom. We will put them in charge of what needs to be done in this matter. [4]We will continue to pay attention to prayer and to the ministry of the word.’
[5]The whole gathering was pleased with what they said. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the holy spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolaus (a proselyte from Antioch). [6]They presented them before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.
[7]The word of God increased, and the number of disciples in Jerusalem grew by leaps and bounds. This included a large crowd of priests who became obedient to the faith.



Acts 6.9

Stephen becomes a target

[8]Stephen was filled with grace and power, and performed great signs and wonders among the people. [9]But some from the 'Freemen's Synagogue', as it was named, and from Cyrene, Alexandria, Cilicia and Asia, stood up and disputed with Stephen. [10]They could not, however, resist the wisdom and the spirit with which he spoke.

[11]Then they put up men to say, 'We heard this man speaking blasphemous words against Moses and against God!' [12]They aroused the people, the elders and the scribes. They set upon him, seized him, and took him in front of the Assembly. [13]They set up false witnesses to say, 'This man never stops speaking words against this holy place and the law! [14]We heard him say that this Jesus the Nazorean will destroy this place, and change the customs which Moses handed down to us!'

[15]Everyone who was sitting in the Assembly looked hard at Stephen. They all saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Stephen tells the story

7 The high priest addressed Stephen.
'Are these things true?' he said.

[2]'My brothers and fathers,' replied Stephen, 'please give me a hearing.

'The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he moved to live in Haran. [3]"Leave your land and your family," he said to him, "and go to the land which I will show you." [4]So he left the land of the Chaldeans and went to live in Haran. Then, from there, after his father's death, God moved him on to this land in which you now live. [5]God didn't give him an inheritance here, not even a place to stand up in. Instead, he promised (when Abraham still had no child) that he would give it as a possession to his seed after him. [6]This is what God said to him: that his seed would be strangers in a foreign land, that they would serve there as slaves, and that they would be afflicted for four hundred years. [7]But God said that he would judge the nation that had enslaved them, and that they would then come out and worship him "on this mountain". [8]And he gave them the covenant of circumcision. So Abraham became the father of Isaac, and he circumcised him on the eighth day. Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of the twelve patriarchs.

[9]‘Now the patriarchs became angry with Joseph, and were jealous of him. They sold him into Egypt. But God was with him,
[10]and rescued him from all his troubles and gave him grace and wisdom before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, making him ruler over
Egypt and over all his household. [11]But then there was a famine over the whole of Egypt and Canaan, which resulted in great
hardship. Our ancestors couldn’t find food to eat. [12]Jacob, however, heard that there was grain in Egypt, and sent our ancestors
there on an initial visit. [13]On their second trip, Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and revealed to Pharaoh what family
he was from. [14]So Joseph sent and summoned Jacob his father and all the family, seventy-five people in all. [15]Jacob came to
Egypt, and he and our ancestors died there. [16]They were brought back to Shechem, and buried in the tomb which Abraham had
bought with silver, at a named price, from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.’

Stephen and Moses

[17]‘God had sworn an oath to Abraham,’ Stephen continued. ‘When the time drew near for this promise to be fulfilled, the people
had increased and multiplied in Egypt, [18]until another king arose over Egypt, one who had not known Joseph. [19]He got the better
of our people, and ill-treated our ancestors, forcing them to abandon their newborn children so that they would die.
[20]‘It was at that time that Moses was born, and he was a noble-looking child. He was nursed for three months in his father’s
house. [21]But, when they abandoned him, Pharaoh’s daughter claimed him and brought him up as her own son. [22]So Moses was
educated in the full teaching of Egyptian wisdom, and he was powerful in what he said and did.
[23]‘When he had grown to about forty years old, it came into his heart to see how his family, the children of Israel, were doing.
[24]He saw someone being wronged, and came to the man’s defence; he took revenge on behalf of the man who was being
oppressed, by striking down the Egyptian. [25]He thought his kinsfolk would grasp the fact that God was sending him to their
rescue, but they didn’t.
[26]‘The next day he showed up as two Hebrews were fighting, and he tried to bring them back together again. “Now then, you
two,” he said, “you are brothers! Why are you wronging each other?” [27]But the man who was wronging the other wasn’t having it.
“Who d’you think you are?” he retorted, pushing him away. “Who made you a ruler or judge over us? [28]Do you want to kill me in
the same way you killed the Egyptian yesterday?” [29]At that word, Moses ran away, and lived as a guest in the land of Midian,
where he had two sons.
[30]‘After another forty years, an angel appeared to him in the desert at Mount Sinai, in the flame of a burning bush. [31]When
Moses saw it, he was amazed at the vision. But, as he came closer to see, there came the voice of the Lord: [32]“I am the God of
your ancestors, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.” Moses was very frightened, and didn’t dare to look. [33]But the Lord
said to him, “Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. [34]I have looked long and hard
at the trouble my people are having in Egypt. I have heard their groaning, and I have come down to rescue them. So, come on
now: I’m going to send you to Egypt.”’

Handmade shrines

[35]‘So’, Stephen continued, ‘this same Moses – the one they rejected, saying “Who made you a ruler or judge?” – this is the man
God sent as ruler and redeemer, by the hand of the angel who had appeared to him in the bush. [36]He did signs and wonders in the
land of Egypt, and led them out, through the Red Sea and for forty years in the wilderness. [37]This is the Moses who said to the
children of Israel, “God will raise up a prophet like me from among your brothers.” [38]And this is the one who was in the
Assembly in the desert with the angel who had spoken to him on Mount Sinai, and with our ancestors; and he received living
words to give to us.
[39]‘This is the one whom our ancestors had not wanted to obey, but instead rejected him and turned back in their hearts to Egypt,
[40]by saying to Aaron, “Make us gods who will go before us; for this Moses, who brought us out of the land of Egypt – we don’t
know what has become of him!” [41]They made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice to an idol. They celebrated things their
own hands had made.
[42]‘Then God turned and handed them over to worship the host of heaven, as it stands written in the book of the prophets: “Did
you bring sacrifices and offerings to me in those forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? [43]You took up the tent of
Moloch, and the star of your god Rhephan, the carved images you made to worship! I will remove you beyond Babylon!”
[44]‘Our ancestors had the “tent of meeting” in the desert. God had commanded Moses to make it according to the pattern which
he had seen. [45]Our ancestors in their turn brought it in when, with Joshua, they dispossessed the nations whom God drove out
before our ancestors, and it was there until the time of David. [46]David found favour with God, and requested permission to
establish a Tabernacle for the house of Jacob. [47]But it was Solomon who built him a house.
[48]‘The Most High, however, does not live in shrines made by human hands. The prophet put it like this:

[49]Heaven is my throne, and earth my footstool!
What sort of house will you build me, says the Lord,
or what place will you give me to rest in?
[50]My own hand made all these, did it not?

[51]‘You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are uncircumcised! You always resist the holy spirit, just as your ancestors did
before you! [52]Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? And you killed those who announced in advance the
coming of the Righteous One – and now you have betrayed him and murdered him. [53]You received the law at the command of
angels, but you didn’t keep it!’

The stoning of Stephen

54What Stephen said was a blow right to the heart. When they heard it, they gnashed their teeth against him. 55He, however, was filled with the holy spirit, and looked steadily up into heaven. There he saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at God's right hand.

56'Look!' he said. 'I can see heaven opened, and the son of man standing at God's right hand!'

57But they yelled at him at the tops of their voices, blocked their ears and made a concerted dash at him. 58They bundled him out of the city and stoned him. The witnesses laid down their cloaks at the feet of a young man named Saul.

59So they stoned Stephen.

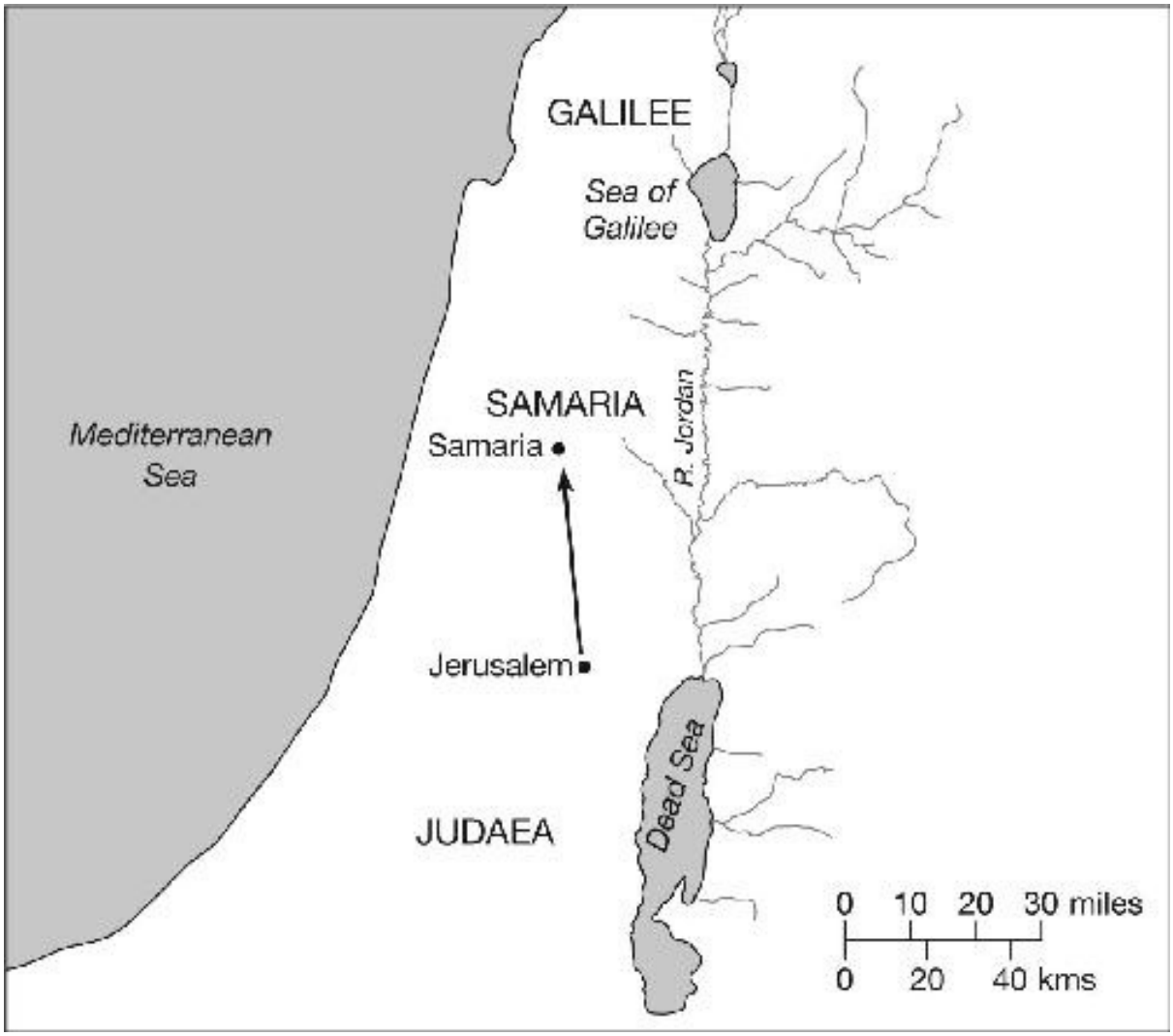
'Lord Jesus,' he cried out, 'receive my spirit.'

60Then he knelt down and shouted at the top of his voice, 'Lord, don't let this sin stand against them.'

Once he had said this, he fell asleep.

8 Now Saul was giving his consent to Stephen's death.

That very day a great persecution was started against the church in Jerusalem. Everyone except the apostles was scattered through the lands of Judaea and Samaria. 2Devout men buried Stephen, and made a great lamentation over him. 3But Saul was doing great damage to the church by going from one house to another, dragging off men and women and throwing them into prison.



Acts 8.4–25

Samaria, the spirit and Simon Magus

4Those who were scattered went all over the place announcing the word. 5Philip went off to a town in Samaria and announced the Messiah to them. 6The crowds, acting as one, clung to what Philip was saying, as they heard him and saw the signs he performed. 7For unclean spirits came out of many of them, and several who were paralysed or lame were cured. 8So there was great joy in that town.

9But there was a man named Simon, who had lived in the town for some while and who practised magic. He used to astonish the Samaritan people, giving out that he was some great personage. 10Everyone, small and great alike, paid attention to him, and

said, ‘This man is the one called “God’s Great Power”!’ [11]They had been under his spell for some time, since they were amazed at the magic he could perform. [12]But when they believed Philip as he was announcing to them the message about God’s kingdom and the Name of Jesus the Messiah, they were baptized, men and women alike. [13]Simon too believed and was baptized, paying close attention to Philip. When he saw signs, and great and powerful deeds, it was his turn to be astonished.

[14]When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received God’s word, they sent Peter and John to them. [15]When they arrived, they prayed for them, asking that they would receive the holy spirit, [16]since up to that point the spirit had come upon none of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. [17]Then they laid their hands on them, and they received the holy spirit.

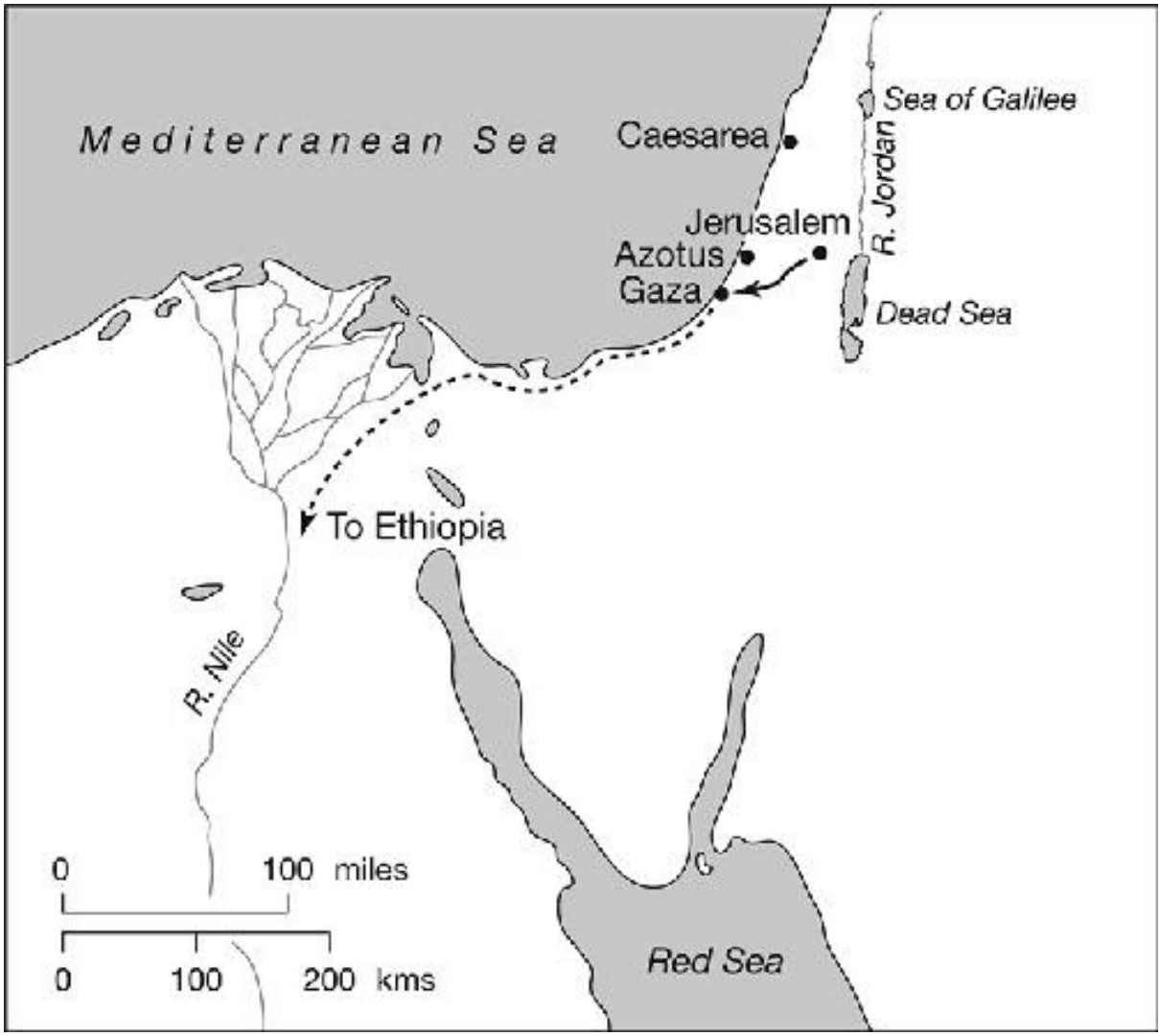
[18]When Simon saw that the spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money.

[19]‘Give me this power too,’ he said, ‘so that anyone I lay my hands on will receive the holy spirit.’

[20]‘You and your silver belong in hell!’ retorted Peter. ‘Did you really think that God’s gift could be bought with money? [21]You have no part or share in this word! Your heart is not straight before God. [22]So repent from this wickedness, and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive the scheme you had in your heart. [23]I can see that you are still stuck in the bitter poison and chains of unrighteousness.’

[24]‘Pray to the Lord for me’, said Simon in reply, ‘that none of what you’ve said will happen to me.’

[25]After Peter and John had finished bearing witness and speaking the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, announcing the good news to many Samaritan villages.



Acts 8.26–40

Philip and the Ethiopian

[26]An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip.

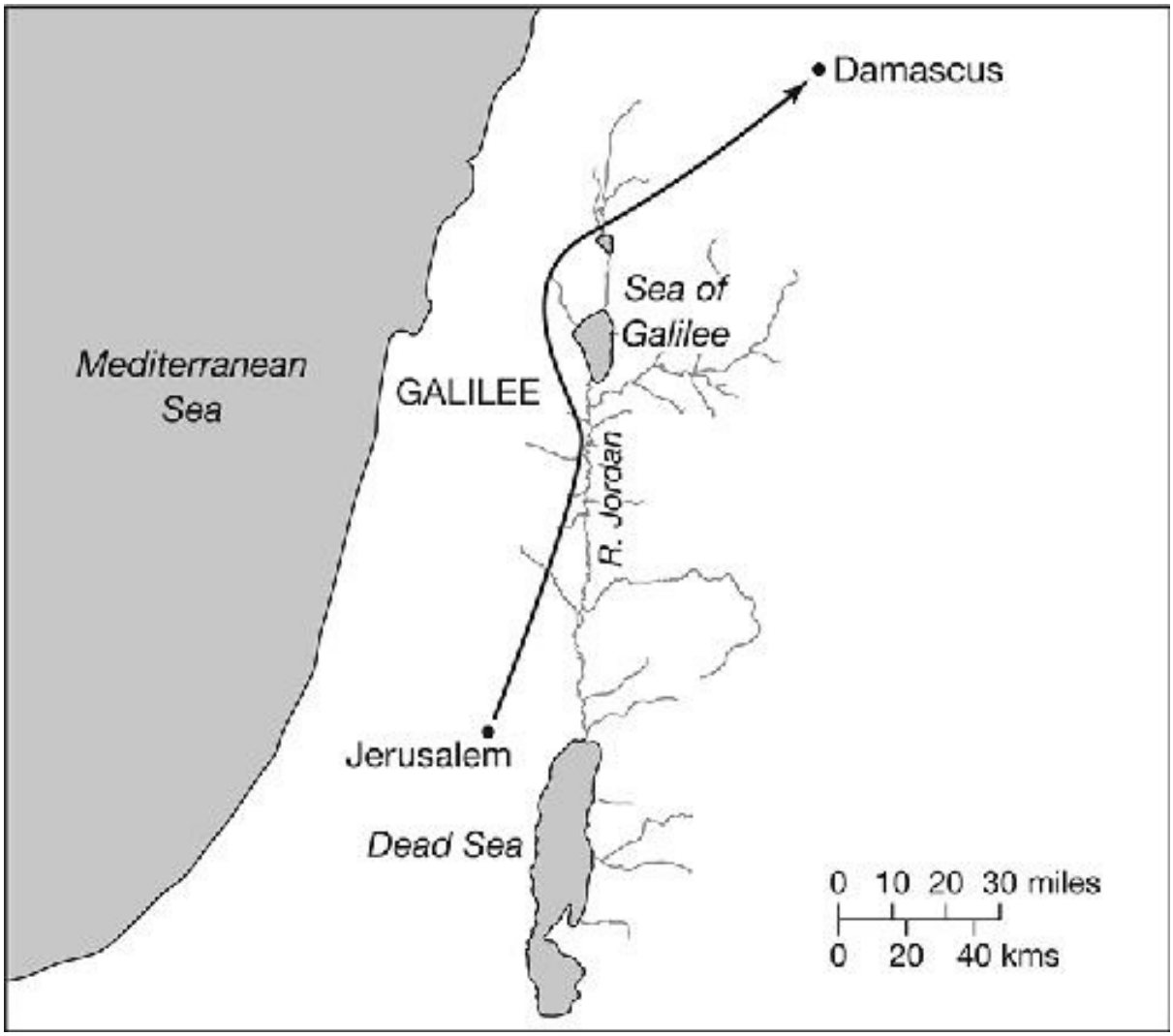
‘Get up and go south,’ he said. ‘Go to the desert road that runs down from Jerusalem to Gaza.’

[27]So he got up and went. Lo and behold, there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace (the queen of Ethiopia), who was in charge of her whole treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship, [28]and was on his way back home. He was sitting in his chariot and reading the prophet Isaiah.

[29]‘Go up and join his chariot,’ said the spirit to Philip. [30]So Philip ran up, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah.
‘Do you understand what you’re reading?’ he asked.
[31]‘How can I’, he replied, ‘unless someone gives me some help?’
So he invited Philip to get up and sit beside him. [32]The biblical passage he was reading was this one:

He was led like a sheep to the slaughter
and as a lamb is silent before its shearers,
so he does not open his mouth.
[33]In his humiliation, judgment was taken away from him.
Who can explain his generation?
For his life was taken away from the earth.

[34]‘Tell me,’ said the eunuch to Philip, ‘who is the prophet talking about? Himself or someone else?’
[35]Then Philip took a deep breath and, starting from this biblical passage, told him the good news about Jesus.
[36]As they were going along the road, they came to some water.
‘Look!’ said the eunuch. ‘Here is some water! What’s to stop me being baptized?’
[38]So he gave orders for the chariot to stop, and both of them went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch together, and he baptized him. [39]When they came up out of the water, the spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away, and the eunuch didn’t see him any more, but went on his way rejoicing. [40]Philip, however, turned up at Azotus. He went through all the towns, announcing the good news, until he came to Caesarea.



Acts 9.1–9

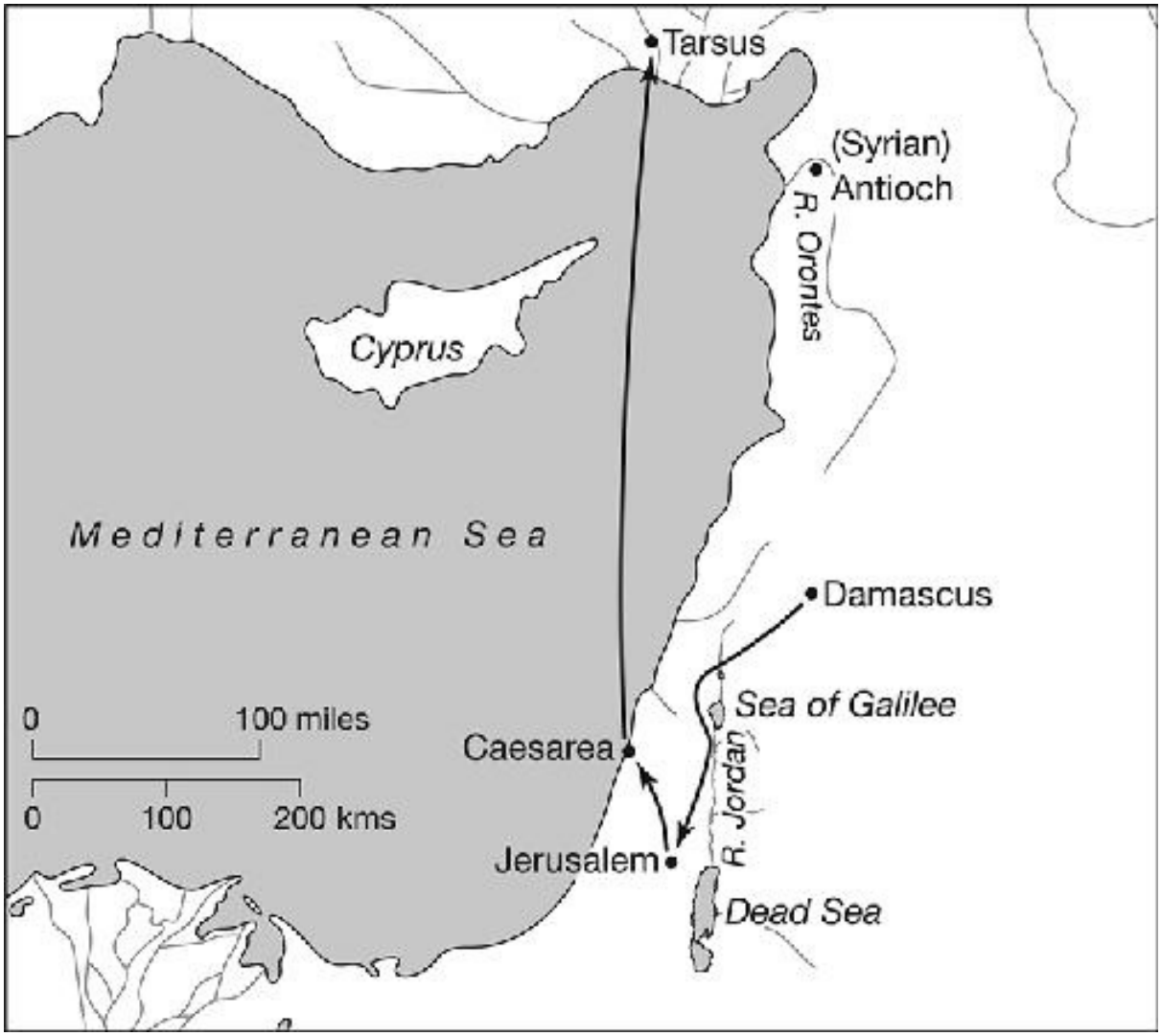
The conversion of Saul

9 Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out threats and murder on the Lord’s disciples. He went to the high priest [2]and requested from him official letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that he could find people who belonged to the Way, men and women alike, tie them up and bring them back to Jerusalem.

[3]While he was on the journey, and was getting near to Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. [4]He fell on the ground and heard a voice speaking to him.
‘Saul, Saul!’ said the voice. ‘Why are you persecuting me?’
[5]‘Who are you, Lord?’ he asked.
‘I am Jesus,’ he said, ‘and you are persecuting me. [6]But get up and go into the city, and it will be told you what you have to do.’
[7]The men who were travelling with Saul stood speechless. They heard the voice but couldn’t see anybody. [8]Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he couldn’t see anything. So they led him by the hand and brought him to Damascus. [9]He went for three days, being unable to see, and he neither ate nor drank.

Ananias and Saul

[10]In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord spoke to him in a vision.
‘Ananias!’ he said.
‘Here I am, Lord,’ he replied.
[11]‘Get up’, said the Lord to him, ‘and go to the street called Straight. Enquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul. Look – he’s praying! [12]And he has seen, in a vision, a man named Ananias coming and laying his hands on him so that he can see again.’
[13]‘Well, Lord,’ replied Ananias, ‘I’ve heard about this man from several people . . . all about how he’s done wicked things to your holy people in Jerusalem . . . [14]and now he’s come here with authority from the chief priests to tie up everybody who calls on your Name!’
[15]‘Just go,’ replied the Lord. ‘He is a chosen vessel for me, to carry my Name before nations and kings – and the children of Israel, too. [16]I am going to show him how many things he is going to have to suffer for the sake of my Name.’
[17]So Ananias set off, went into the house, and laid his hands on him.
‘Brother Saul,’ he said, ‘the Lord has sent me – yes, Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here – so that you may be able to see again, and receive the holy spirit.’
[18]At once something like scales fell off his eyes, and he was able to see. He got up and was baptized. [19]He had something to eat, and regained his strength.



Acts 9.19–26, 30

‘He is God’s son’

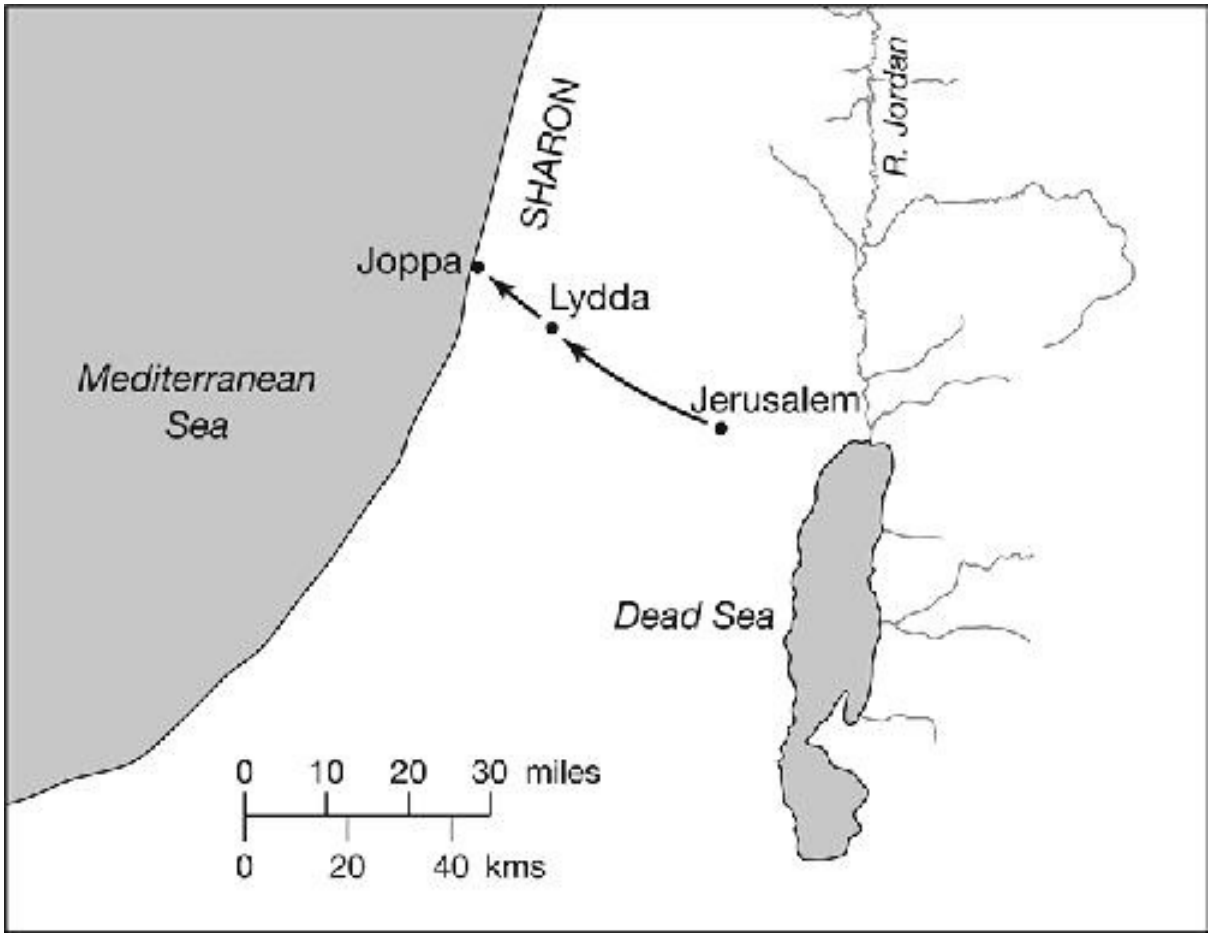
Saul stayed with the disciples in Damascus for a few days. [20]At once he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, ‘This really is the son of God!’ [21]Everyone was astonished, and said, ‘Isn’t this the man who caused havoc to those in Jerusalem who call on this Name? And here he is, coming to tie them up and take them off to the high priests!’ [22]But Saul grew all the stronger, and threw the Jews in Damascus into confusion by demonstrating that Jesus is indeed the Messiah.

[23]After some days, the Jews made a plot to kill him, [24]but Saul got wind of their plan. They were watching the city gates day and night so that they could do away with him. [25]But the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket.

[26]When he got back to Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. [27]But Barnabas took him, brought him to the apostles, and explained to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that he had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus.

[28]He was with them in Jerusalem, coming and going and speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. [29]He spoke, as well, to the Hellenists, who tried to kill him. [30]But the family heard of it and took him down to Caesarea. There they sent him off to Tarsus.

[31]So the church in all Judaea, Galilee and Samaria found itself at peace. It was built up and gained in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the holy spirit.



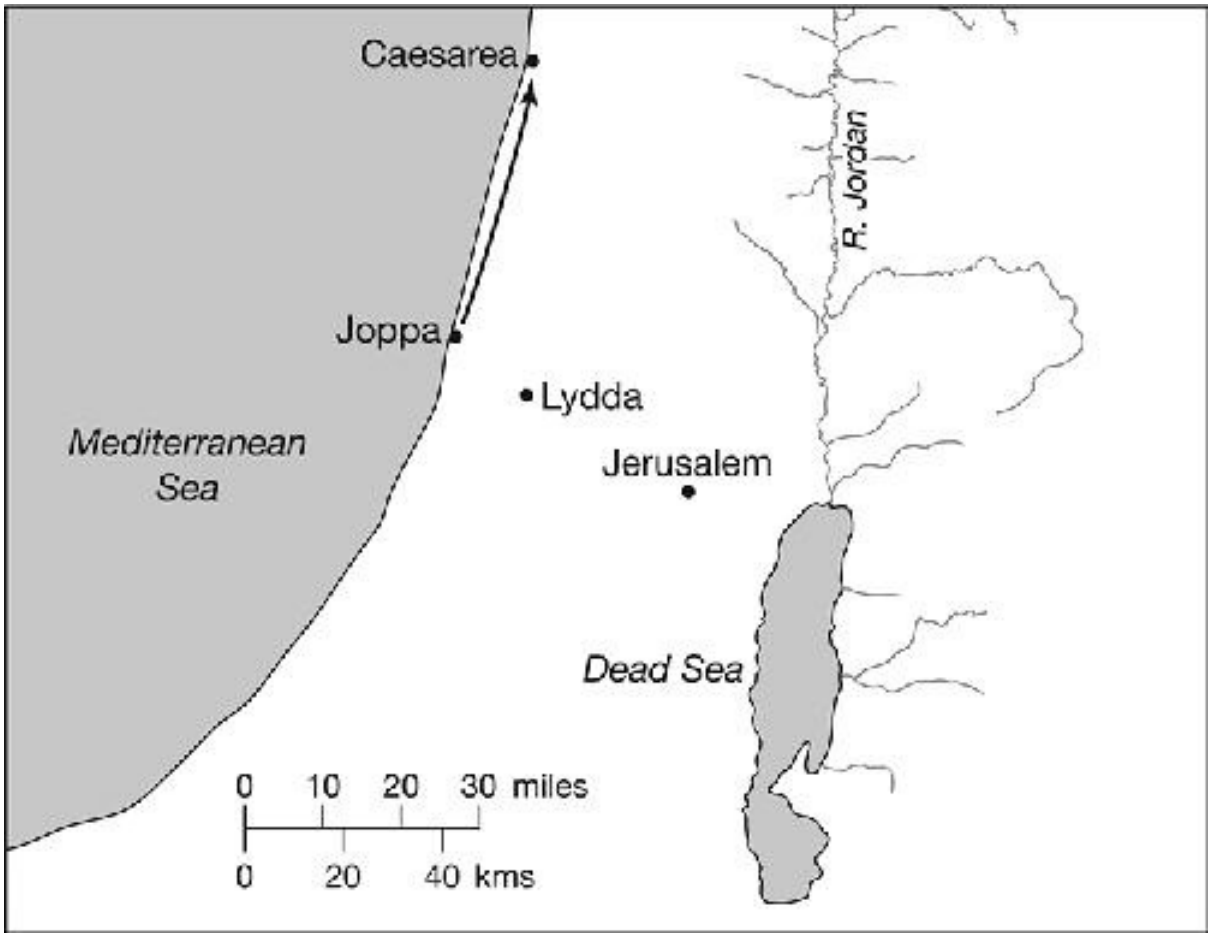
Acts 9.32, 35, 36

Back to Peter

32As Peter was going through various places among all the believers, he went down to God's people who lived in Lydda. 33There
he found a paralysed man named Aeneas who had been confined to bed for eight years.
34'Aeneas,' Peter said to him, 'Jesus the Messiah heals you! Stand up and fold up your bed!'
And at once he stood up. 35Everyone who lived at Lydda and Sharon saw it, and they turned to the Lord.
36In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha, whose name translates as 'Dorcas'. She was full of good works and generous
deeds. 37Around that time she fell ill and died. They washed her and laid her in an upper room. 38Lydda is near Joppa, and the
disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the urgent request that he shouldn't delay, but come to them at
once. 39So Peter got up and went with them. When he arrived, they took him to the upper room, where all the widows were
weeping. They showed him the tunics and the other clothes that Dorcas had made while she was with them.
40Peter requested them all to leave. Then he knelt down and prayed, and turned to the body.
'Tabitha,' he said, 'get up!'
She opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. 41He gave her his hand and lifted her up. Then he called God's people,
including the widows, and presented her alive.
42This became known throughout the whole of Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. 43Peter stayed on in Joppa for some days,
at the house of Simon the tanner.

Peter's vision

10 In Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion with the cohort called 'the Italian'. 2He was devout, and he and all
his household revered God. He gave alms generously to the people, and constantly prayed to God.
3He had a vision. Around three o'clock in the afternoon he saw, quite clearly, one of God's angels coming to him.
'Cornelius!' said the angel.
4He looked hard at him, terrified.
'What is it, Sir?' he said.



Acts 10.1–16

'Your prayers and your alms have come to God's notice,' said the angel. [5]'What you must do is this. Send men to Joppa, and ask for someone called Simon, surnamed Peter. [6]He is staying with a man called Simon, a tanner, whose house is beside the sea.'

[7]When the angel who had spoken with him went away, he called two of his household and a devout soldier from among his retinue. [8]He explained everything to them, and sent them off to Joppa.

[9]The next day, as they were on their journey and getting near the town, Peter went up onto the roof of the house to pray. It was around midday; [10]he was hungry, and asked for something to eat. While they were preparing it, he fell into a trance. [11]He saw heaven opened, and a vessel like a great sail coming down towards the earth, suspended by its four corners. [12]In the sail there was every kind of four-footed creature, reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. [13]Then he heard a voice: 'Get up, Peter!' said the voice. 'Kill and eat!'

[14]'Certainly not, Master!' said Peter. 'I've never eaten anything common or unclean!'

[15]'What God has made clean,' said the voice, coming now for a second time, 'you must not regard as common.'

[16]This all happened three times, and then suddenly the sail was whisked back up to heaven.

Peter goes to Cornelius

[17]When Peter came to himself, he was puzzled as to what the vision he had seen was all about. Then, suddenly, the men sent by Cornelius appeared, standing by the gate. They had been asking for Simon's house, [18]enquiring if someone by the name of Simon called Peter was staying there. [19]Peter was still pondering the vision, when the spirit spoke to him.

'Look,' said the spirit. 'There are three men searching for you. [20]It's all right; get up, go down and go with them. Don't be prejudiced; I have sent them.'

[21]So Peter went down to the men.

'Here I am,' he said. 'I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?'

[22]'There is a man called Cornelius,' they replied. 'He is a centurion, and he's a righteous and God-fearing man. The whole people of the Jews will testify to him. A holy angel told him in a vision to send for you to come to his house, so that he can hear any words you may have to say.'

[23]So he invited them in and put them up for the night.

In the morning he got up and went with them. Some of the believers from Joppa went with him. [24]They reached Caesarea the following day. Cornelius had summoned his relatives and close friends and was waiting for him.

[25]When Peter came in, Cornelius went to meet him. He fell down at his feet and worshipped him.

[26]‘Get up!’ said Peter, lifting him up. ‘I’m just a man, too.’
[27]So they talked together, and Peter came in and found lots of people assembled.
[28]‘You must know’, he said to them, ‘that it is forbidden for a Jewish man to mix with or visit a Gentile. But God showed me that I should call nobody “common” or “unclean”. [29]So I came when I was asked, and raised no objections. Do tell me, then, the reason why you sent for me.’
[30]Cornelius gave him the answer.
‘Four days ago’, he said, ‘I was praying in my house at around this time, about three o’clock, and suddenly a man stood beside me in shining clothes. [31]“Cornelius,” he said, “your prayer has been heard, and your almsgiving has been remembered by God. [32]So send someone to Joppa and call Simon, who is named Peter; he is staying in the house of Simon the tanner, beside the sea.” [33]So I sent for you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. So now we are all here, in God’s presence, to listen to everything which the Lord has told you to say.’

Telling the Gentiles about Jesus

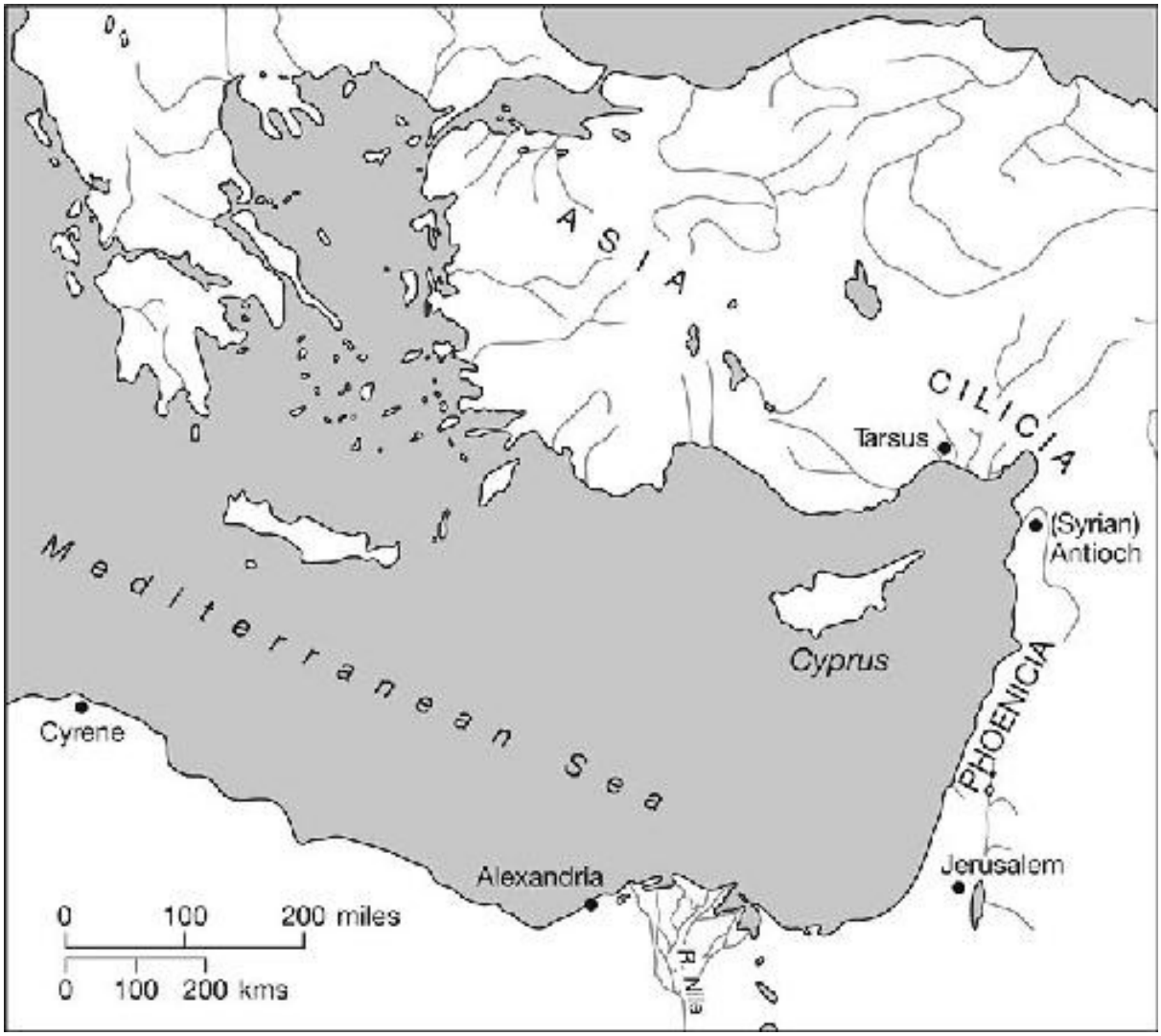
[34]Peter took a deep breath and began.
‘It’s become clear to me’, he said, ‘that God really does show no favouritism. [35]No: in every race, people who fear him and do what is right are acceptable to him. [36]He sent his word to the children of Israel, announcing peace through Jesus Christ – he is Lord of all! [37]You know all about this, and how the word spread through all Judaea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism which John proclaimed.
[38]‘God anointed this man, Jesus of Nazareth, with the holy spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were overpowered by the devil, since God was with him. [39]We are witnesses of everything he did in the land of Judaea and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree; [40]but God raised him on the third day, and allowed him to be seen, [41]not indeed by all the people, but by those of us whom God had appointed beforehand. We ate and drank with him after he had been raised from the dead. [42]And he commanded us to announce to the people, and to bear testimony, that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. [43]All the prophets give their witness: he is the one! Everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his Name.’
[44]While Peter was still speaking these words, the holy spirit fell on everyone who was listening to the word. [45]The circumcised believers who had accompanied Peter were astonished, because the gift of the holy spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles too. [46]They heard them speaking with tongues and praising God.
Then Peter spoke up.
[47]‘Nobody can deny these people water to be baptized, can they?’ he said. ‘They have received the holy spirit, just like we did!’ [48]So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus the Messiah.
Then they asked him to stay for a few days.

Controversy and vindication

11 The apostles, and the brothers and sisters with them in Judaea, heard that the Gentiles had received the word of God. [2]So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, those who wanted to emphasize circumcision took issue with him.
[3]‘Why did you do it?’ they asked. ‘Why did you go in to visit uncircumcised men and eat with them?’
[4]So Peter began to explain it all, step by step.
[5]‘I was in the town of Joppa’, he said, ‘and I was praying. I was in a trance, and I saw a vision: something like a great sail suspended by its four corners was let down from heaven, and came towards me. [6]I stared at it, then I began to look in, and I saw four-footed land animals, wild beasts, reptiles and birds of the air. [7]I heard a voice, saying to me, “Get up, Peter! Kill and eat!” [8]“Certainly not, Lord,” I replied. “Nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth!” [9]Then the voice came from heaven a second time: “What God made clean, you must not regard as common.” [10]All this happened three times, and then the whole lot was drawn back up into heaven.
[11]‘Just then, suddenly, three men appeared at the house where I was, sent to me from Caesarea. [12]The spirit told me to go with them, without raising scrupulous objections. These six brothers also came with me, and we went into the man’s house. [13]He told us that he had seen an angel standing in his house and saying, “Send to Joppa and fetch Simon called Peter, [14]who will speak to you words by which you and all your house will be saved.” [15]As I began to speak, the holy spirit fell on them, just as the spirit did on us at the beginning. [16]And I remembered the word which the Lord had spoken: “John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the holy spirit.”
[17]‘So, then,’ Peter concluded, ‘if God gave them the same gift as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus the Messiah, who was I to stand in the way of God?’
[18]When they heard this, they had nothing more to say. They praised God.
‘Well, then,’ they declared, ‘God has given the Gentiles, too, the repentance that leads to life!’

Taking root – and a name! – in Antioch

[19]The people who had been scattered because of the persecution that came about over Stephen went as far afield as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word only to Jewish people. [20]But some from among them, who were from Cyprus and Cyrene in the first place, arrived in Antioch and spoke to the Hellenists as well, announcing the good news of the Lord Jesus. [21]The Lord’s hand was with them, and a large number of people believed and turned to the Lord.



Acts 11.19–30

22 News of all this reached the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. 23 When he arrived and saw
the grace of God he was glad, and he urged them all to stay firmly loyal to the Lord from the bottom of their hearts. 24 He was a
good man, full of the holy spirit and faith. And a substantial crowd was added to the Lord.
25 Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul 26 and, when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. They were there a
whole year, and were received hospitably in the church, and taught a substantial crowd. And it was in Antioch that the disciples
were first called 'Christians'.
27 Around that time, prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 One of them, Agabus by name, stood up and gave an
indication through the spirit that there would be a great famine over the whole world. (This took place in the reign of Claudius.)
29 Each of the disciples determined, according to their ability, to send what they could to help the brothers and sisters living in
Judaea. 30 They carried out this plan, sending their gift to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

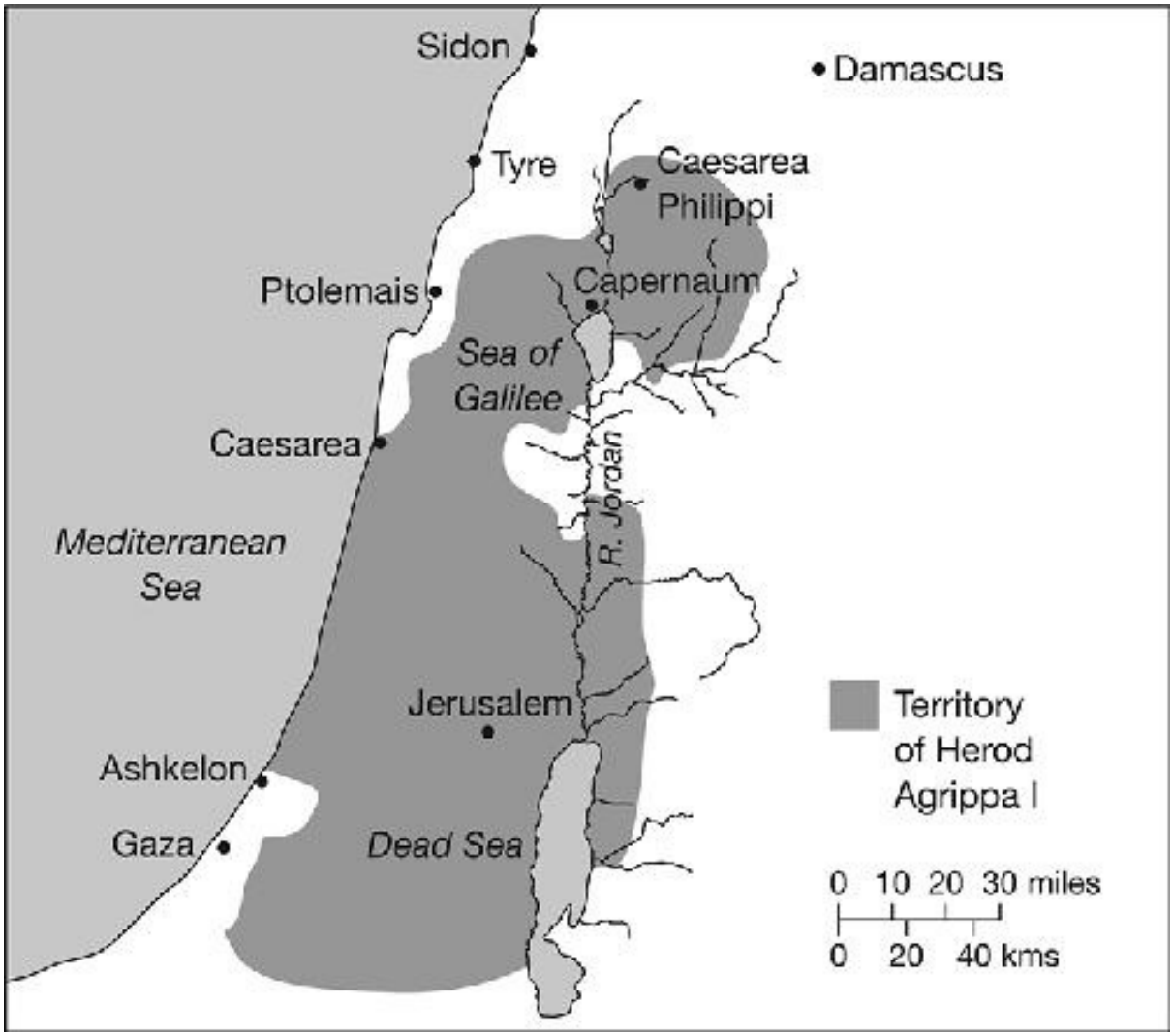
Herod kills James

12 Around that time, King Herod began to use violence towards some people in the church. 2 He killed James the brother of
John with the sword. 3 When he saw that it pleased the Judaeans, he proceeded to arrest Peter, too. (This was around the time
of the Festival of Unleavened Bread.) 4 So, when he had seized him, he put him in prison, and gave four squads of soldiers the job
of guarding him, with the intention of bringing him out to the people after Passover. 5 So Peter was kept in prison. But the church
prayed earnestly to God on his behalf.

Peter's rescue and Rhoda's mistake

6 On the night when Herod was intending to bring Peter out, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains.
There were guards on the doors, watching the prison. 7 Suddenly an angel of the Lord stood there, and a light shone in the cell.
The angel hit Peter on the side and woke him up.
'Get up quickly!' he said.

The chains fell off his hands. [8]Then the angel spoke again.
'Get dressed and put on your sandals,' he said. So Peter did.
'Put on your cloak and follow me,' said the angel.
[9]So he went out, following the angel. He didn't think all this business with the angel was really happening. He thought he was seeing a vision. [10]They went through the first set of guards; then the second; and then they came to the iron gate that led into the city. It opened all by itself. They went out and walked along a street. Suddenly the angel left him.
[11]Then Peter came to his senses.
'Now I know it's true!' he said. 'The Lord sent his angel and snatched me out of Herod's hands. He rescued me from all the things the Judaeans were intending to do.'
[12]Once he had realized this, he went to the house of Mary, John Mark's mother. Lots of people were gathered there, praying. [13]Peter knocked at the door in the outer gate, and a maid called Rhoda came to answer it. [14]When she heard Peter's voice, she was so excited she didn't open the gate. Instead, she ran back in and told them that Peter was standing outside the gate.
[15]'You're mad!' they said to her. But she insisted that it really was true.
'It must be his angel!' they said.
[16]Meanwhile Peter carried on knocking. They opened the door and saw him, and were astonished. [17]He made a sign with his hand for them to be quiet. Then he told them how the Lord had led him out of the prison.
'Tell this to James, and to the other brothers and sisters,' he said.
Then he left, and went somewhere else.
[18]When morning came, there was quite a commotion among the guards as to what had become of Peter. [19]Herod looked for him but couldn't find him. He interrogated the guards and ordered them to be put to death. Then he left Judaea and went down to Caesarea, and stayed there.



Acts 12.20–25

Herod's vanity and death

[20]Now Herod was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon. They all came together to meet him, and they persuaded Blastus, who was in charge of the king's bedchamber, to seek a reconciliation. (They were, you see, dependent on the king's country for their

food.) [21]So a day was set, and Herod dressed himself in his royal robes and took his seat on the official platform to make a public address to them.

[22]The people began to shout,

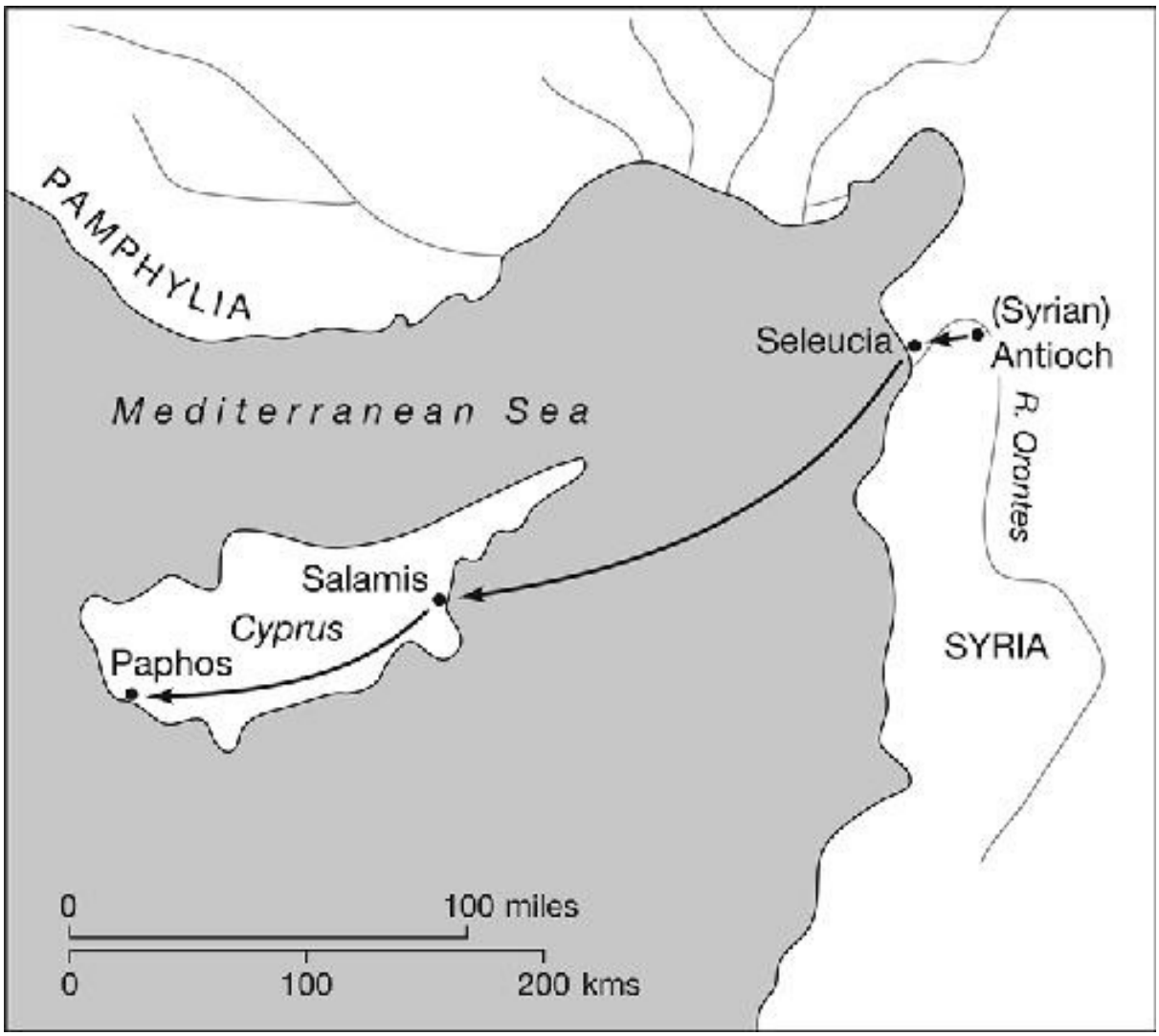
'The voice of a god, not of a mortal!'

[23]Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he didn't give God the glory. He was eaten by worms and expired.

[24]But God's word grew and multiplied. [25]Barnabas and Saul had by now accomplished their ministry in Jerusalem, and they came back to Antioch, bringing John Mark with them.

Mission and magic

13 In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Symeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen from the court of Herod the Tetrarch, and Saul. [2]As they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the holy spirit said, 'Set apart Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' [3]So they fasted and prayed; and then they laid their hands on them and sent them off.



Acts 13.1–6

[4]So off they went, sent out by the holy spirit, and arrived at Seleucia. From there they set sail to Cyprus, [5]and when they arrived in Salamis they announced God's word in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their assistant. [6]They went through the whole of the island, all the way to Paphos. There they found a magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. [7]He was with the governor, Sergius Paulus, who was an intelligent man. He called Barnabas and Saul and asked to hear the word of God. [8]The magician Elymas (that is the translation of his name) was opposing them, and doing his best to turn the governor away from the faith. [9]But Saul, also named Paul, looked intently at him, filled with the holy spirit.

[10]'You're full of trickery and every kind of villainy!' he said. 'You're a son of the devil! You're an enemy of everything that's right! When are you going to stop twisting the paths that God has made straight? [11]Now see here: the Lord's hand will be upon you, and you will be blind for a while; you won't even be able to see the sun!'

At once mist and darkness fell on him, and he went about looking for someone to lead him by the hand. [12]When the governor

saw what had happened, he believed, since he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

Address in Antioch

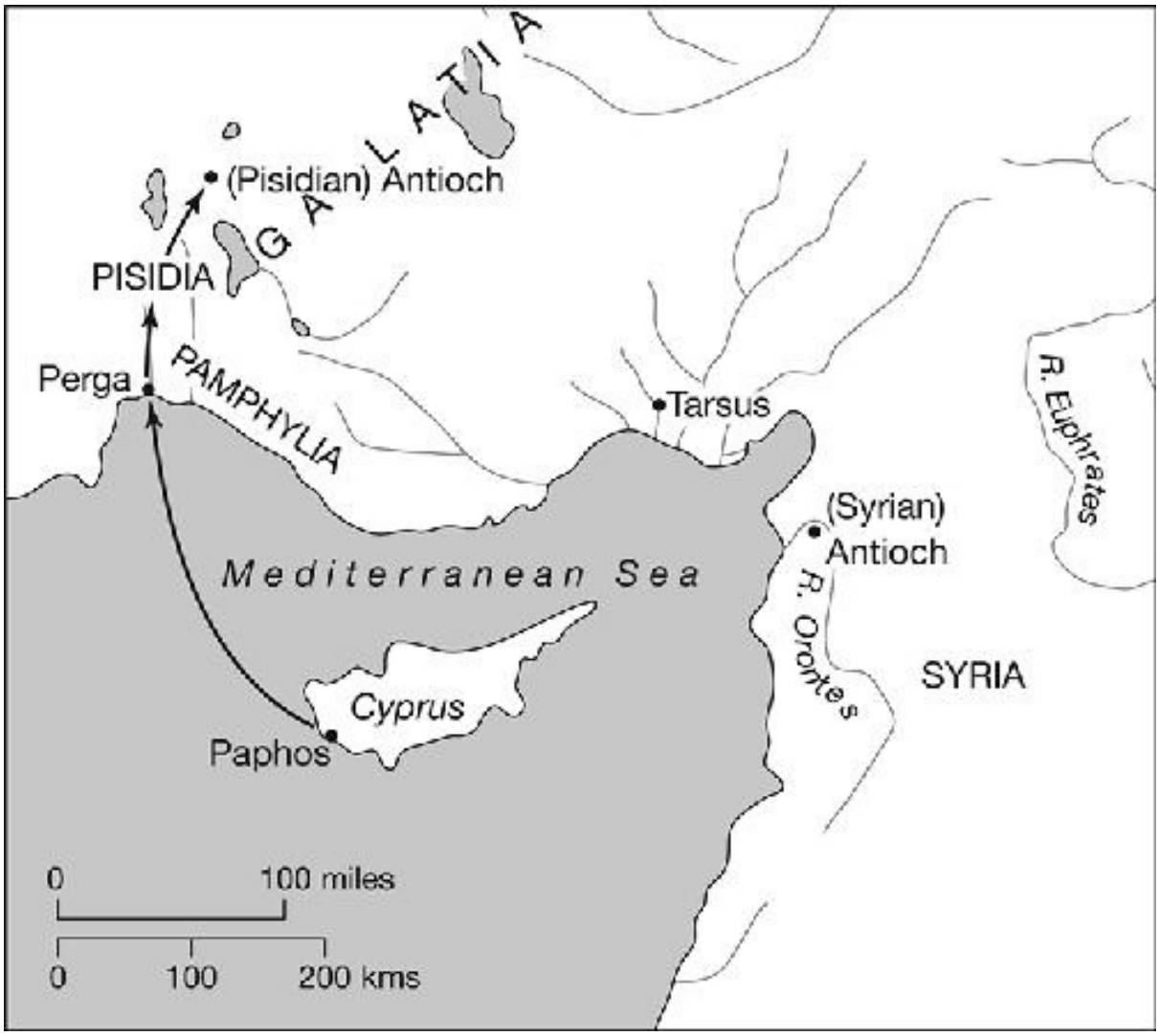
[13]Paul and his companions set off from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. John, however, left them and went back to Jerusalem. [14]But they came through from Perga and arrived in Antioch of Pisidia, where they went into the synagogue on the sabbath day and sat down. [15]After the reading of the law and the prophets, the ruler of the synagogue sent word to them.

'My brothers,' he said, 'if you have any word of exhortation for the people, let us hear it.'

[16]So Paul stood up and motioned with his hand for attention.

'Fellow Israelites,' he said, 'and the godfearers among you: listen. [17]The God of this people Israel chose our ancestors, and he raised the people up to greatness during their stay in the land of Egypt. Then he led them out from there with his hand lifted high, [18]and for about forty years he put up with them in the desert. [19]He drove out seven nations from the land of Canaan, and gave them the land as their inheritance [20]for about four hundred and fifty years. After that, he gave them judges, up until Samuel the prophet. [21]After that, they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man from the tribe of Benjamin. He ruled for forty years, [22]and after God had removed him he raised up for them David as king. He is the one to whom God bore witness when he said, "I have found David, son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will accomplish all my purpose."

[23]'From this man's offspring, in accordance with his promise, God has produced a saviour for Israel: Jesus! [24]Before he appeared, John had announced a baptism of repentance for the whole people of Israel. [25]As John was finishing his course, he said, "What do you suppose I am? I am not the one. But look: someone is coming after me, and I am not worthy to untie the sandals on his feet."



Acts 13.13–25

The messianic challenge

[26]'My brothers and sisters,' Paul continued, 'children of Abraham's family, and the godfearers among you: it is to us that the word of this salvation has been sent! [27]The people who live in Jerusalem, and their rulers, didn't recognize him, and they fulfilled the

words of the prophets which are read to them every sabbath by condemning him. [28]Even though they found no reason to condemn him to death, they asked Pilate to have him killed. [29]When they had completed everything that had been written about him in prophecy, they took him down from the cross and put him in a tomb. [30]But God raised him from the dead, [31]and he was seen for several days by those who had come with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to the people.

[32]'We are here now to bring you the good news which was promised to our ancestors, [33]that God has fulfilled this promise to us, their children, by raising Jesus. This corresponds, indeed, to what is written in the second Psalm:

> You are my son; this day I have begotten you.

[34]'That he raised him from the dead, never more to return to corruption, conforms to what was written:

> I will give you the holy and faithful mercies of David.

[35]'Because, as it says in another place,

> You will not hand over your holy one to see corruption.

[36]'Now David served his own generation, and in the purposes of God he fell asleep and was gathered to his fathers. He did experience corruption. [37]But the one God raised up did not experience corruption. [38]So let it be known to you, my brothers and sisters, that forgiveness of sins is announced through him, and that everything from which you were unable to be set right by the law of Moses, [39]by him every one who believes is set right.

[40]'Beware, then, lest what the prophets foretold comes true of you:

> [41]Look out, you scoffers – be amazed, and disappear!
> I am doing something in your days, a work which you wouldn't believe
> even if someone were to explain it to you.'

[42]As Paul and Barnabas were leaving, they begged them to come back the next sabbath and tell them more about these things. [43]Many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed them once the synagogue was dismissed. They spoke to them some more, and urged them to remain in God's grace.

A light to the Gentiles

[44]On the next sabbath, almost the whole city came together to hear the word of the Lord. [45]But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with righteous indignation, and spoke blasphemous words against what Paul was saying.

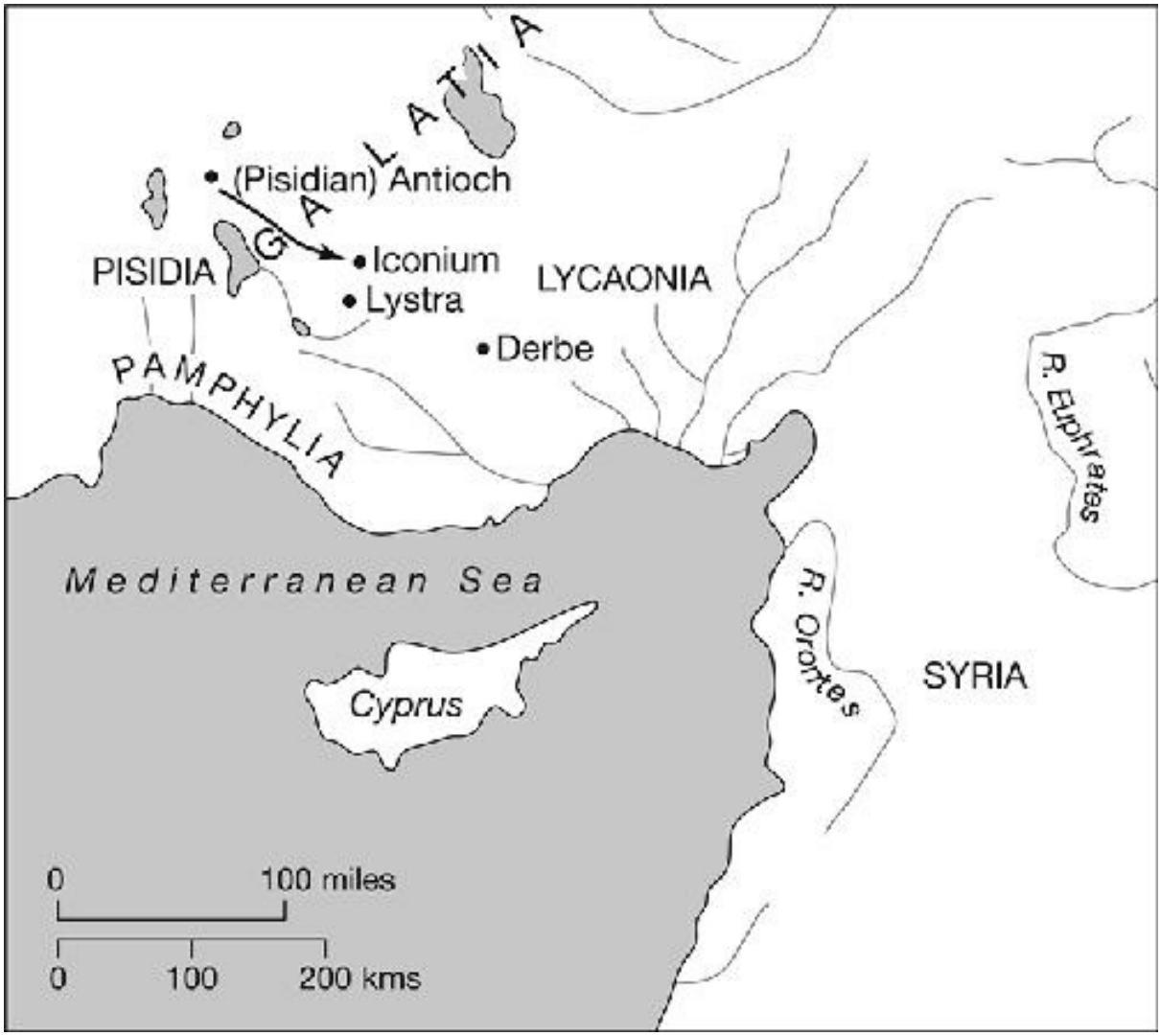
[46]Paul and Barnabas grew very bold.

'God's word had to be spoken to you first,' they declared. 'But since you are rejecting it, and judging yourselves unworthy of the life of God's new age, look! We are turning to the Gentiles! [47]This is what the Lord has commanded, you see:

> I have set you for a light to the nations,
> so that you can be salvation-bringers to the end of the earth.'

[48]When the Gentiles heard this, they were thrilled, and they praised the word of the Lord. All those who were marked out for the life of God's new age became believers. [49]And the word of the Lord spread through the whole land.

[50]But the Jews incited the devout aristocratic women and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. [51]They, however, shook the dust off their feet and went on to Iconium. [52]The disciples were filled with joy and with the holy spirit.

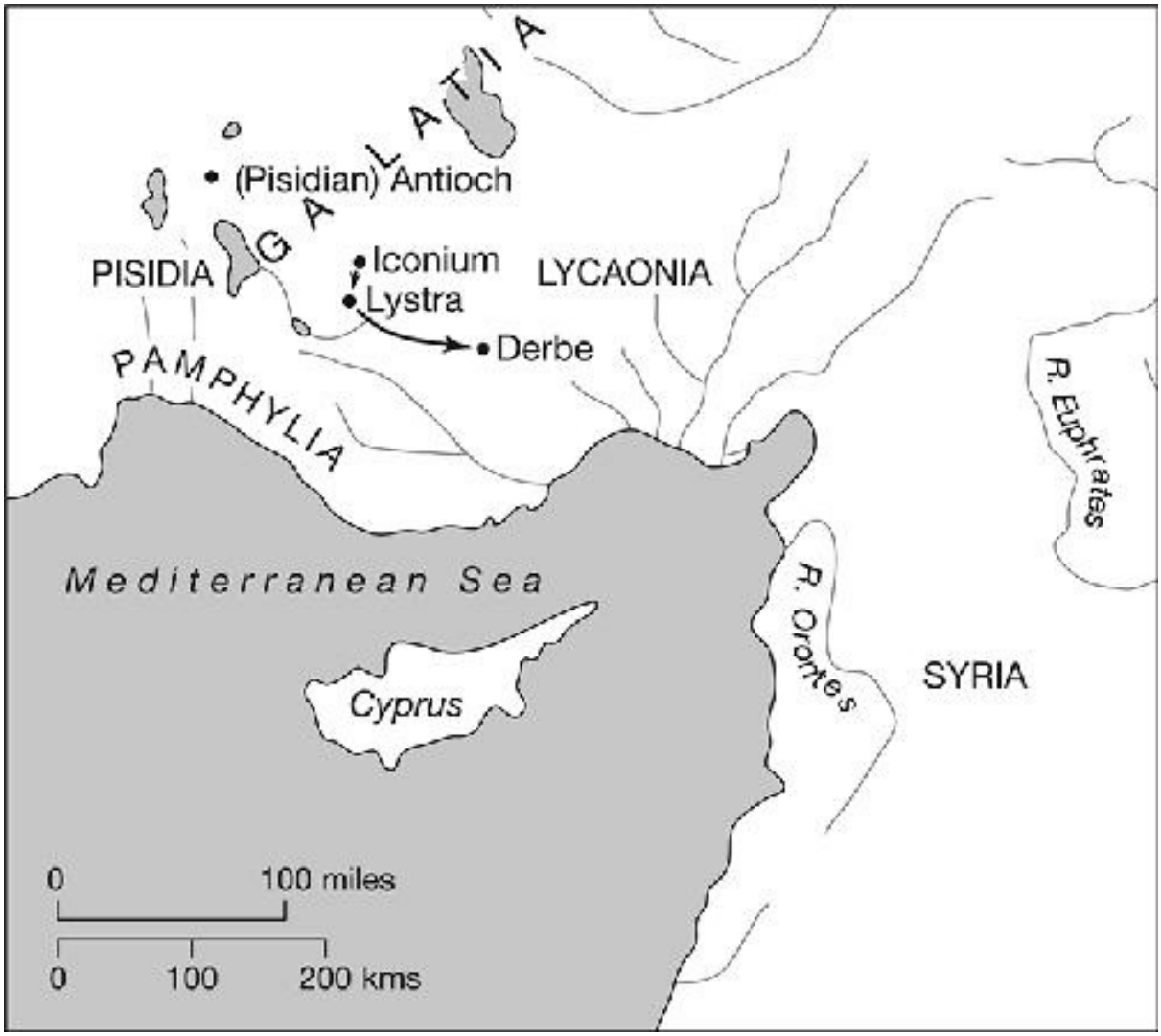


Acts 13.51

Iconium

14 What happened in Iconium was much the same. They went into the Jewish synagogue and spoke, with the result that a large crowd, both of Jews and of Greeks, came to faith. [2]But the unbelieving Jews stirred up and poisoned the minds of the Gentiles against the brothers. [3]They stayed there a long time, speaking boldly on behalf of the Lord, who bore them witness to the word of his grace by giving signs and wonders which were done at their hands.

[4]But the inhabitants of the city were divided. Some were with the Jews, and some with the apostles. [5]But then the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, made an attempt to ill- treat them and stone them. [6]They got wind of it, however, and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding countryside. [7]There they went on announcing the good news.



Acts 14.1–7

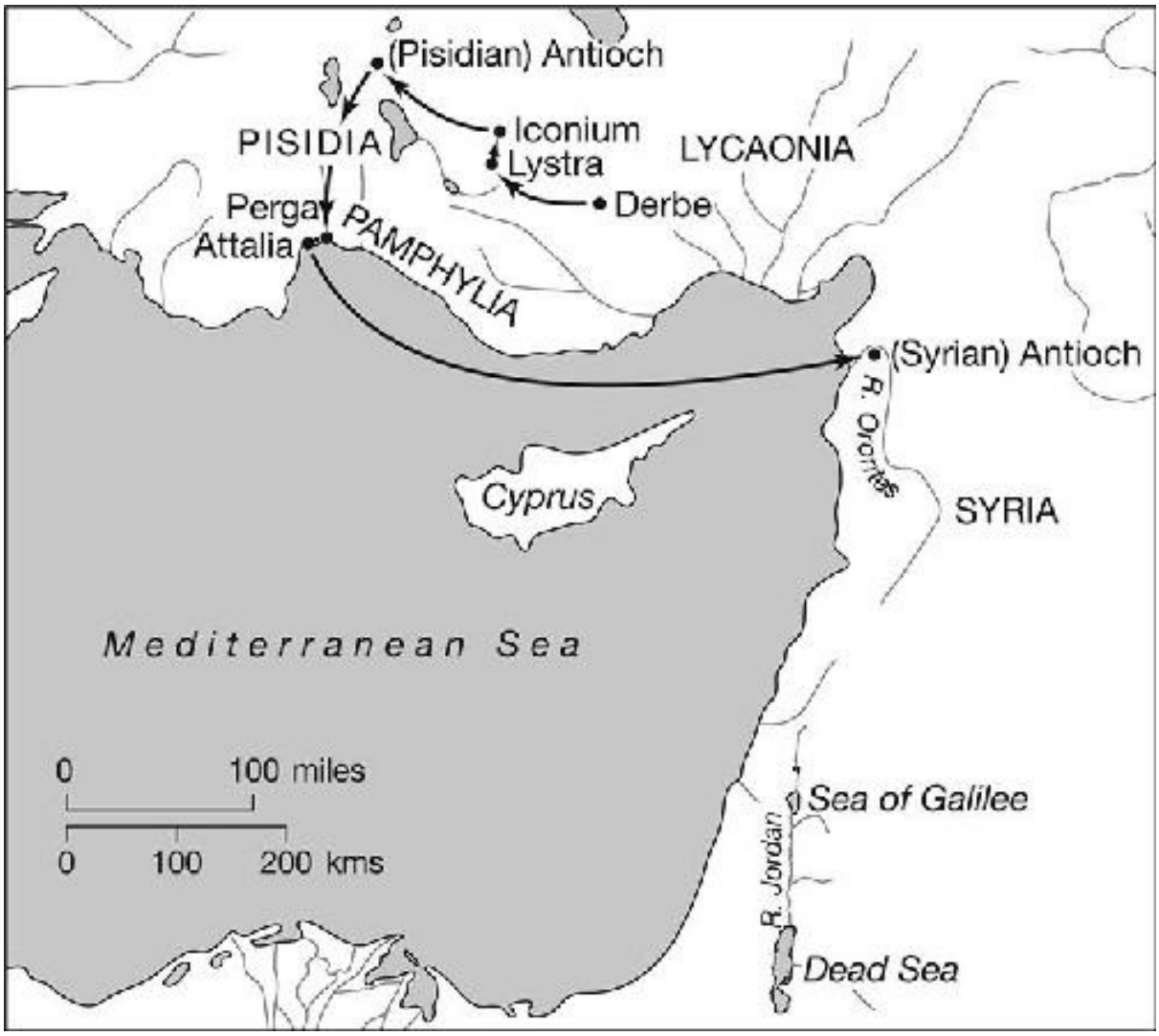
Confusion in Lystra

8 There was a man sitting in Lystra who was unable to use his feet. He had been lame from his mother's womb, and had never
walked. 9 He heard Paul speaking. When Paul looked hard at him, and saw that he had faith to be made well, 10 he said with a loud
voice, 'Stand up straight on your feet!'
Up he jumped, and walked about.
11 When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they shouted loudly in the Lycaonian language, 'The gods have come down to us
in human form!'
12 They called Barnabas 'Zeus', and Paul, because he was the main speaker, 'Hermes'. 13 The priest of Zeus, whose temple was
just outside the city, brought oxen and garlands to the city gates. There was a crowd with him, and he was all ready to offer
sacrifice.
14 But when the apostles, Paul and Barnabas, heard of it, they tore their clothes and rushed into the crowd.
15 'Men, men,' they shouted, 'what on earth are you doing? We are just ordinary humans, with the same nature as you, and we
are bringing you the wonderful message that you should turn away from these foolish things to the living God, the one who made
heaven and earth and the sea and everything in them. 16 In earlier generations he allowed all the nations to go their own ways,
17 but even then he didn't leave himself without witness. He has done you good, giving you rain from heaven and times of
fruitfulness, filling your bodies with food and your hearts with gladness.'
18 Even by saying this, they only just restrained the crowds from offering them sacrifice. 19 But some Jews arrived from Antioch
and Iconium, and persuaded the crowds to stone Paul. They dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. 20 The disciples
gathered round him, however, and he got up and went into the city. The next day he and Barnabas went off to Derbe.

Opening the door of faith

21 They preached in Derbe, and made many disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, 22 strengthening the
hearts of the disciples, and urging them to remain in the faith. They warned them that getting into God's kingdom would mean

going through considerable suffering. [23]In every church they appointed elders by laying hands on them. They fasted, prayed, and commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.



Acts 14.21–28

[24]They went through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia; [25]and when they had spoken the word in Perga they went down to Attalia. [26]From there they sailed to Antioch, which was where they had been commended to God's grace for the work which they had accomplished. [27]Once there, they called the church together, and told them all the things which God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith for the Gentiles. [28]They stayed there a long time with the disciples.

Is circumcision necessary?

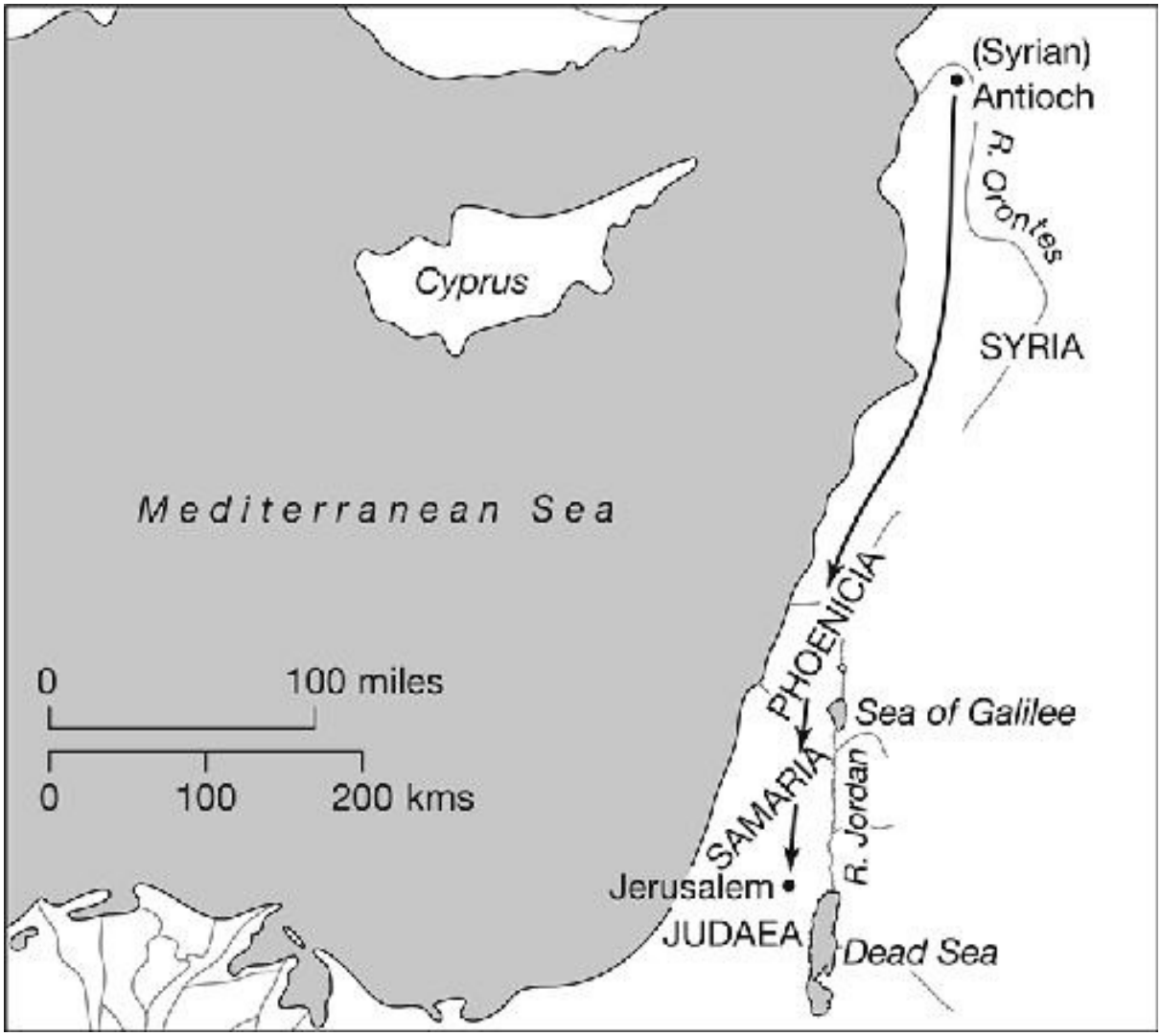
15 Some people came from Judaea to Antioch and, on arrival, began to teach the Christians that they could not be saved unless they were circumcised according to the custom of Moses. [2]This caused considerable uproar and dispute between them and Paul and Barnabas, and the church decided to send Paul and Barnabas, and some others from their fellowship, to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem, to try to sort out the problem. [3]So they were sent off by the church. They travelled through Phoenicia and Samaria, telling people as they went about the conversion of the Gentiles. They brought great joy to the Christian communities.

[4]When they arrived in Jerusalem they were welcomed by the church, the apostles and the elders, and they told them all the things that God had done with them. [5]But some believers from the party of the Pharisees stood up.

'They must be circumcised,' they said, 'and you must tell them to keep the law of Moses.'

[6]The apostles and elders gathered together to see what to do about this matter. [7]After considerable argument, Peter got up.

'My brothers,' he said, 'you know that from our early days together God chose that it should be from my mouth that the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. [8]And God, who knows the heart, bore them witness, by giving them the holy spirit just as he did to us. [9]He made no distinction between us and them, but he purified their hearts through faith. [10]So now, why are you putting God to the test, by placing a yoke on the disciples' neck which neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? [11]Rather, we believe that it is by the grace of the Lord Jesus that we shall be saved, just like them.'



Acts 15.1–11

The judgment of James

12The whole company was silent, and listened to Barnabas and Paul describing the signs and wonders which God had done
through them among the Gentiles. 13After they had finished, James replied.
‘My dear brothers,’ he said, ‘listen to me. 14Symeon has explained how, at the beginning, God graciously favoured the Gentiles,
to take from them a people for his own name. 15This, indeed, is in accordance with the words of the prophets, which say,

16After this I will return, and will rebuild the tabernacle of David which had collapsed,
and I will build the ruins again, and set them straight,
17so that the rest of the human race may seek the Lord,
and all the nations upon whom my name has been called.
Thus says the Lord, who has made these things 18known from of old.

19‘Therefore this is my judgment: we should not cause extra difficulties for those of the Gentiles who have turned to God.
20Rather, we should send them a message, warning them to keep away from things that have been polluted by idols, from
fornication, from what has been strangled, and from blood. 21Moses, after all, has from ancient times had people proclaiming him
from city to city, since he is read in the synagogues sabbath after sabbath.’

The letter to the churches

22Then the apostles and elders, with the whole assembly, decided to send people from their number, Judas Barsabbas and Silas
(men well thought of by the Christian community) to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. 23They sent a letter with them, which read
as follows.
‘The apostles and elders send greetings to our Gentile brothers and sisters in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia. 24Since we have heard
that some of our number (not, however, sent by us) have been saying things which have troubled you, causing you distress of

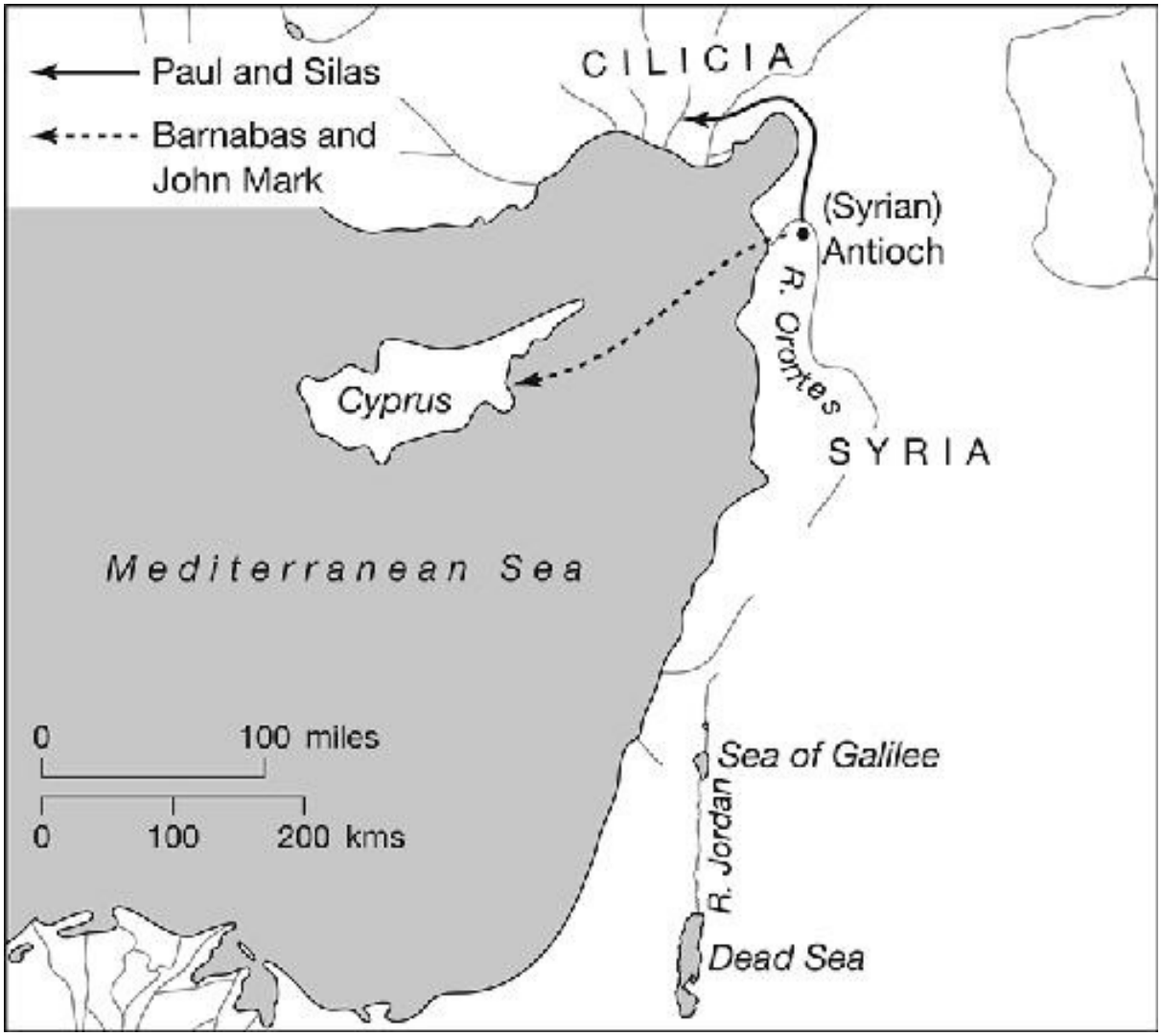
heart, [25]we resolved unanimously that it would be best to send to you men whom we have chosen, together with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, [26]who have risked their lives for the name of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus. [27]So we have sent Judas and Silas, and they will tell you the same things face to face. [28]For it seemed good to the holy spirit and to us not to lay any burden on you beyond the following necessary things: [29]that you should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, from blood, from what has been strangled, and from fornication. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.'

[30]So they went off and came down to Antioch, where they gathered the people together and presented the letter. [31]When they read it, they were delighted with the message it contained. [32]Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, said a good deal to encourage the brothers and sisters, and they gave them strength. [33]When they had spent some time there, they left the family in peace and returned to those who had sent them. [35]But Paul and Barnabas stayed on in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others as well.

A huge row

[36]After some days, Paul said to Barnabas, 'Let's go back and visit the brothers and sisters in all the various cities where we preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing.'

[37]Barnabas wanted to take John, called Mark, along with them. [38]But Paul reckoned that it was not a good idea to take with them someone who had left them in Pamphylia and had not gone on with them to the rest of the work. [39]There was a huge row, which resulted in them splitting up. Barnabas took Mark and sailed off for Cyprus. [40]Paul chose Silas, and went off, having been commended by the church to the grace of the Lord. [41]They went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.



Acts 15.39–41

Timothy – and new developments

16 Paul went on further, to Derbe and then Lystra. There was a disciple there by the name of Timothy, the son of a believing Jewish woman, but with a Greek father. [2]The Christians in Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. [3]Paul wanted Timothy to go with them, so he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews in those regions, since they all knew that his father was

Greek. [4]When they went through the cities, they handed on to them the decisions which had been taken by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, so that they could observe them. [5]The churches were strengthened in faith, and grew in number every day.

Acts 16.1–10

[6]They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, since the holy spirit had forbidden them to speak the word in the province of Asia. [7]When they came to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the spirit of Jesus didn't allow them to do so. [8]So, passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. [9]Then a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man from Macedonia was standing there, pleading with him, and saying, 'Come across to Macedonia and help us!' [10]When he saw the vision, at once we set about finding a way to get across to Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the good news to them.

Preaching and prison in Philippi

[11]So we sailed away from Troas and made a straight course to Samothrace, and the next day to Neapolis. [12]From there we went on to Philippi, a Roman colony which is the chief city of the district of Macedonia. We stayed in this city for some days.

Acts 16.11–12

[13]On the sabbath day we went outside the gate to a place by a river where we reckoned there was a place of prayer, and there we sat down. Some women had gathered, and we spoke to them. [14]There was a woman called Lydia, a godfearer, who was a seller of purple from Thyatira. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what Paul was saying. [15]She was baptized, with all her household.

'If you have judged me faithful to the Lord,' she begged us, 'please come and stay at my home.'

So she persuaded us.

[16]As we were going to the place of prayer we were met by a girl who had a spirit of divination. She and her oracles made a good living for her owners. [17]She followed Paul and the rest of us.

'These men are servants of God Most High!' she would shout out. 'They are declaring to you the way of salvation!'

[18]She did this for many days. Eventually, Paul got fed up with it. He turned round and addressed the spirit.

'I command you in the name of Jesus the Messiah,' he said, 'come out of her!'

And it came out then and there.

[19]When the girl's owners saw that their hope of profit had vanished, they seized Paul and Silas, dragged them into the public square before the authorities, [20]and presented them to the magistrates.

'These men', they said, 'are throwing our city into an uproar! They are Jews, [21]and they are teaching customs which it's illegal for us Romans to accept or practise!'

[22]The crowd joined in the attack on them, and the magistrates had their clothes torn off them and gave orders for them to be beaten with rods. [23]When they had thoroughly beaten them, they threw them into prison, and gave orders to the jailer to guard them securely. [24]With that instruction, he put them into the innermost part of the prison, and fastened their feet in the stocks.

Earthquake and salvation

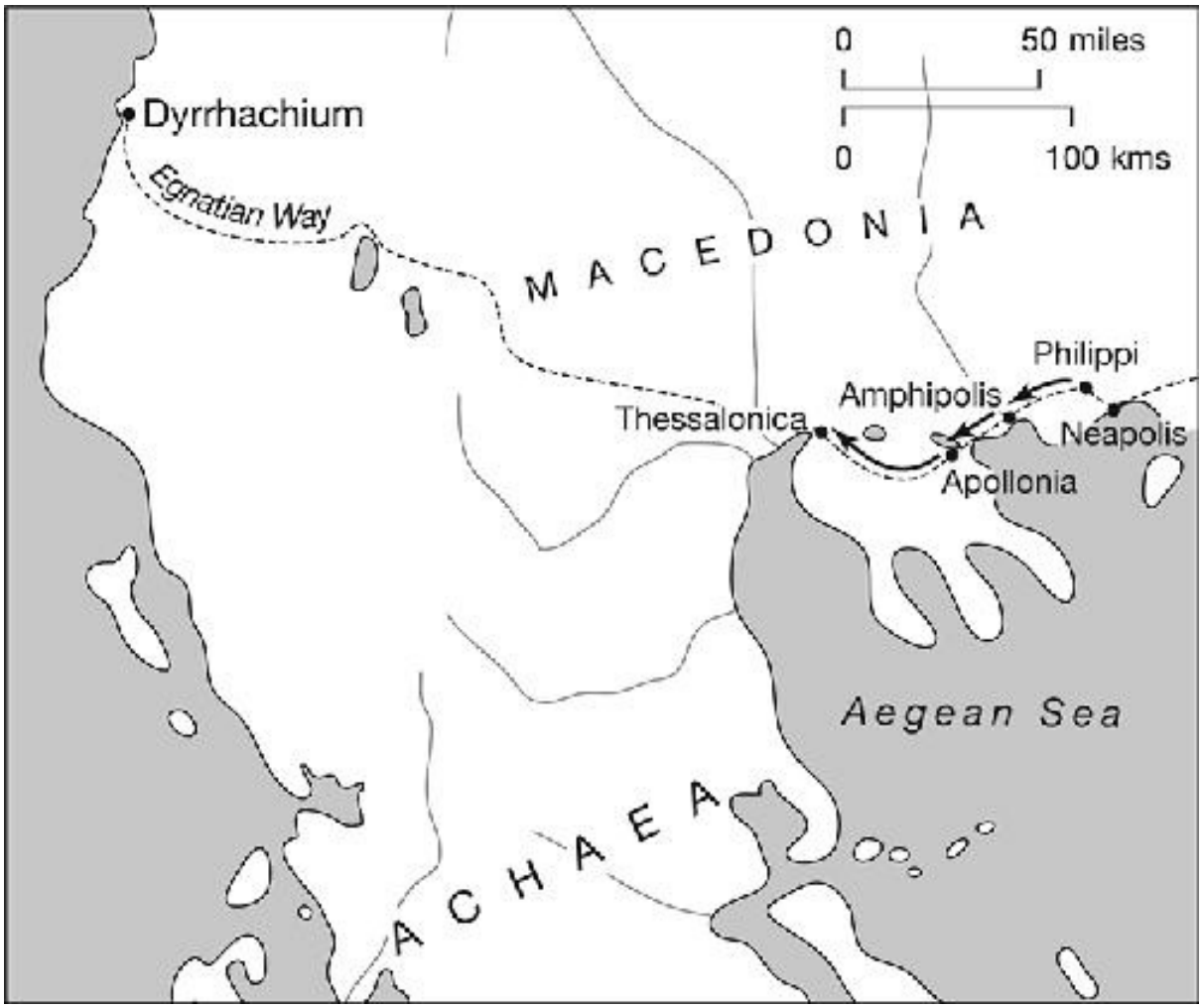
[25]Around midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. [26]Suddenly there was a huge earthquake, which shook the foundations of the prison. At once all the doors flew open, and everyone's chains became loose. [27]When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. [28]But Paul shouted at the top of his voice, 'Don't harm yourself! We're all still here!'

[29]The jailer called for lights and rushed in. Trembling all over, he fell down before Paul and Silas. [30]Then he brought them

outside.
‘Gentlemen,’ he said, ‘will you please tell me how I can get out of this mess?’
31‘Believe in the Lord Jesus,’ they replied, ‘and you will be rescued – you and your household.’
32And they spoke the word of the Lord to him, with everyone who was in his house. 33He took them, at that very hour of the night, and washed their wounds. Then at once he was baptized, and all his household with him. 34Then he took them into his house, put food on the table, and rejoiced with his whole house that he had believed in God.

Publicly vindicated

35When day broke, the magistrates sent their officers with the message, ‘Let those men go.’ 36The jailer passed on what they said to Paul.
‘The magistrates have sent word that you should be released,’ he said. ‘So now you can leave and go in peace.’
37But Paul objected.
‘We are Roman citizens!’ he said. ‘They didn’t put us on trial, they beat us in public, they threw us into prison, and now they are sending us away secretly? No way! Let them come themselves and take us out.’
38The officers reported these words to the magistrates. When they heard that they were Roman citizens, they were afraid. 39They went and apologized, brought them out of the prison, and requested that they leave the city. 40So when they had left the prison they went to Lydia’s house. There they saw and encouraged the brothers and sisters, and then they went on their way.



Acts 17.1

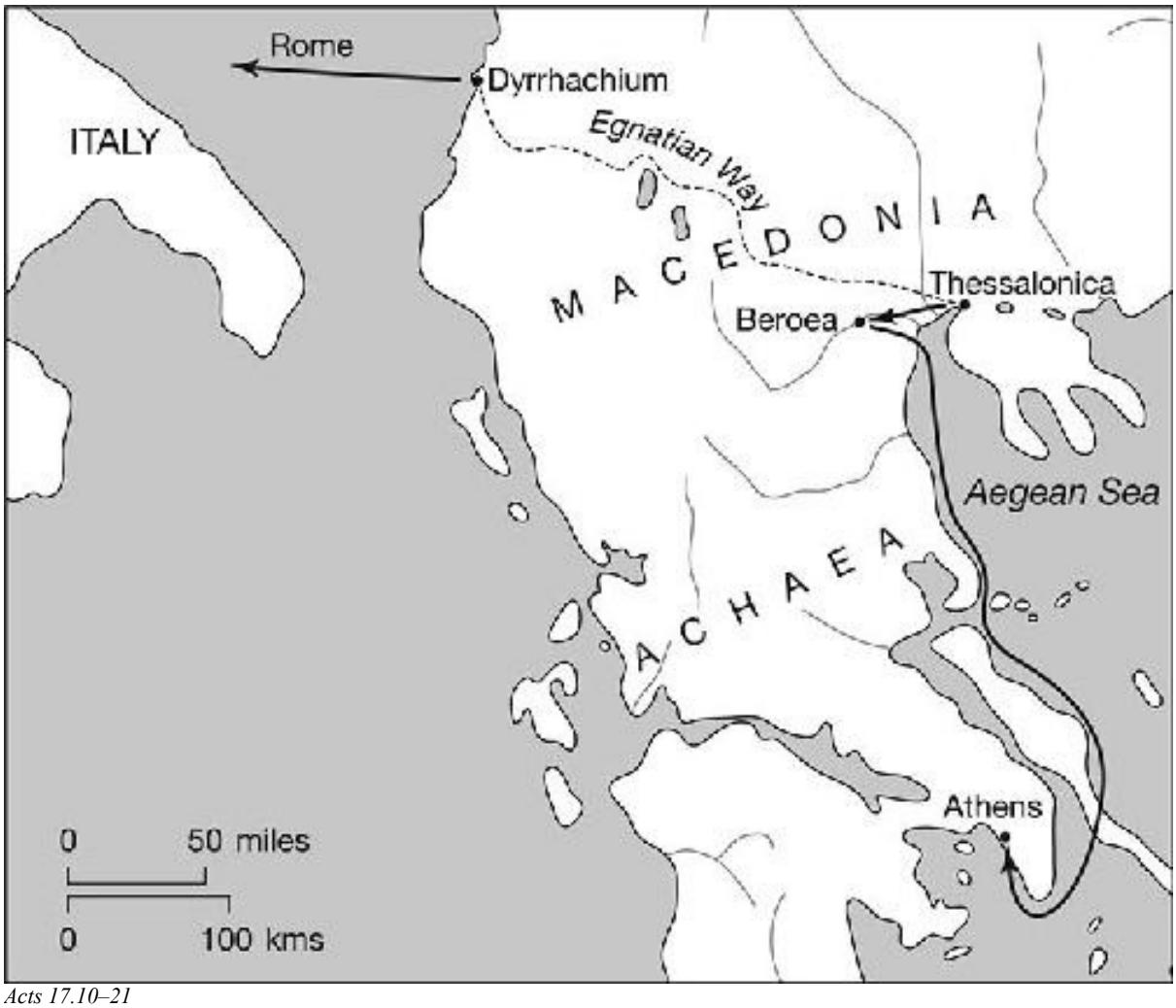
Another king!

17 Paul and Silas travelled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, and came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue.
2Paul went there, as he usually did, and for three sabbaths he spoke to them, expounding the scriptures, 3interpreting and explaining that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and to rise from the dead, and that ‘This Jesus, that I am announcing to you, is the Messiah’. 4Some of them were persuaded, and threw in their lot with Paul and Silas, including a large crowd of godfearing Greeks, together with quite a few of the leading women.
5But the Jews were righteously indignant. They took some villainous men from the market-place, drew a crowd, and threw the city into an uproar. They besieged Jason’s house and searched for Paul and Silas, to bring them out to the mob. 6When they

couldn't find them, they dragged Jason and some of the Christians before the town authorities.

'These are the people who are turning the world upside down!' they yelled. 'Now they've come here! [7]Jason has had them in his house! They are all acting against the decrees of Caesar – and they're saying that there is another king, Jesus!'

[8]When they heard these words, the crowd and the authorities were both greatly agitated. [9]They bound Jason and the others over, and then dismissed them.



Acts 17.10–21

Paul reaches Athens

[10]The Christians in Thessalonica quickly sent Paul and Silas on, by night, to Beroea. When they got there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. [11]The people there were more generous in spirit than those in Thessalonica. They received the word with considerable eagerness, searching the scriptures day by day to see if what they were hearing was indeed the case. [12]Many of them became believers, including some of the well-born Greek women, and quite a few men.

[13]But when the Jews from Thessalonica knew that the word of God had been proclaimed by Paul in Beroea, too, they came there as well, stirring up trouble and whipping up the crowd. [14]So the Christians quickly sent Paul away as far as the sea-coast, while Silas and Timothy remained behind. [15]Those who were conducting Paul brought him all the way to Athens, where he told them to tell Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible. Then they left him there.

[16]So Paul waited in Athens. While he was there, his spirit was stirred up as he saw the whole city simply full of idols. [17]He argued in the synagogue with the Jews and the godfearers, and in the market-place every day with those who happened to be there. [18]Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were disputing with him.

'What can this word-scatterer be on about?' some were saying.

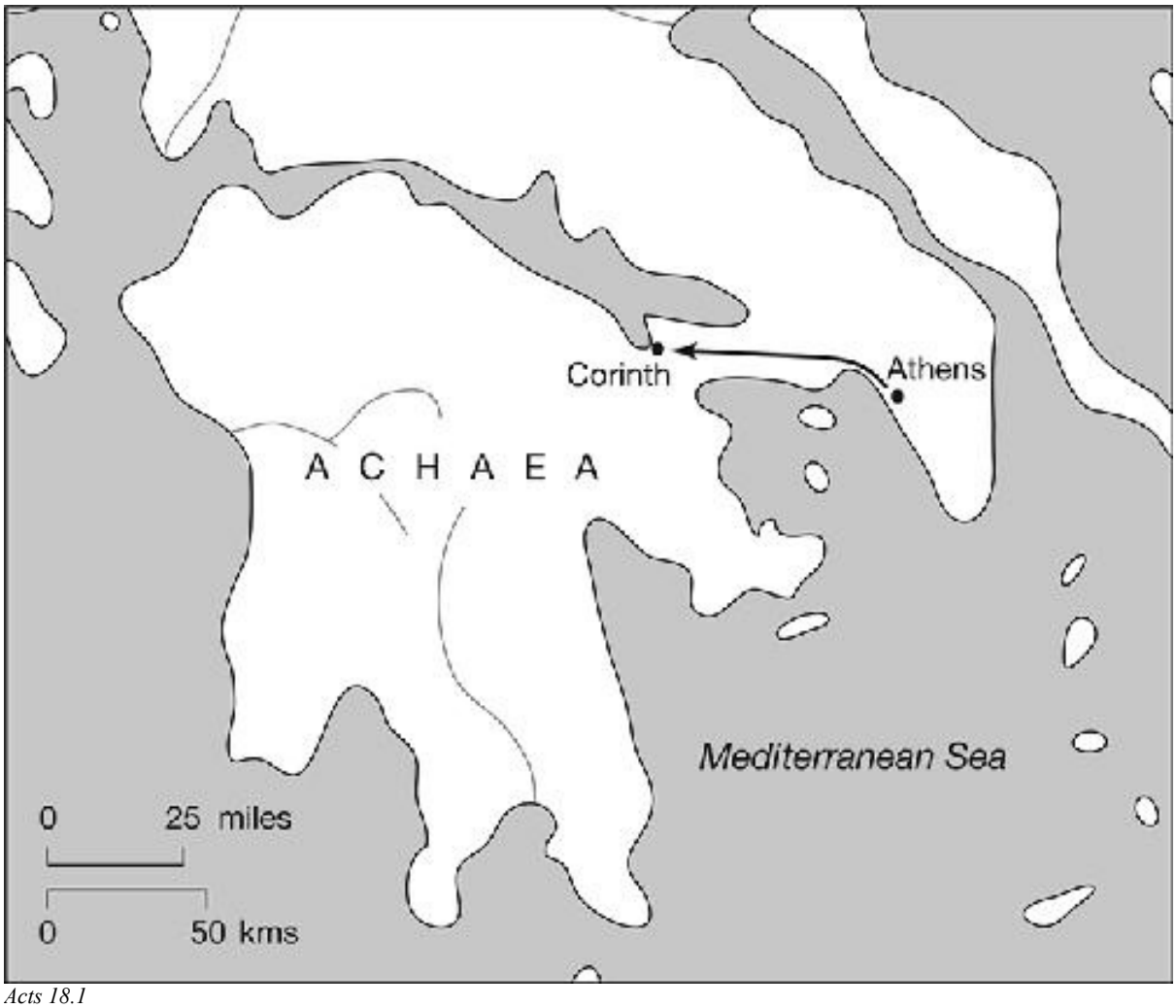
'He seems to be proclaiming foreign divinities,' declared others – since he was preaching 'Jesus and Anastasis'. ('Anastasis' means 'resurrection'.) [19]So they took him up to the Areopagus.

'Are we able to know', they said, 'what this new teaching really is that you are talking about? [20]You are putting very strange ideas into our minds. We'd like to find out what it all means.'

[21]All the Athenians, and the foreigners who live there, spend their time simply and solely in telling and hearing the latest novelty.

Paul among the philosophers

22So Paul stood up in the midst of the Areopagus.
‘Men of Athens,’ he said, ‘I see that you are in every way an extremely religious people. 23For as I was going along and looking at your objects of worship, I saw an altar with the inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Well: I’m here to tell you about what it is that you are worshipping in ignorance. 24The God who made the world and everything in it, the one who is Lord of heaven and earth, doesn’t live in temples made by human hands. 25Nor does he need to be looked after by human hands, as though he lacked something, since he himself gives life and breath and all things to everyone. 26He made from one stock every race of humans to live on the whole face of the earth, allotting them their properly ordained times and the boundaries for their dwellings. 27The aim was that they would search for God, and perhaps reach out for him and find him. Indeed, he is actually not far from each one of us, 28for in him we live and move and exist; as also some of your own poets have put it, “For we are his offspring”.
29‘Well, then, if we really are God’s offspring, we ought not to suppose that the divinity is like gold or silver or stone, formed by human skill and ingenuity. 30That was just ignorance; but the time for it has passed, and God has drawn a veil over it. Now, instead, he commands all people everywhere to repent, 31because he has established a day on which he intends to call the world to account with full and proper justice by a man whom he has appointed. God has given all people his pledge of this by raising this man from the dead.’
32When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them ridiculed Paul. But others said, ‘We will give you another hearing about this.’ 33So Paul went out from their presence. 34But some people joined him and believed, including Dionysius, a member of the court of the Areopagus, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.



Acts 18.1

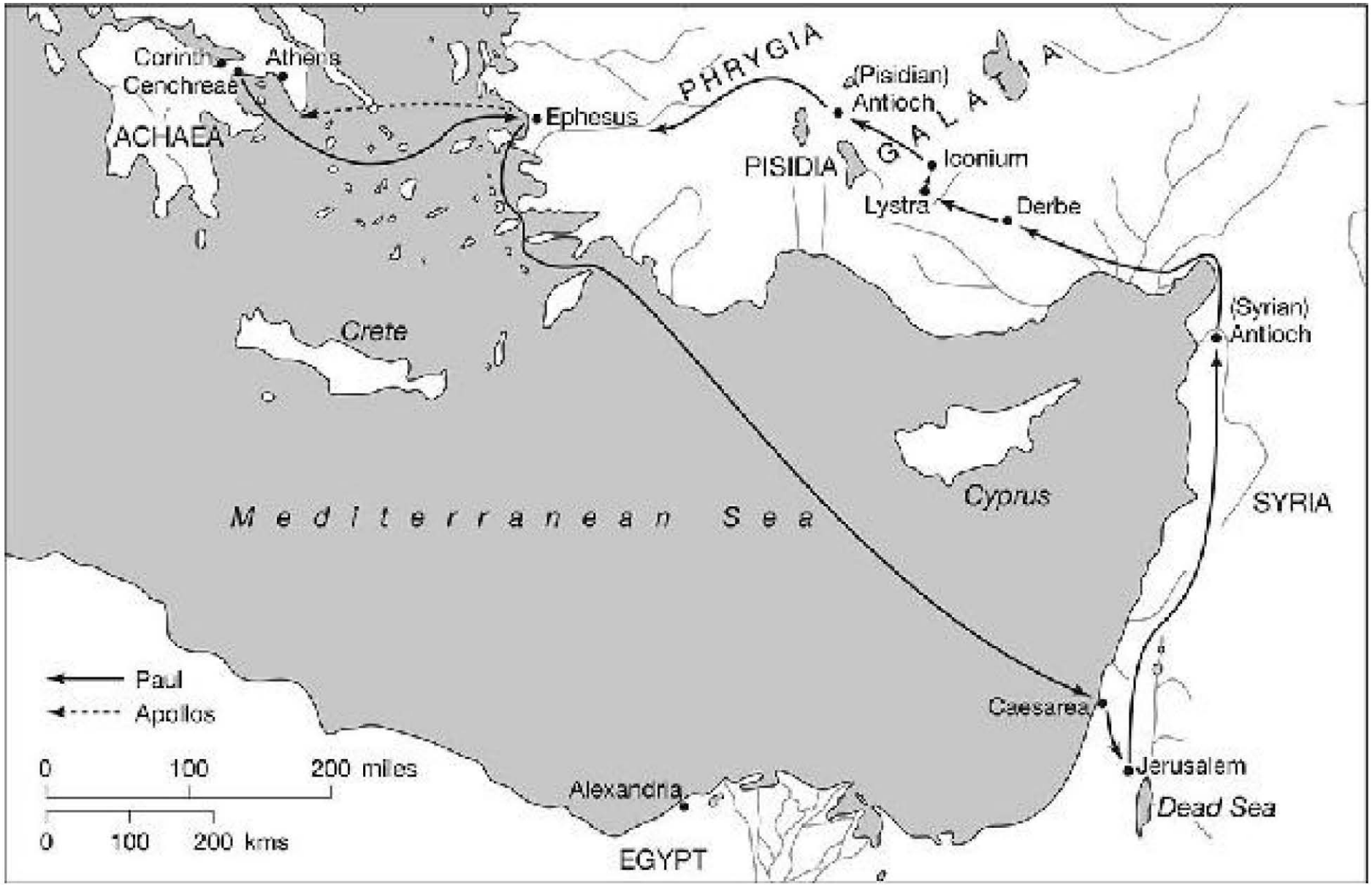
A year in Corinth

18 After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. 2There he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently arrived from Italy with Priscilla his wife, due to Claudius’ edict banishing all Jews from Rome. Paul paid them a visit 3and, because they were in the same business, he stayed with them and worked. They were, by trade, tent-makers.
4Paul argued every sabbath in the synagogue, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks. 5When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was putting great energy into the task of bearing forthright witness to the Jews that the Messiah really was Jesus.

[6]When they opposed him, and blasphemed, he shook out his clothes.
‘Your blood be on your own heads!’ he said. ‘I am innocent. From now on I shall go to the Gentiles.’
[7]He moved on from the synagogue, and went in to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a godfearer who lived opposite the synagogue. [8]But Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, with all his household, and many of the Corinthians heard about it, came to faith, and were baptized.
[9]The Lord spoke to Paul by night in a vision.
‘Don’t be afraid,’ he said. ‘Speak on, and don’t be silent, [10]because I am with you, and nobody will be able to lay a finger on you to harm you. There are many of my people in this city.’
[11]He stayed there eighteen months, teaching the word of God among them.

Christianity declared legal in Achaea

[12]When Gallio was proconsul of Achaea, the Jews made a concerted attack on Paul, and led him to the official tribunal.
[13]‘This man’, they said, ‘is teaching people to worship God in illegal ways.’
[14]Paul was getting ready to speak when Gallio intervened.
‘Look here, you Jews,’ he said to them. ‘If this was a matter of serious wrongdoing or some wicked villainy, I would receive your plea in the proper way. [15]But if this is a dispute about words, names and laws within your own customs, you can sort it out among yourselves. I don’t intend to be a judge in such matters.’
[16]Then he dismissed them from the tribunal. [17]But the crowd seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him right there in front of the tribunal. Gallio, however, totally ignored this.


Corinth
Cenchreae
Athens
ACHAEA
Ephesus
PHRYGIA
(Pisidian)
Antioch
GALATIA
PISIDIA
Iconium
Lystra
Derbe
Crete
(Syrian)
Antioch
Cyprus
SYRIA
Mediterranean Sea
Paul
Apollos
0
100
200 miles
0
100
200 kms
Caesarea
Jerusalem
Dead Sea
Alexandria
EGYPT

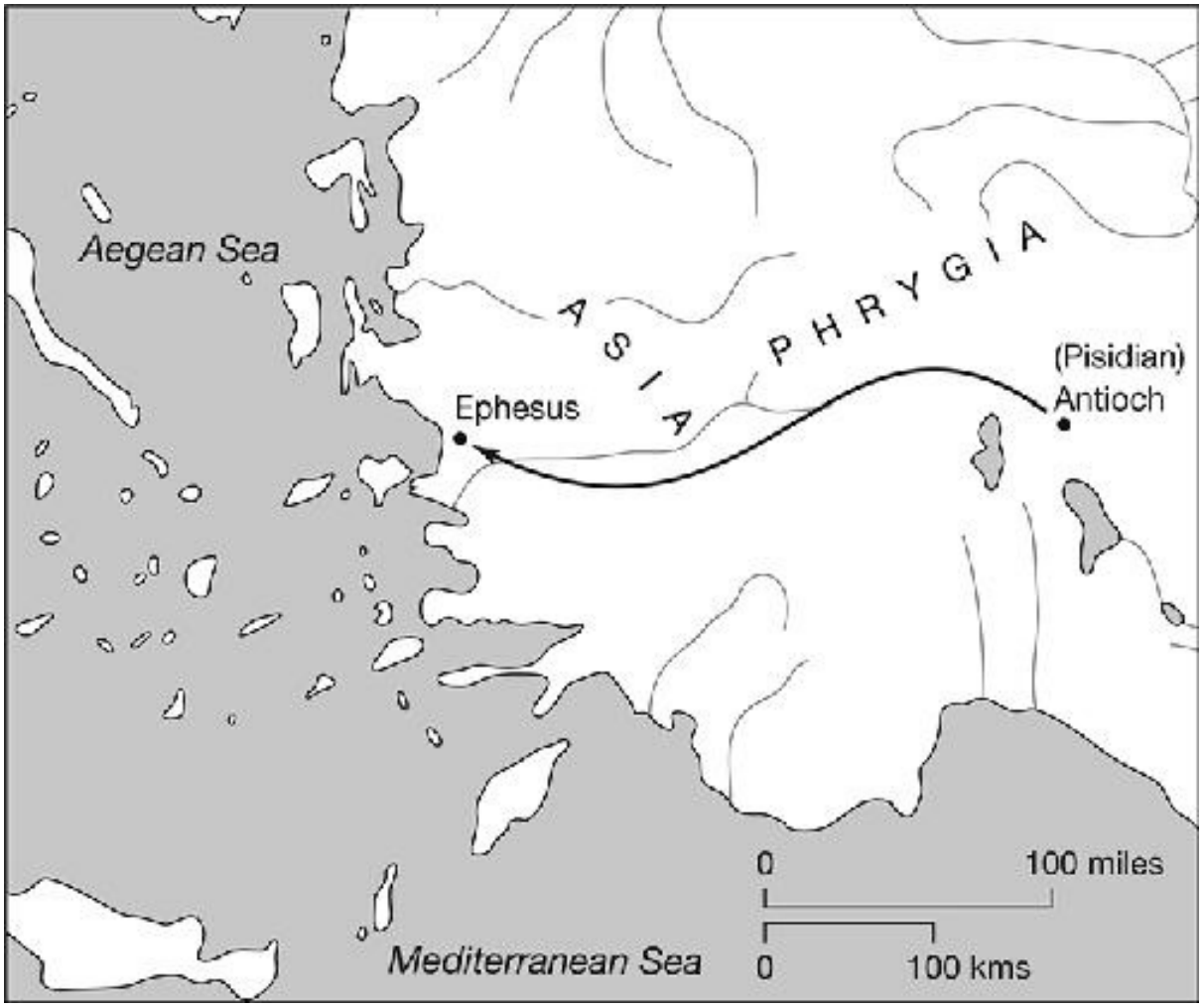
Acts 18.18–28

Apollos in Ephesus and Corinth

[18]Paul stayed on for several more days with the Christians, and then said his farewells and sailed away to Syria, taking Priscilla
and Aquila with him. In Cenchreae he had his hair cut off, since he was under a vow. [19]When they arrived at Ephesus he left them
there, while he himself went into the synagogue and disputed with the Jews. [20]When they asked him to stay with them for a longer
time, he refused, [21]and took his leave.
'I will come back to you again,' he said, 'if that's God's will.'
Then he left Ephesus, [22]and went to Caesarea. Then he went up to Jerusalem, greeted the church, and went back to Antioch.
[23]When he had spent some time there, he went off again and travelled from one place to another throughout the region of Galatia
and Phrygia, encouraging all the disciples.
[24]Now there arrived in Ephesus a Jew named Apollos, who came from Alexandria. He was an eloquent man, and powerful
when it came to expounding scripture. [25]He had received instruction in the Way of the Lord. He was an enthusiastic speaker, and
taught the things about Jesus accurately, even though he only knew the baptism of John. [26]He began to speak boldly in the
synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him to one side and expounded the Way of God to him more
accurately.
[27]He wanted to go across to Achaea. The Christians in Ephesus, by way of encouragement, wrote letters to the church there to
welcome him. On his arrival, his work made a considerable impact, through God's grace, on the believers, [28]since he openly and
powerfully refuted the Jews by demonstrating from the scriptures that the Messiah really was Jesus.

Paul in Ephesus

19 While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul travelled through the interior regions and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some
disciples, [2]and said to them, 'Did you receive the holy spirit when you believed?'
'We had not heard', they replied, 'that there *was* a "holy spirit".'
[3]'Well then,' said Paul, 'into what were you baptized?'
'Into John's baptism,' they replied.
[4]'John baptized with a baptism of repentance for the people,' said Paul, 'speaking about the one who was to come after him,
and saying that that person would be the one that people should believe in – and that means Jesus.'



Acts 19.1–10

5When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of Jesus. 6Paul then laid his hands on them, and the holy spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. 7There were about twelve men in all.

8Paul went into the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing and persuading them about the kingdom of God. 9But when some of them were hard-hearted, and wouldn't believe, and made wicked allegations about the Way in front of everybody else, Paul left them. He took the disciples with him, and argued every day in the lecture-hall of Tyrannus. 10He did this for two years, so that all the inhabitants of Asia, Jews and Greeks alike, heard the word of the Lord.

The power of God and the powers at Ephesus

11God performed unusual works of power through Paul's hands. 12People used to take handkerchiefs or towels that had touched his skin and put them on the sick, and then their diseases would leave them and evil spirits would depart.

13There were some travelling Jewish exorcists who tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus on people with evil spirits.

'I command you', they used to say, 'in the name of Jesus, the one Paul proclaims!'

14There were seven of them who used to do this. They were the sons of Sceva, a Jewish high priest. 15But on one occasion the evil spirit answered them back.

'I know Jesus', it shouted, 'and I am well acquainted with Paul; but who are you?'

16The man who had the evil spirit pounced on them and, since he was much too strong for them, overpowered all of them, so that they fled out of the house naked and battered. 17This became common knowledge among both Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus. Fear came on all of them, and the name of the Lord Jesus grew greatly in prestige.

18Many people who became believers came forward to make public confession, revealing what they had been up to. 19Some who had been practising magic brought their books and burnt them in front of everyone; someone calculated how much they were all worth, and it came to fifty thousand silver pieces. 20So the word grew and was strong, in accordance with the Lord's power.

21Once all this had been finished, Paul decided in his spirit to go back through Macedonia and Achaea and, from there, on to Jerusalem.

'After I've been there', he said, 'I'll have to go and see Rome.'

22He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, on ahead to Macedonia, while he himself spent a little more time in Asia.

‘Great is Ephesian Artemis!’

[23]Around that time there was a major disturbance because of the Way. [24]There was a silversmith called Demetrius who made silver statues of Artemis, which brought the workmen a tidy income. [25]He got them all together, along with other workers in the same business.

‘Gentlemen,’ he began. ‘You know that the reason we are doing rather well for ourselves is quite simply this business of ours. [26]And now you see, and hear, that this fellow Paul is going around not only Ephesus but pretty well the whole of Asia, persuading the masses to change their way of life, telling them that gods made with hands are not gods after all! [27]This not only threatens to bring our proper business into disrepute, but it looks as if it might make people disregard the temple of the great goddess Artemis. Then she – and, after all, the whole of Asia, indeed the whole world, worships her! – she might lose her great majesty.’

[28]When they heard this, they were filled with rage.

‘Great is Ephesian Artemis!’ they shouted. ‘Great is Ephesian Artemis!’

[29]The whole city was filled with the uproar, and everyone rushed together into the theatre, dragging along with them the Macedonians Gaius and Aristarchus, two of Paul’s companions. [30]Paul wanted to go in to speak to the people, but his followers wouldn’t let him. [31]Indeed, some of the local magistrates, who were friendly towards him, sent him a message urging him not to take the risk of going into the theatre. [32]Meanwhile, some people were shouting one thing, some another. In fact, the whole assembly was thoroughly confused, and most of them had no idea why they had come there in the first place. [33]The Jews pushed Alexander forward, and some of the crowd informed him what was going on. He motioned with his hand, and was going to make a statement to the people to explain things. [34]But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted together, for about two hours, ‘Great is Ephesian Artemis!’

[35]The town clerk quietened the crowd.

‘Men of Ephesus,’ he said, ‘is there anyone who doesn’t know that our city of Ephesus is the place which has the honour of being the home of Artemis the Great, and of the statue that fell from heaven? [36]Nobody can deny it! So you should be quiet, and not do anything rash. [37]You’ve brought these men here, but they haven’t stolen from the temple, or blasphemed our goddess. [38]If Demetrius and his colleagues have a charge they want to bring against anyone, the courts are open and we have magistrates. People can present their cases against one another. [39]But if you are wanting to know anything beyond that, it must be sorted out in the authorized assembly. [40]Let me remind you that we ourselves are risking legal proceedings because of this riot today, since there is no reason we could give which would enable us to present a satisfactory explanation for this uproar.’

[41]With these words, he dismissed the assembly.

Round the coast and out of the window

20 After the hue and cry had died down, Paul sent for the disciples. He encouraged them, said his farewells, and set off to go to Macedonia. [2]He went through those regions, encouraging them with many words and, arriving in Greece, [3]stayed there three months. He was intending to set sail for Syria, but the Jews made a plot against him, and he decided to return instead through Macedonia.

[4]He was accompanied on this trip by Sopater, son of Pyrrhus of Beroea; by Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica; by Gaius from Derbe; and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus from Asia. [5]They went on ahead and waited for us at Troas, [6]while we got on board ship at Philippi, after the days of Unleavened Bread, and joined them in Troas five days later. We stayed there for a week.

Acts 20.1–12

[7]On the first day of the week we gathered to break bread. Paul was intending to leave the following morning. He was engaged in discussion with them, and he went on talking up to midnight. [8]There were several lamps burning in the upper room where we were gathered. [9]A young man named Eutychus was sitting by the window, and was overcome with a deep sleep as Paul went on and on. Once sleep had got the better of him, he fell down out of the third-storey window, and was picked up dead.

[10]Paul went down, stooped over him and picked him up.

'Don't be alarmed,' he said. 'There is life still in him.'

[11]He went back upstairs, broke bread and ate with them, and continued speaking until dawn. Then he left. [12]They took up the young man alive and were very much comforted.

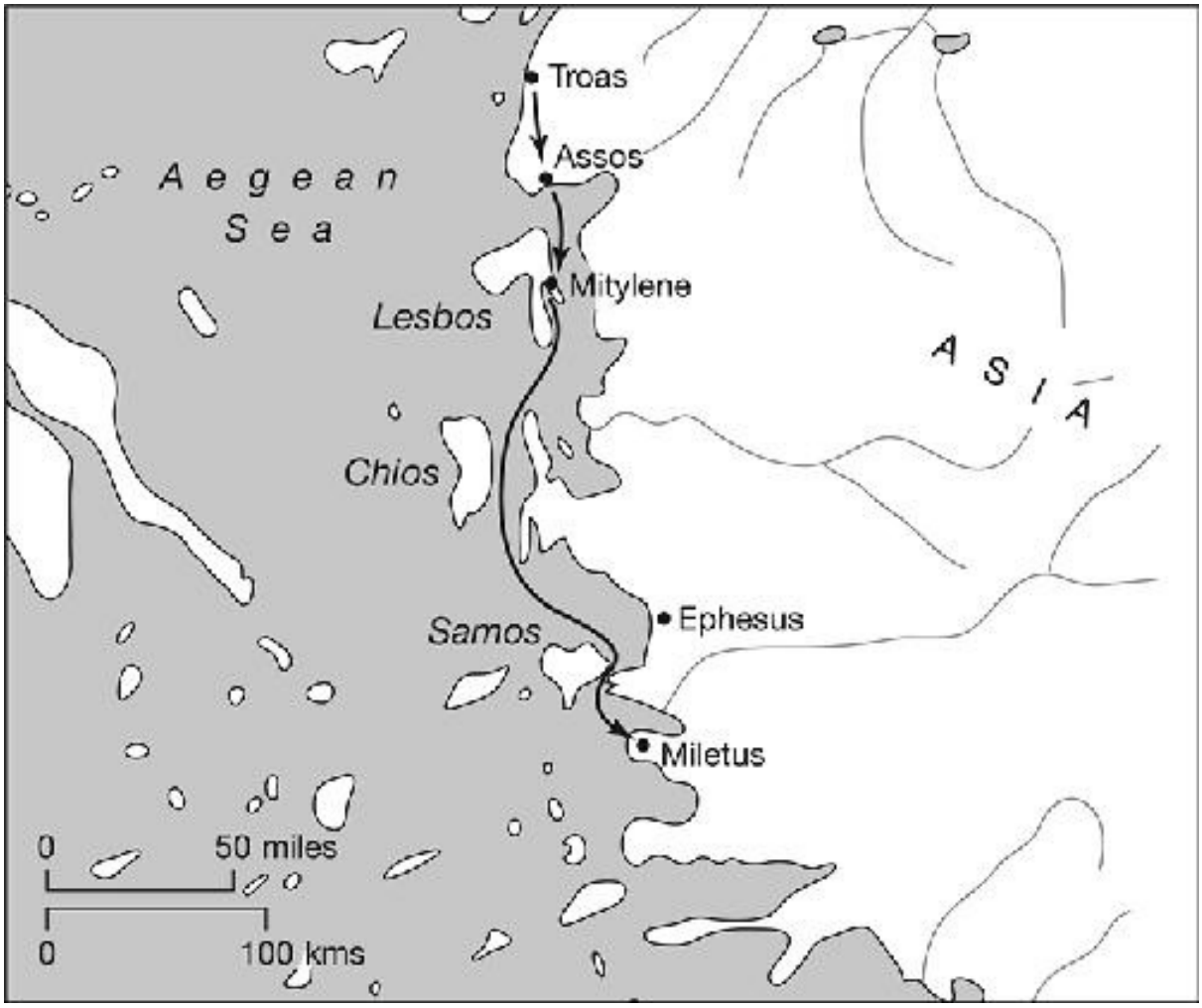
Paul the pastor looks back – and looks on

[13]We went on ahead to the ship and set off for Assos, with the intention of picking Paul up there (he had decided that he would walk to that point). [14]When we arrived at Assos, we picked him up and went on to Mitylene, [15]and from there we sailed on the next day and arrived opposite Chios. The following day we got near to Samos, and the day after that we came to Miletus. [16]Paul had decided, you see, to pass by Ephesus, so that he wouldn't have to spend more time in Asia. He was eager to get to Jerusalem, if he could, in time for the day of Pentecost.

[17]From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church, [18]and they came to him.

'You know very well', he began, 'how I have behaved with you all the time, since the first day I arrived in Asia. [19]I have served the Lord with all humility, with the tears and torments that came upon me because of the plots of the Jews. [20]You know that I kept back nothing that would have been helpful to you, preaching to you and teaching you both in public and from house to house. [21]I bore witness both to Jews and Greeks about repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus.

[22]'And now, look, I am going to Jerusalem, bound by the spirit. I have no idea what's going to happen to me there, [23]but only that the holy spirit testifies to me in city after city that captivity and trouble are in store for me. [24]But I don't reckon my life at any value, so long as I can finish my course, and the ministry which I have received from the Lord Jesus, to bear witness to the gospel of God's grace.



Acts 20.13–27

[25]'So now', he went on, 'I have gone to and fro preaching the kingdom among you, but I know that none of you will ever see
my face again. [26]Therefore I bear witness to you this very day that I am innocent of everyone's blood, [27]since I did not shrink
from declaring to you God's entire plan.'

Watch out for yourselves, the flock and the wolves

[28]'Watch out for yourselves', Paul continued, 'and for the whole flock, in which the holy spirit has appointed you as guardians, to
feed the church of God, which he purchased with his very own blood. [29]I know that fierce wolves will come in after I am gone,
and they won't spare the flock. [30]Yes, even from among yourselves people will arise, saying things which will distort the truth,
and they will draw the disciples away after them. [31]Therefore keep watch, and remember that for three years, night and day, I
didn't stop warning each of you, with tears.

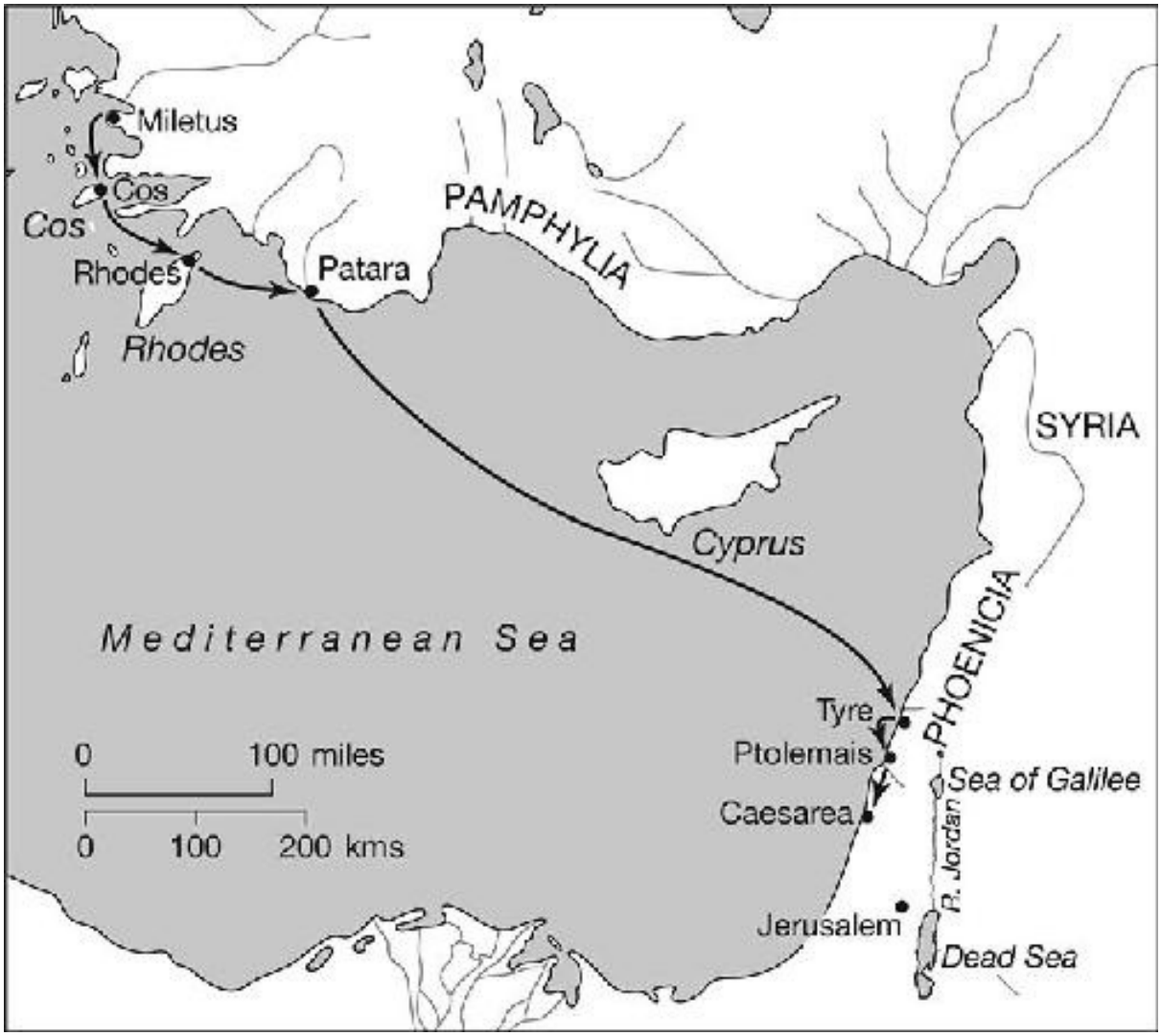
[32]'So now I commit you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and give you the inheritance among
all those whom God has sanctified. [33]I never coveted anyone's silver, or gold, or clothes. [34]You yourselves know that these very
hands worked to serve my own needs and those of the people with me. [35]I showed you in all such matters that this is how we
should work to help the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, as he put it, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."'

[36]When he had said this, he knelt down with them all and prayed. [37]There was great lamentation among them all, and they fell
on Paul's neck and kissed him. [38]They were particularly sorry to hear the word he had spoken about never seeing his face again.

Then they brought him to the ship.

Disturbing prophecies

21 When we had left them behind and had set sail, we made a straight course to Cos, and went on the next day to Rhodes and
from there to Patara. [2]There we found a ship heading for Phoenicia, and we got on board and set sail. [3]We came in sight of
Cyprus, passed it on our left side, sailed to Syria and arrived in Tyre, which was where the boat was going to unload its cargo.
[4]We found some disciples and stayed there a week – and they told Paul, by the spirit, not to go to Jerusalem. [5]When our time there
was up, we left and went on our way, with everyone, women and children included, coming with us out of the city. We knelt
down on the seashore and prayed. [6]Then we said our farewells to one another. We got on the ship and they returned home.



Acts 21.1–14

7The end of our voyage from Tyre saw us arrive at Ptolemais. There we greeted the Christians, and stayed a day with them. 8On the next day we left and went on to Caesarea, and went into the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven, and stayed with him. 9He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.

10After we'd been there several days, Agabus the prophet arrived from Jerusalem. 11He came to us, took Paul's girdle, and tied himself up with it, hand and foot.

'This is what the holy spirit says,' he declared. 'The Judaeans in Jerusalem will tie up the man to whom this girdle belongs, just like this, and they will hand him over to the Gentiles.'

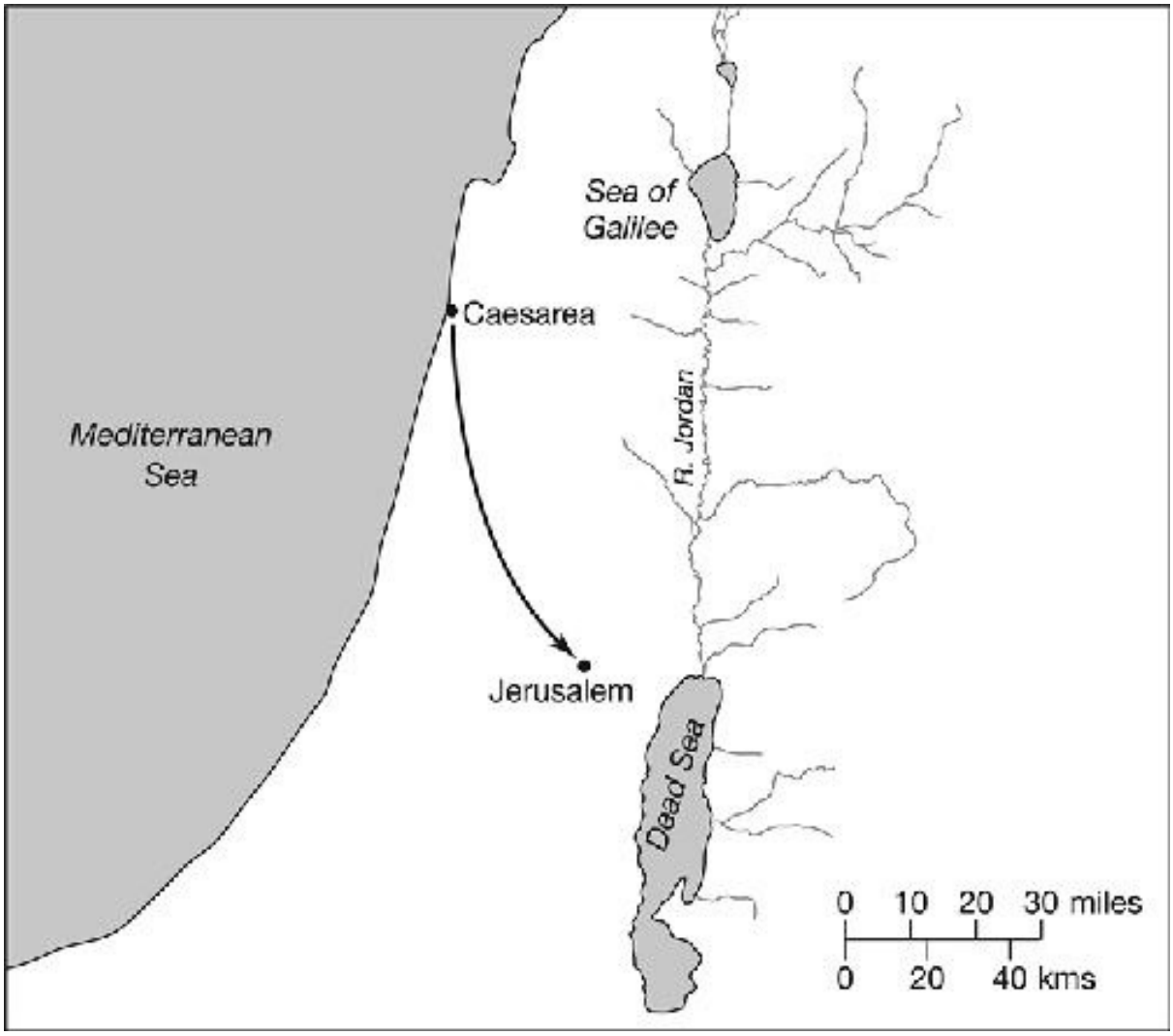
12When we heard that, we and the people of that place begged Paul not to go up to Jerusalem.

13Then Paul responded.

'What are you doing with all this weeping,' he said, 'breaking my heart in pieces? I am quite prepared not only to be tied up but to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.'

14When we realized we couldn't dissuade him, we gave up the attempt.

'May the Lord's will be done,' was all we said.



Acts 21.15–17

Warding off the inevitable

15After those days we made preparations to go up to Jerusalem. 16Some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us, and took us
to the house of Mnason, an elderly disciple from Cyprus. That was where we were going to be staying.
17When we came to Jerusalem, the brothers and sisters welcomed us gladly. 18On the next day Paul went in with us to see
James, with all the elders present. 19He greeted them and laid out before them everything which God had done through his
ministry among the Gentiles, telling it all step by step. 20They praised God when they heard it.
'You see, brother,' they said, 'that there are many thousands of Jews who have believed. They are all of them fiercely
enthusiastic for the law. 21But what they have heard about you is that you teach all the Jews who live among the nations to
abandon Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children and not to keep the customs. 22Where does this leave us? They will
certainly hear that you have come. 23So do what we tell you: there are four men here who have taken a vow upon themselves.
24Join in with these men. Purify yourself along with them, and pay the expenses for them as they have their heads shaved. That
way everyone will know that there is no truth in the accusations against you, but rather that you too are behaving as a law-
observant Jew should. 25As for the Gentiles who have believed, we have written to them with our decision that they should keep
themselves from what has been sacrificed to idols, from blood, from what is strangled, and from fornication.'
26So Paul took the men and, the next day, underwent the ritual of purification alongside them. He went into the Temple and
made the declaration, stating when the days of purification would be completed and when the time would come for sacrifice to be
offered for each of them.

Riot in the Temple

27When the seven days were completed, some Jews from Asia spotted Paul in the Temple. They gathered a crowd and grabbed
him.
28'Men of Israel,' they yelled, 'come and help us! This is the man who's been teaching everybody everywhere against our
people, our law, and this place! And now, what's more, he's brought some Greeks into the Temple, and he's defiled this holy

place!’ [29](They had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with Paul in the city, and they thought Paul had taken him into the Temple.)

[30]The whole city was stirred up, and people rushed together from all around. They seized Paul and dragged him outside the Temple, and the gates were shut at once. [31]As they were trying to kill him, word reached the tribune of the guard that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. [32]At once he took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. When the crowd saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. [33]Then the tribune came up, arrested him, ordered him to be bound with two chains, and asked who he was and what he had done. [34]Some in the crowd said one thing, some said another. Since he couldn’t find out what was really going on because of the uproar, he gave orders for Paul to be brought into the barracks. [35]When they got to the steps, the pressure of the crowd was so strong that the soldiers had to carry Paul. [36]The great mob of people was following, and shouting, ‘Kill him! Kill him!’

Why not hear my story?

[37]As they were about to go into the barracks, Paul turned to the tribune.

‘Am I allowed to say something to you?’ he asked.

‘Well!’ replied the tribune. ‘So you know some Greek, do you? [38]Aren’t you the Egyptian who raised a revolt some while back and led those four thousand “assassins” into the desert?’

[39]‘Actually,’ replied Paul, ‘I’m a Jew! I’m from Tarsus in Cilicia. That’s not an insignificant place to be a citizen of. Please, please, let me speak to the people.’

[40]So he gave him permission. Paul stood on the steps and motioned with his hand to the people. When, eventually, there was silence, he spoke to them in Aramaic.

22 ‘My brothers and fathers,’ he began, ‘hear me as I explain myself to you.’

[2]When they heard him speaking in Aramaic they became even quieter.

[3]‘I am a Jew’, he continued, ‘and I was born in Tarsus in Cilicia. I received my education here, in this city, and I studied at the feet of Gamaliel. I was trained in the strictest interpretations of our ancestral laws, and became zealous for God, just as all of you are today. [4]I persecuted this Way, right to the point of killing people, and I bound and handed over to prison both men and women – [5]as the high priest and all the elders can testify. I received letters from them to the Jews of Damascus, where I was going in order to find the heretics who were there, tie them up, and bring them to Jerusalem to face their just deserts.

[6]‘Just as I was on the way, and getting near to Damascus, suddenly a bright light shone from heaven all around me. It was about midday. [7]I fell down on the ground and I heard a voice, saying, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” [8]I answered, “Who are you, Master?” And he said to me, “I am Jesus of Nazareth, and you are persecuting me!”

[9]‘The people who were with me saw the light, but they didn’t hear the voice of the person speaking to me. [10]So I said, “What shall I do, Master?” And the Lord said to me, “Get up and go into Damascus, and there you will be informed of all the things that have been arranged for you to do.”

[11]‘So, as I couldn’t see because of the brightness of that light, the people with me led me by the hand, and I came to Damascus.’

Out of his own mouth

[12]‘There was a man named Ananias,’ Paul continued. ‘He was a devout, law-keeping Jew, and all the Jews living in Damascus would testify to the fact. [13]He came and stood beside me and said, “Brother Saul, receive your sight.” In that very moment I could see, and I looked at him. [14]This is what he said. “The God of our ancestors chose you to know his will, to see the Righteous One, and to hear the word from his mouth. [15]This is because you are going to bear witness for him to all people, telling them what you have seen and heard. [16]Now, then, what are you going to do? Get up, be baptized and wash away your sins by calling on his name.”

[17]‘After I came back to Jerusalem, and was praying in the Temple, I fell into a trance, [18]and I saw him speaking to me. “Hurry up!” he said. “Leave Jerusalem as quickly as possible! They won’t accept your testimony about me.” [19]“But, Lord,” I replied, “they themselves know that in all the synagogues I used to imprison and beat those who believe in you. [20]And when they shed the blood of Stephen, your witness, I was myself standing there and giving my approval. I was looking after the cloaks of those who were killing him.”

[21]‘“No,” he said to me. “Go away from here! I’m sending you far away – to the Gentiles!”’

[22]Up to this point the crowd listened to Paul. But now they began to shout.

‘Away with him from the face of the earth!’ they yelled. ‘Someone like that has no right to live!’

Roman citizenship comes in useful

[23]The crowd was shouting, tearing their clothes, and throwing dust in the air. [24]The tribune gave orders for Paul to be brought into the barracks, and he told the guards to examine him by flogging, so that he could find out just what was the reason for all the uproar against him.

[25]As they were tying Paul up ready for the whips, Paul spoke to the centurion who was standing beside him.

‘Is it lawful’, he said, ‘to flog a Roman citizen without first finding him guilty?’

[26]When the centurion heard that, he went off to the tribune and spoke to him.

‘What d’you think you’re doing?’ he said. ‘This fellow’s a Roman citizen!’

[27]The tribune came and spoke to Paul.

‘Tell me,’ he said. ‘Are you a Roman citizen?’

‘Yes,’ replied Paul.
[28]‘It cost me a lot of money to buy this citizenship,’ said the tribune.
‘Ah,’ said Paul, ‘but it came to me by birth.’
[29]The people who were about to torture Paul stepped back quickly from him. As for the tribune, he was afraid, discovering that he was a Roman citizen and that he had had him tied up.
[30]On the next day, still wanting to get to the bottom of it all, and to find out what was being alleged by the Jews, he released Paul, and ordered the chief priests to come together, with the whole Sanhedrin. He brought Paul in and presented him to them.

Paul before the Sanhedrin

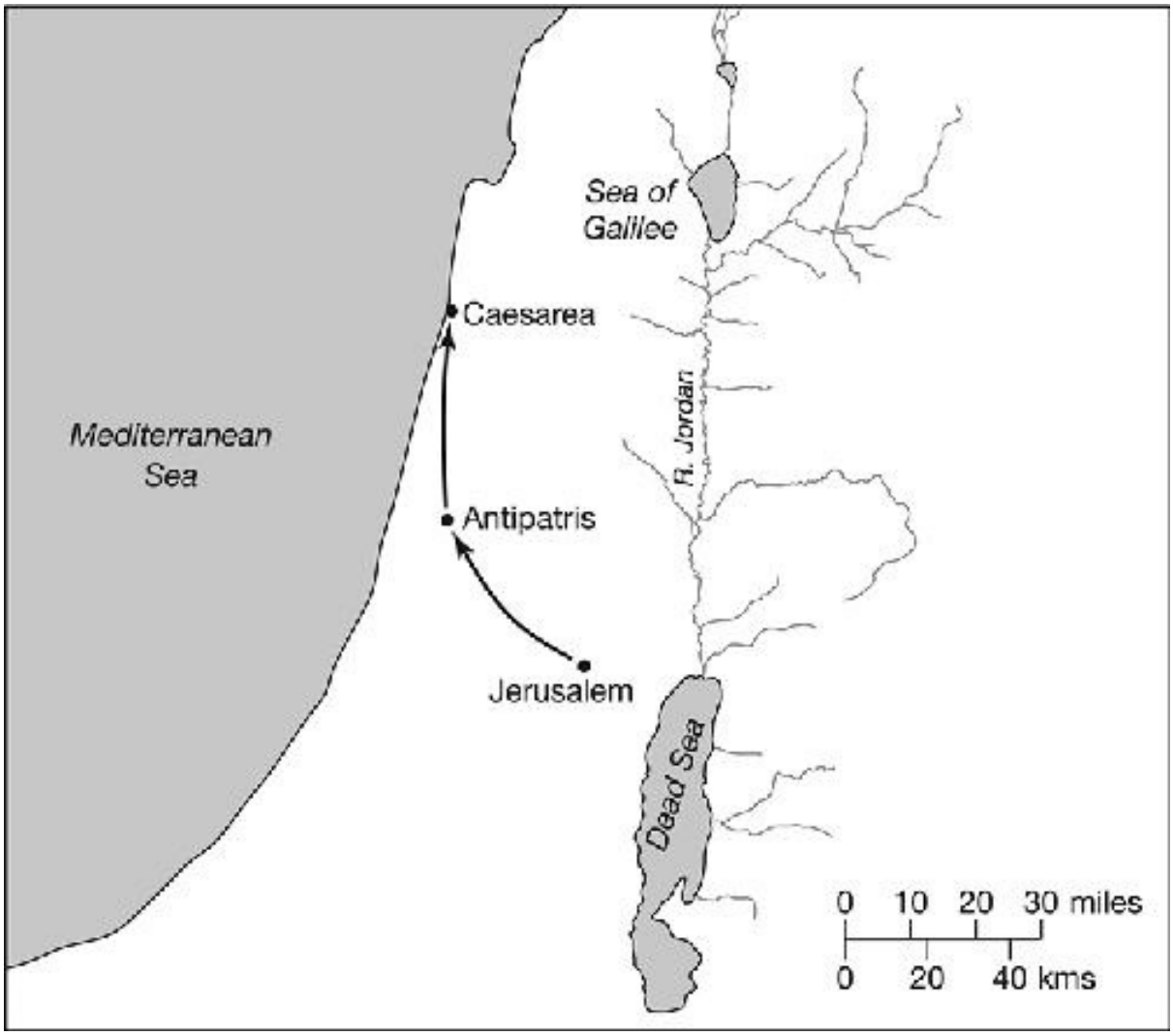
23 Paul looked hard at the Sanhedrin.
‘My brothers,’ he said. ‘I have conducted myself before God in a completely good conscience all my life up to this day.’
[2]Ananias, the high priest, ordered the bystanders to strike Paul on the mouth.
[3]‘God will strike you, you whitewashed wall!’ said Paul to Ananias. ‘You are sitting to judge me according to the law, and yet you order me to be struck in violation of the law?’
[4]‘You are insulting the high priest?’ asked the bystanders.
[5]‘My brothers,’ replied Paul, ‘I didn’t know he was the high priest. Scripture says, of course, “You mustn’t speak evil of the ruler of your people.”’
[6]Paul knew that one part of the gathering were Sadducees, and the other part Pharisees.
‘My brothers,’ he shouted to the Sanhedrin, ‘I am a Pharisee, the son of Pharisees. This trial is about the Hope, about the Resurrection of the Dead!’
[7]At these words, an argument broke out between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and they were split among themselves. [8](The Sadducees deny that there is any resurrection, or any intermediate state of ‘angel’ or ‘spirit’, but the Pharisees affirm them both.) [9]There was quite an uproar, with some of the scribes from the Pharisees’ party standing up and arguing angrily, ‘We find nothing wrong in this man! What if a spirit spoke to him, or an angel for that matter?’
[10]Faced with another great riot, the tribune was worried that Paul was going to be pulled in pieces between them. He ordered the guard to go down and snatch him out of the midst of them and bring him back up into the barracks.
[11]On the next night, the Lord stood by him.
‘Cheer up!’ he said. ‘You have given your testimony about me in Jerusalem. Now you have to do it in Rome.’

The oath and the plot

[12]The next morning, the Jews made a plot together. They swore an oath, binding themselves not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. [13]There were more than forty of them who made this solemn vow with one another. [14]They went to the high priest and the elders.
‘We have sworn a solemn and binding oath’, they said, ‘not to taste anything until we have killed Paul. [15]What you need to do is this: tell the tribune, with the Sanhedrin, to bring him down to you, as if you wanted to make a more careful examination of his case. And then, before he arrives, we’ll be ready to dispatch him.’
[16]Paul’s nephew (his sister’s son) heard of the plot. He went off, entered the barracks, and told Paul about it. [17]Paul called one of the centurions.
‘Take this young man to the tribune,’ he said. ‘He’s got something to tell him.’
[18]So he took him off and brought him to the tribune.
‘Paul the prisoner called me and asked me to bring this young man to you,’ he said. ‘Apparently he’s got something to tell you.’
[19]So the tribune took the young man by the hand, and led him off into a private room.
‘What is it you have to tell me?’ he asked.
[20]‘The Judaeans have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the Sanhedrin tomorrow,’ he said. ‘It will look as if they’re wanting to make a more thorough investigation about him. [21]But don’t do what they want! There are more than forty men who are setting an ambush for him, and they’ve sworn a solemn oath not to eat or drink until they’ve killed him. They are ready right now, waiting for the word from you!’
[22]So the tribune dismissed the lad.
‘Don’t tell anyone at all that you’ve told me about this,’ he said.

We have ways of keeping you safe

[23]So the tribune summoned two of the centurions.
‘Get ready a squad of two hundred,’ he said. ‘They’re going to Caesarea. Also take seventy horsemen and two hundred light-armed guards. They leave at nine o’clock tonight. [24]Get horses ready for Paul to ride, and take him safely to Felix the governor.’
[25]He wrote a letter which went like this:
[26]‘Claudius Lysias, to the most excellent governor Felix, greeting. [27]This man was seized by the Jews, who were going to kill him. When I learned that he was a Roman citizen I went with the guard and rescued him. [28]I wanted to know the charge on which they were accusing him, so I took him into their Sanhedrin. [29]There I discovered that he was being accused in relation to disputes about their law, but that he was not being charged with anything for which he would deserve to die or to be imprisoned. [30]I then received information that there was to be a plot against him. So I am sending him to you at once. I have told his accusers that they must inform you of their charges against him.’



Acts 23.23–35

31 So the soldiers did what they were told. They took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris, 32 and the next day they
allowed the horsemen to go on with him while they returned to barracks. 33 The company arrived at Caesarea and handed over the
letter to the governor, presenting Paul at the same time. 34 Felix read the letter, and asked which jurisdiction Paul was from. He
found out that he was from Cilicia.
35 'I will hear your case', he said, 'when your accusers arrive.'
He ordered that he be kept under guard in Herod's Praetorium.

Bring on the barristers

24 After five days, Ananias the high priest came down to Caesarea with some of the elders, and with a barrister named
Tertullus. They told the governor what they had against Paul. 2 Paul was summoned, and Tertullus began his speech of
accusation.
'Most excellent Felix! We are enjoying great peace because of you! Through your wise foresight and planning things have
greatly improved for this people. 3 We welcome it in every way, in every place, and with every feeling of gratitude. 4 But, so as not
to keep you waiting any longer, I beg you, of your forbearance, to listen to us briefly.
5 'We find this fellow to be a public nuisance. He stirs up civil strife among all the Jews, all over the world. He is a ringleader in
the sect of the Nazoreans. 6 He even tried to defile the Temple! But we caught him. 8 If you examine him yourself you will be able
to find out about all these things of which we're accusing him.'
9 The Jews added their voices to this speech, agreeing that it was just as had been said.

A defence of the Hope

10 The governor motioned to Paul to speak.
'I understand that you have been governor of this nation for several years', he began, 'and therefore I am all the more pleased to
make my defence before you. 11 You will be able to discover that it is not more than twelve days since I came up to worship at
Jerusalem. 12 They didn't find me disputing with anybody in the Temple; nor was I stirring up a crowd, either in the synagogues or

elsewhere in the city. [13]They can provide no proof of any of the charges they are now bringing against me.
[14]‘But this much I will confess to you: that it is true that I do worship the God of my ancestors according to the Way which they call a “sect”. I believe everything which is written in the law and the prophets, [15]and I hold to the hope in God, for which they also long, that there will be a resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteous. [16]For that reason I make it my settled aim always to have a clear conscience before God and all people.
[17]‘For several years I have been collecting alms and offerings to bring to my nation. [18]That was the business I was engaged in when they found me purified in the Temple, without any crowds and without any riot. [19]There were some Jews from Asia there; they are the ones who should appear before you and bring any accusations against me that they may have. [20]Or let these people themselves say what wrong they found in me when I stood before the Sanhedrin – [21]unless it is about this one thing, which I shouted out as I was standing among them: “It’s because of the resurrection of the dead that I am being judged before you today.”’

Felix calms (and slows) things down

[22]Felix was quite well informed about the Way. He adjourned the hearing.
‘When Lysias the tribune comes down,’ he said, ‘then I will make my decision about your business.’
[23]He told the centurion to keep Paul under guard, to allow him some freedom, and not to stop any of his companions from looking after him.
[24]After some days, Felix came with Drusilla his wife, who was Jewish. They sent for Paul and listened to him speaking about faith in the Messiah Jesus. [25]As he talked about justice, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix became afraid.
‘That’s quite enough for now,’ he said. ‘You can go. When I get a good opportunity I’ll call for you again another time.’
[26]At the same time he was hoping that Paul would give him money, and so he sent for him frequently and talked with him.
[27]After two years Felix handed over the reins of office to Porcius Festus. He wanted to do the Jews a favour, and so he left Paul in prison.

To Caesar you shall go

25 So Festus arrived in the province, and after three days he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem. [2]The high priests and the leading men of the Jews appeared before him, laying charges against Paul, and putting a request to him. [3]They wanted him to do a special favour for them and against Paul, by sending for him to be brought up to Jerusalem. They were making a plan to kill him on the way. [4]But Festus answered that he was keeping Paul at Caesarea, and that he himself would shortly be going back there.
[5]‘So’, he said, ‘your officials should come down with me. They can put any accusations of wrongdoing they may have against the man.’
[6]He stayed with them for a few days (about eight or ten) and then went down to Caesarea. On the next day he took his seat on the tribunal and ordered Paul to be brought to him. [7]When he appeared, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem surrounded him and hurled many serious accusations at him, which they were not able to substantiate. [8]Paul made his response: ‘I have offended neither against the Jews’ law, nor against the Temple, nor against Caesar.’
[9]Festus, however, wanted to do a favour to the Jews. ‘Tell me,’ he said to Paul in reply, ‘how would you like to go up to Jerusalem and be tried by me there about these things?’
[10]‘I am standing before Caesar’s tribunal,’ said Paul, ‘which is where I ought to be tried. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you well know. [11]If I have committed any wrong, or if I have done something which means I deserve to die, I’m not trying to escape death. But if I have done none of the things they are accusing me of, nobody can hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar.’
[12]Festus consulted with his advisers.
‘You have appealed to Caesar’, he said, ‘and to Caesar you shall go.’

Agrippa and Bernice

[13]After some days King Agrippa came to Caesarea, with Bernice, to greet Festus. [14]They spent several days there, and during that time Festus put to the king the whole matter of Paul and the case against him.
‘I have a man here’, he said, ‘who was left by Felix as a prisoner. [15]When I was up in Jerusalem, the chief priests and the Jewish elders came before me and asked me to pass sentence on him. [16]My response was that it is not our Roman custom to hand anyone over until the accused has had a chance to look his accusers in the face and make a defence against the charges. [17]So they came down here, and I didn’t postpone the business, but sat in court the next day and commanded the man to be brought. [18]His accusers stood there and brought charges – but not of the sort of wrongdoing I had been expecting. [19]It turned out to have to do with various wranglings concerning their own religion, and about some dead man called Jesus whom Paul asserted was alive. [20]I simply didn’t know what to do about all this dispute, and so I asked him if he would like to go up to Jerusalem and be judged there about these things. [21]But Paul then appealed for his case to be sent up to His Majesty! So I gave the order that he should be kept under guard until I can send him to Caesar.’
[22]‘I should like to hear this man for myself,’ said Agrippa to Festus.
‘Very well,’ said Festus. ‘You shall do so tomorrow.’
[23]On the next day, Agrippa and Bernice came with great ceremony, and entered the audience chamber. With them came the tribunes and the leading men of the city. Festus gave the order, and Paul was brought in.

[24]‘King Agrippa’, said Festus, ‘and all of you assembled here, you see this man. The whole multitude of the Jews appealed to me about him, both in Jerusalem and here. They shouted that it wasn’t right to let him live. [25]But I found that he had done nothing to deserve death, and since he then himself appealed to His Majesty I decided to send him. [26]I don’t have anything definite to write to our Lord and Master about him, and so I’ve brought him here to you, and particularly before you, King Agrippa, so that I may know what to write once we have had a judicial hearing. [27]There seems no sense to me in sending a prisoner without giving some indication of the charges against him.’

Paul before Agrippa

26 Agrippa addressed Paul.
‘You are permitted’, he said, ‘to speak for yourself.’
Paul stretched out his hand and began his defence.
[2]‘I consider myself blessed, King Agrippa,’ he said, ‘to have the chance to speak before you today in my defence concerning all the things of which the Jews have charged me, [3]in particular because I know you are an expert on all matters of Jewish customs and disputes. I beg you, therefore, to give me a generous hearing.
[4]‘All the Jews know my manner of life. I lived from my earliest days among my own people and in Jerusalem. [5]They have known already for a long time (if they are willing to testify!) that I lived as a Pharisee, according to the strictest sect of our religion. [6]And now I stand accused because of the hope of the promise made by God to our ancestors, [7]the hope for which our twelve tribes wait with earnest longing in their worship night and day. And it is this hope, O king, for which I am now accused by the Jews! [8]Why should any of you judge it unbelievable that God would raise the dead?
[9]‘I thought I was under obligation to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth, [10]and that is what I did in Jerusalem. I received authority from the chief priests to shut up many of God’s people in prison, and when they were condemned to death I cast my vote against them. [11]I punished them many times in all the synagogues, and forced many of them to blaspheme. I became more and more furious against them, and even pursued them to cities in other lands.’

Paul’s conversion (one more time)

[12]‘While I was busy on this work’, Paul continued, ‘I was travelling to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests. [13]Around midday, while I was on the road, O king, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the light of the sun, and shining all around me and my companions on the road. [14]We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice speaking to me in Aramaic.
‘“Saul, Saul,” he said, “why are you persecuting me? It’s hard for you, this kicking against the goads.”
[15]‘“Who are you, Lord?” I said.
‘“I am Jesus”, said the Lord, “and you are persecuting me. [16]But get up and stand on your feet. I’m going to tell you why I have appeared to you. I am going to establish you as a servant, as a witness both of the things you have already seen and of the occasions I will appear to you in the future. [17]I will rescue you from the people, and from the nations to whom I am going to send you [18]so that you can open their eyes to enable them to turn from darkness to light, and from the power of the satan to God – so that they can have forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among those who are made holy by their faith in me.”
[19]‘So then, King Agrippa, I didn’t disobey this vision from heaven. [20]I preached that people should repent, and turn to God, and do the works that demonstrate repentance. I preached it first to those in Damascus, then also in Jerusalem, in the whole countryside of Judaea, and among the nations. [21]That is the reason the Jews seized me in the Temple and tried to slaughter me. [22]But I have had help from God, right up to this very day. And so I stand here to bear witness, to small and great alike, of nothing except what the prophets, and Moses too, said would happen: [23]namely, that the Messiah would suffer, that he would be the first to rise from the dead, and that he would proclaim light to the people and to the nations.’

‘Paul, you’re mad!’

[24]As Paul was making his defence in this way, Festus roared out at the top of his voice, ‘Paul, you’re mad! All this learning of yours has driven you crazy!’
[25]‘I’m not mad, most excellent Festus,’ responded Paul. ‘On the contrary, I am speaking words full of truth and good sense. [26]The king knows about these things, and it is to him that I am speaking so boldly. I cannot believe that any of this has escaped his notice. After all, these things didn’t happen in a corner. [27]Do you believe the prophets, King Agrippa? I know you believe them.’
[28]‘You reckon you’re going to make *me* a Christian, then,’ said Agrippa to Paul, ‘and pretty quick, too, by the sound of it!’
[29]‘Whether quick or slow,’ replied Paul, ‘I pray to God that not only you but also all who hear me today will become just as I am – apart, of course, from these chains.’
[30]The king, the governor and Bernice, and those sitting with them, got up. [31]As they were going away, they talked to one another about it.
‘This man’, they were saying, ‘has done nothing to deserve death or chains.’
[32]And Agrippa commented to Festus, ‘This man could have been set free, if only he hadn’t gone and appealed to Caesar.’

All at sea

27 When it was decided that we should sail to Italy, they handed Paul over, along with some other prisoners, to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Imperial Cohort. [2]They got into a ship from Adramyttium, which was intending to sail to various places along the coast of Asia. So off we set. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, came too.

[3]Next day we put in at Sidon. Julius was kind to Paul, and allowed him to go to his friends to be cared for. [4]When we left Sidon, we sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because the winds were against us, [5]and then crossed the sea off the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, arriving at Myra in Lycia. [6]There the centurion found a ship going from Alexandria to Italy, and we got on board.

[7]After a few days we were making very heavy weather of it, and only got to the shore at Cnidus. Since the wind was not helping us, we sailed under the lee of Crete, off the coast from Salmone. [8]Getting past that point with some difficulty, we came to a place which is called 'Fair Havens', not far from the town of Lasea.

[9]Quite a bit of time had now elapsed, and sailing was becoming dangerous. The Fast had already come and gone. Paul gave his advice.

[10]'Men,' he said, 'I can see we're going to have trouble on this voyage. It's going to be dangerous. We may well sustain heavy losses both to the cargo and to the ship, not to mention to human life.'

[11]But the centurion put his faith in the helmsman and the ship-owner rather than in what Paul had said. [12]Unfortunately, the harbour was not suitable for wintering in, so most people were in favour of going on from there to see if they could get to Phoenix, a harbour on Crete which faces both south-west and north-west. They would then be able to spend the winter there.

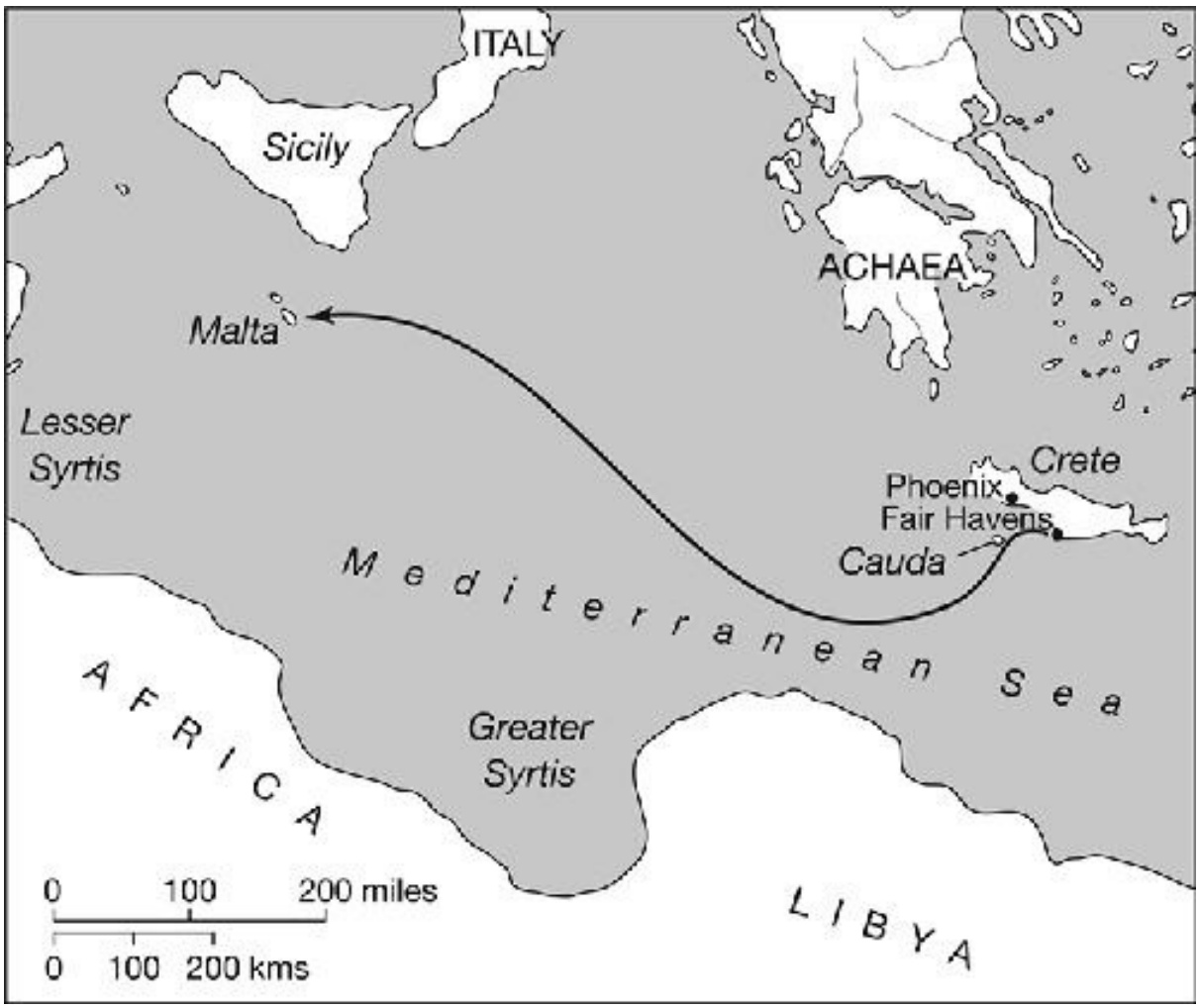
Cnidus
LYCIA
PAMPHYLIA
CILICIA
Myra
Rhodes
Second ship
Crete
Phoenix
Fair Havens
Lasea
Salmone
Cauda
Cyprus
First ship
Mediterranean Sea
Sidon
Caesarea
0 100 200 miles
0 100 200 kms
Dead Sea

Acts 27.1–12

The storm and the angel

[13]Well, a moderate southerly breeze sprang up, and they thought they had the result they wanted. So they lifted the anchor and sailed along, hugging the shore of Crete. [14]But before long a great typhoon – they call it 'Eurakylon', the Northeaster – swept down from Crete, [15]and the ship was caught up by it. Since the ship couldn't turn and face into the wind, it had to give way and we were carried along.

[16]When we came in behind an island called Cauda, we were just able to get the ship's boat under control. [17]They pulled it up, and did what was necessary to undergird the ship. Then, because they were afraid that we would crash into the Syrtis sandbanks, they lowered the sea-anchor and allowed the ship to be driven along. [18]The storm was so severe that on the next day they began to throw cargo overboard, [19]and on the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard as well, with their own hands. [20]We then went for a good many days without seeing either the sun or the stars, with a major storm raging. All hope of safety was finally abandoned.



Acts 27.13–32

[21]We had gone without food a long time. Then Paul stood up in the middle of them all.

'It does seem to me, my good people,' he said, 'that you should have taken my advice not to leave Crete. We could have managed without this damage and loss. [22]But now I want to tell you: take heart! No lives will be lost – only the ship. [23]This last night, you see, an angel of the God to whom I belong, and whom I worship, stood beside me. [24]"Don't be afraid, Paul", he said. "You must appear before Caesar, and let me tell you this: God has granted you all your travelling companions." [25]So take heart, my friends. I believe God, that it will be as he said to me. [26]We must, however, be cast up on some island or other.'

[27]On the fourteenth night we were being carried across the sea of Adria when, around the middle of the night, the sailors reckoned that we were getting near some land. [28]They took soundings and found twenty fathoms; then, a little bit further, they took soundings again and found fifteen fathoms. [29]They were afraid that we might crash into a rocky place, so they let down four anchors from the stern and prayed for day to come. [30]The sailors wanted to escape from the ship, and let down the boat into the sea under the pretence of going to put out anchors from the bow. [31]But Paul spoke to the centurion and the soldiers.

'If these men don't stay in the ship', he said, 'there is no chance of safety.'

[32]Then the soldiers cut the ropes of the boat, and let it fall away.

Shipwreck

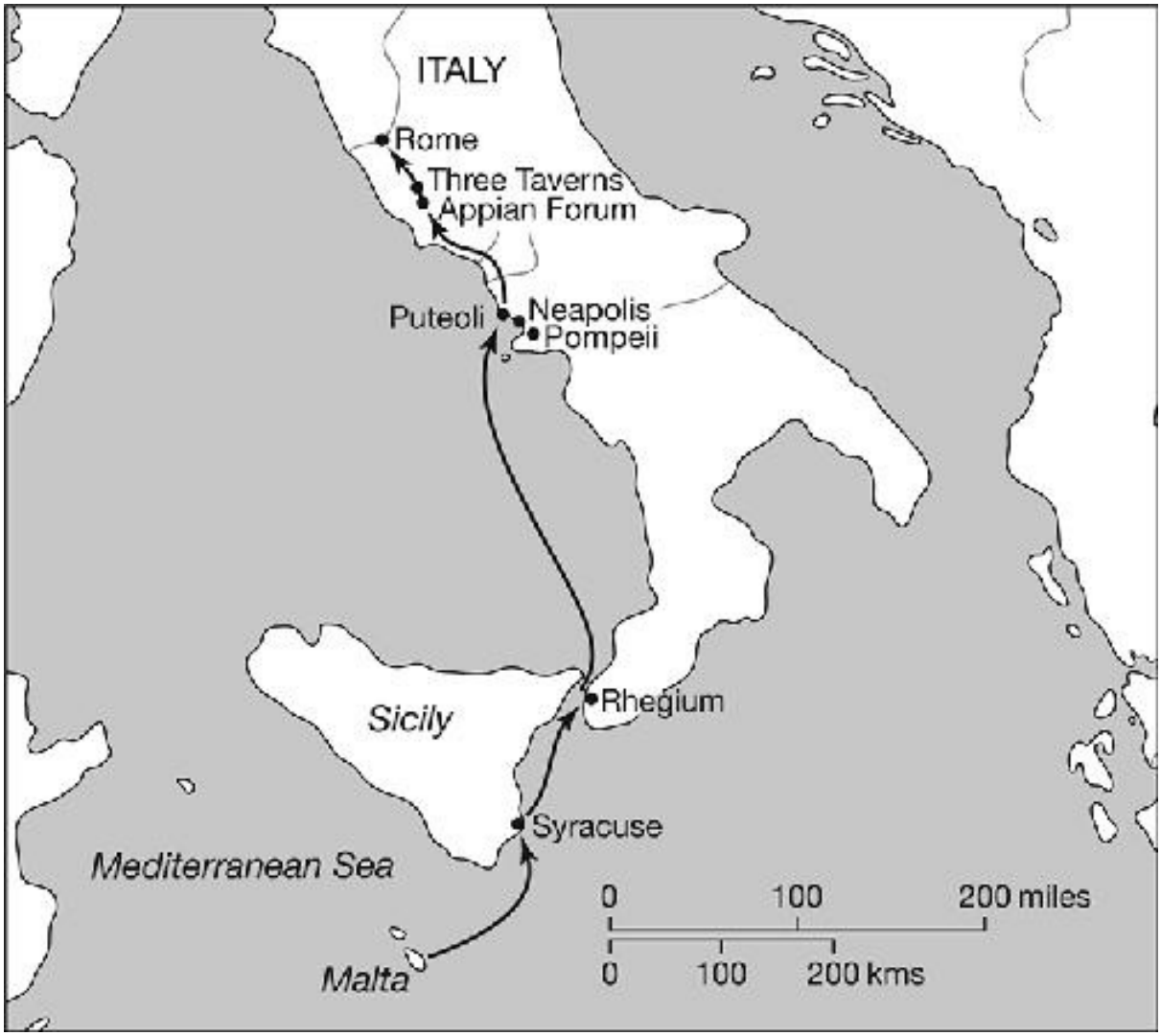
[33]When it was nearly daytime, Paul urged all of them to eat something.
'It's now all of fourteen days', he said, 'that you've been hanging on without food, not eating a thing. [34]So let me encourage you to have something to eat. This will help you get rescued. No hair of any of your heads will be lost.'
[35]So saying, he took some bread, gave thanks to God in front of them all, broke the bread and ate it. [36]Then all of them cheered up and took some food. [37]The whole company on board was two hundred and seventy-six. [38]When we had eaten enough food, they threw the grain overboard to lighten the ship.
[39]When day came, they didn't recognize the land. It appeared to have a bay with a sandy shore, and that was where they hoped, if possible, to beach the ship. [40]They let the anchors drop away into the sea, and at the same time slackened the ropes on the rudders, hoisted the foresail, and headed for the beach. [41]But they crashed into a reef and ran the ship aground. The prow stuck fast and wouldn't budge, while the strong waves were smashing the stern to bits. [42]The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners so that none of them would swim away and escape. [43]But the centurion wanted to rescue Paul, and refused permission for them to carry out their intention. Instead, he ordered all who were able to swim to leap overboard first and head for land, [44]while the rest were to come after, some on boards and some on bits and pieces of the ship. And so everyone ended up safely on land.

The snake on Malta

28 When we reached safety, we discovered that the island was called Malta. [2]The local inhabitants treated us with unusual kindness: they set to and built a fire for us all, since it was cold and had started to rain. [3]Paul had collected quite a bundle of brushwood, and was putting it on the fire, when a viper, escaping the heat, fastened onto his hand. [4]The natives saw the animal clinging to his hand.
'Aha!' they said to one another. 'This man must be a murderer! He's been rescued from the sea, but Justice hasn't allowed him to live.'
[5]Paul, however, shook off the snake into the fire and suffered no harm. [6]They kept watching him to see if he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But when they had waited and watched for quite some time, and nothing untoward had happened to him, they changed their minds.
'He must be a god,' they said.
[7]Publius, the leading man of the island, owned lands in the region where we were. He welcomed us, and entertained us in a most friendly fashion for three days. [8]Publius' father was lying sick in bed with a fever and with dysentery. Paul went in to see him and prayed; then he laid his hands on him and cured him. [9]At this, everyone else on the island who was sick came and was cured. [10]They gave us many honours, and when we were getting ready to sail away they gave us everything we needed.

To Rome at last

[11]After three months we set sail on a ship that had been spending the winter on the island. It was from Alexandria, and had the insignia of the Heavenly Twins. [12]We arrived at Syracuse, and stayed three days. [13]From there we raised anchor and sailed across to Rhegium. After one day there, a south wind arose, and on the second day we arrived at Puteoli, [14]where we found Christians, who encouraged us to stay with them for seven days.
And so we came to Rome. [15]Christians from there, hearing about us, came to meet us as far as Appian Forum and Three Taverns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took heart.
[16]When we arrived in Rome, Paul was allowed to lodge privately. He had a soldier to guard him.
[17]After three days, Paul called together the leading men of the Jews. When they arrived, he began to speak.
'My brothers,' he said, 'I have done nothing against our people or our ancestral customs. Yet I was made a prisoner in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. [18]The Romans put me on trial and wanted to let me go, because they couldn't find me guilty of any capital crime. [19]But the Judaeans opposed this, and forced me to appeal to Caesar. This had nothing to do with my bringing any charges against my nation! [20]So that's why I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the hope of Israel, you see, that I am wearing this chain.'
[21]'For our part', they responded, 'we haven't received any letters about you from Judaea. Nor has anyone of our nation come here to tell us anything, or to say anything bad about you. [22]We want to hear from your own lips what you have in mind. However, as for this new sect, the one thing we know is that people everywhere are speaking out against it.'



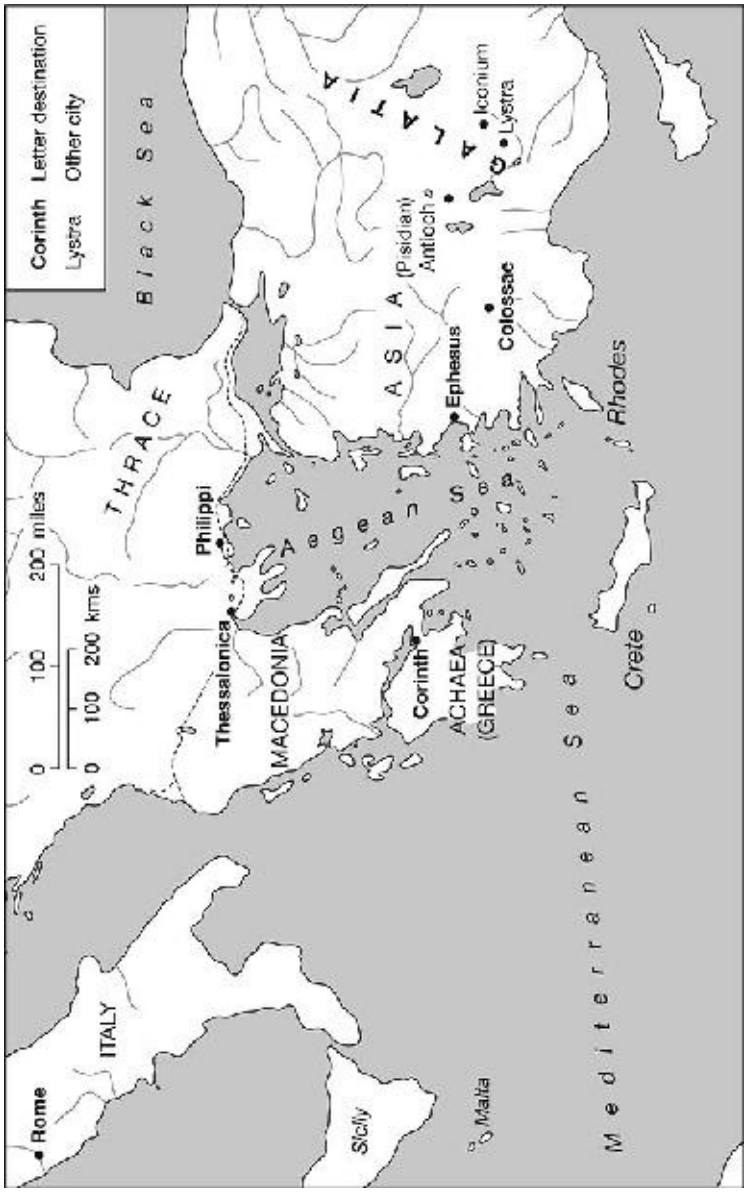
Acts 28.11–22

The end is where we start from

23So they fixed a day and came in large numbers to Paul's lodgings. He spoke to them and gave his testimony about the kingdom of God. From morning to night, he explained to them the things about Jesus, from the law of Moses and the prophets.
24Some were persuaded by what he said, and others did not believe. 25They disagreed among themselves. So, as they were getting ready to leave, Paul said one last thing.
'The holy spirit', he said, 'spoke truly through the prophet Isaiah to your ancestors, 26when he said,

Go to this people and say to them:
Listen and listen, but never hear;
look and look, but never see!
27For this people's heart has grown dull,
and their ears are dim with hearing,
and they have closed their eyes –
so that they might not see with their eyes,
and hear with their ears,
and understand with their heart,
and turn, and I would heal them.

28'Let it then be known to you that this salvation from God has been sent to the Gentiles. They will listen.'
30Paul lived there for two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed everyone who came to see him. 31He announced the kingdom of God, and taught the things about the Lord Jesus the Messiah, with all boldness, and with no one stopping him.



The destination of Paul's Letters

Romans

The letter to Rome is by common consent not only Paul's masterpiece but one of the most astonishing pieces of writing on any subject from any time or culture. It is dense, fast-paced, combative and lyrical by turns. It wrestles with some of the hardest problems in philosophy or theology and ranks with anything Plato or Aristotle ever wrote – except that it is much shorter, covers more ground, and draws together the traditions of Israel while taking on the traditions of Greece. And also Rome! The letter presents – in writing to a small, disjointed group in Caesar's capital! – a picture of Jesus as the true 'son of God', the world's rightful Lord, summoning all people to believing allegiance because the 'good news' of his reign brings 'salvation', 'justice' and 'peace'. In every element of that sequence Paul is claiming that in Jesus you can see the truth of which Caesar and his rhetoric were a mere parody.

The ostensible purpose of the letter is to introduce Paul to the church in Rome ahead of his projected visit, and to solicit support for his intended trip to Spain. But there were problems in the Roman church as well. A large number of Jews had been expelled by the emperor Claudius in the late 40s, and had returned to Rome after Claudius's death in AD 54; but many ordinary Romans, including it seems some Jesus-followers, had not been happy about this, with some of the non-Jewish Christians supposing that the message of Jesus was now for Gentiles only. Tensions were in the air, too, between the different house-churches, which probably took different views on such matters as food laws, keeping of holy days, and the like. What from one point of view, then, is a general letter setting out Paul's mature view of 'the gospel', from another point of view is sharply focused on the need for Gentile Christians to understand the strange dynamic of God's dealings with Israel, and on the need for unity.

The four 'movements' of this letter (chapters 1—4, 5—8, 9—11 and 12—16) form a symphonic whole. The overarching theme is the covenant faithfulness of the one God: Paul draws on the Old Testament to stress that the one God has been faithful to his promises to, and through, Abraham, by creating from the wreck of idolatrous and sinful humankind a single forgiven family marked out by the same 'faith' or 'faithfulness' that Jesus embodied in going to his saving death. This is set out briefly in the first section (1—4), providing a platform from which Paul can survey the entire narrative of creation and humankind, from the failed vocation of the first human to the glorious promise of resurrected humankind in a newborn created order (8.18—30).

This, however, only heightens the tension left unresolved in chapters 1—4: what has God been doing with Israel? Chapters 9—11 answer the question in terms of the Messiah himself and his inauguration of the covenant renewal promised in Deuteronomy. Those who believe in his resurrection and confess him as Lord are the new covenant people. God will save 'all Israel', but only 'if they do not remain in unbelief' (11.23). His main message in chapter 11 is a sharp warning to Gentile Christians not to suppose that God has finished with his ancient people.

This then opens the way for the appeal of chapters 12—16, which is general in chapters 12 and 13 and specific in 14.1—15.13. Underlying it all is the true worship, which means being transformed by the renewal of the mind and the offering of one's whole self to God (12.1–2). This leads to a bracing and outward-facing ethic, and particularly to patterns of reconciliation, and ultimately shared worship, among Jesus-followers of all backgrounds. Paul's travel plans round off chapter 15, and chapter 16 provides a long list of greetings to Paul's many friends, and some relatives, in the different Roman house-churches.

Good news about the new king

1 Paul, a slave of King Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for God's good news, [2]which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the sacred writings – [3]the good news about his son, who was descended from David's seed in terms of flesh, [4]and who was marked out powerfully as God's son in terms of the spirit of holiness by the resurrection of the dead: Jesus, the king, our Lord!

[5]Through him we have received grace and apostleship to bring about believing obedience among all the nations for the sake of his name. [6]That includes you, too, who are called by Jesus the king.

[7]This letter comes to all in Rome who love God, all who are called to be his holy people. Grace and peace to you from God our father, and King Jesus, the Lord.

Paul longs to see the Roman Christians

[8]Let me say first that I thank my God for all of you, through Jesus the king, because all the world has heard the news of your faith. [9]God is my witness – the God I worship in my spirit in the good news of his son – that I never stop remembering you [10]in my prayers. I ask God again and again that somehow at last I may now be able, in his good purposes, to come to you. [11]I'm longing to see you! I want to share with you some spiritual blessing to give you strength; [12]that is, I want to encourage you, and be encouraged by you, in the faith you and I share. [13]I don't want you to be unaware, my dear family, that I've often made plans to come to you; it's just that up to now something has always got in the way. I want to bear some fruit among you, as I have been doing among the other nations.

Good news, salvation and the justice of God

[14]I am under obligation to barbarians as well as to Greeks, you see; both to the wise and to the foolish. [15]That's why I'm eager to announce the good news to you, too, in Rome. [16]I'm not ashamed of the good news; it's God's power, bringing salvation to everyone who believes – to the Jew first, and also, equally, to the Greek. [17]This is because God's covenant justice is unveiled in it, from faithfulness to faithfulness. As it says in the Bible, 'the just shall live by faith'.

Humans reject God and embrace corruption

[18]For the anger of God is unveiled from heaven against all the ungodliness and injustice performed by people who use injustice to suppress the truth. [19]What can be known of God, you see, is plain to them, since God has made it plain to them. [20]There are, of course, things about God which you can't see, namely, his eternal power and deity. But, ever since the world was created, they have been known and seen in the things he has made. As a result, they have no excuse: [21]they knew God, but didn't honour him as God or thank him. Instead, they learned to think in useless ways, and their unwise heart grew dark. [22]They declared themselves to be wise, but in fact they became foolish. [23]They swapped the glory of the immortal God for the likeness of the image of mortal humans – and of birds, animals and reptiles.

Unclean desires, dishonoured bodies

[24]So God gave them up to uncleanness in the desires of their hearts, with the result that they dishonoured their bodies among themselves. [25]They swapped God's truth for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the creator, who is blessed for ever, Amen.

[26]So God gave them up to shameful desires. Even the women, you see, swapped natural sexual practice for unnatural; [27]and the men, too, abandoned natural sexual relations with women, and were inflamed with their lust for one another. Men performed shameless acts with men, and received in themselves the appropriate repayment for their mistaken ways.

Darkened mind, darkened behaviour

[28]Moreover, just as they did not see fit to hold on to knowledge of God, God gave them up to an unfit mind, so that they would behave inappropriately. [29]They were filled with all kinds of injustice, wickedness, greed and evil; they were full of envy, murder, enmity, deceit and cunning. They became gossips, [30]slanderers, God-haters, arrogant, self-important, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, [31]unwise, unfaithful, unfeeling, uncaring. [32]They know that God has rightly decreed that people who do things like that deserve death. But not only do they do them; they give their approval to people who practise them.

God's coming judgment will be impartial, the same for all

2 So *you* have no excuse – anyone, whoever you are, who sits in judgment! When you judge someone else, you condemn yourself, because you, who are behaving as a judge, are doing the same things. [2]God's judgment falls, we know, in accordance with the truth, on those who do such things. [3]But if you judge those who do them and yet do them yourself, do you really suppose that you will escape God's judgment?

[4]Or do you despise the riches of God's kindness, forbearance and patience? Don't you know that God's kindness is meant to bring you to repentance? [5]But by your hard, unrepentant heart you are building up a store of anger for yourself on the day of anger, the day when God's just judgment will be unveiled – [6]the God who will 'repay everyone according to their works'.

[7]When people patiently do what is good, and so pursue the quest for glory and honour and immortality, God will give them the life of the age to come. [8]But when people act out of selfish desire, and do not obey the truth, but instead obey injustice, there will be anger and fury. [9]There will be trouble and distress for every single person who does what is wicked, the Jew first and also, equally, the Greek – [10]and there will be glory, honour and peace for everyone who does what is good, the Jew first and also, equally, the Greek. [11]God, you see, shows no partiality.

How God's impartial judgment will work

[12]Everyone who sinned outside the law, you see, will perish outside the law – and those who sinned from within the law will be judged by means of the law. [13]After all, it isn't those who *hear* the law who are in the right before God. It's those who *do* the law who will be declared to be in the right!

[14]This is how it works out. Gentiles don't possess the law as their birthright; but whenever they do what the law says, they are a law for themselves, despite not possessing the law. [15]They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts. Their conscience bears witness as well, and their thoughts will run this way and that, sometimes accusing them and sometimes excusing, [16]on the day when (according to the gospel I proclaim) God judges all human secrets through King Jesus.

The claim of the Jew – and its problems

[17]But supposing you call yourself a 'Jew'. Supposing you rest your hope in the law. Supposing you celebrate the fact that God is your God, [18]and that you know what he wants, and that by the law's instruction you can make appropriate moral distinctions. [19]Supposing you believe yourself to be a guide to the blind, a light to people in darkness, [20]a teacher of the foolish, an instructor for children – all because, in the law, you possess the outline of knowledge and truth.

[21]Well then: if you're going to teach someone else, aren't you going to teach yourself? If you say people shouldn't steal, do you steal? [22]If you say people shouldn't commit adultery, do you commit adultery? If you loathe idols, do you rob temples? [23]If you boast in the law, do you dishonour God by breaking the law? [24]This is what the Bible says: 'Because of you, God's name is blasphemed among the nations'!

The badge, the name and the meaning

[25]Circumcision, you see, has real value for people who keep the law. If, however, you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. [26]Meanwhile, if uncircumcised people keep the law's requirements, their uncircumcision will be regarded as circumcision, won't it? [27]So people who are by nature uncircumcised, but who fulfil the law, will pass judgment on people like you who possess the letter of the law and circumcision but who break the law.

[28]The 'Jew' isn't the person who appears to be one, you see. Nor is 'circumcision' what it appears to be, a matter of physical flesh. [29]The 'Jew' is the one in secret; and 'circumcision' is a matter of the heart, in the spirit rather than the letter. Such a person gets 'praise', not from humans, but from God.

God's determined faithfulness

3 What advantage, then, does the Jew possess? What, indeed, is the point of circumcision? [2]A great deal, in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with God's oracles. [3]What follows from that? If some of them were unfaithful to their commission, does their unfaithfulness nullify God's faithfulness? [4]Certainly not! Let God be true, and every human being false! As the Bible says,

> So that you may be found in the right in what you say, and may win the victory when you come to court.

[5]But if our being in the wrong proves that God is in the right, what are we going to say? That God is unjust to inflict anger on people? (I'm reducing things to a human scale!) [6]Certainly not! How then could God judge the world? [7]But if God's truthfulness grows all the greater and brings him glory in and through my falsehood, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? [8]And why not 'do evil so that good may come' – as some people blasphemously say about us, and as some allege that we say? People like that, at least, deserve the judgment they get!

Jews as well as Gentiles are guilty of sin

[9]What then? Are we in fact better off? No, certainly not. I have already laid down this charge, you see: Jews as well as Greeks are all under the power of sin. [10]This is what the Bible says:

> No one is in the right – nobody at all!
> [11]No one understands, or goes looking for God;
> [12]all of them alike have wandered astray,
> together they have all become futile;
> none of them behaves kindly, no, not one.
> [13]Their throat is an open grave,
> they use their tongues to deceive,
> the poison of vipers is under their lips.
> [14]Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness,
> [15]their feet are quick when there's blood to be shed,
> [16]disaster and wretchedness are in their paths,
> [17]and they did not know the way of peace.
> [18]They have no fear of God before their eyes.

[19]Now we know that whatever the law says, it is speaking to those who are 'in the law'. The purpose of this is that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be brought to the bar of God's judgment. [20]No mere mortal, you see, can be declared to be in the right before God on the basis of the works of the law. What you get through the law is the knowledge of sin.

The unveiling of God's covenant justice

[21]But now, quite apart from the law (though the law and the prophets bore witness to it), God's covenant justice has been displayed. [22]God's covenant justice comes into operation through the faithfulness of Jesus the Messiah, for the benefit of all who have faith. For there is no distinction: [23]all sinned, and fell short of God's glory – [24]and by God's grace they are freely declared to be in the right, to be members of the covenant, through the redemption which is found in the Messiah, Jesus.

Jesus' death reveals God's covenant justice

[25]God put Jesus forth as the place of mercy, through faithfulness, by means of his blood. He did this to demonstrate his covenant justice, because of the passing over (in divine forbearance) of sins committed beforehand. [26]This was to demonstrate his covenant justice in the present time: that is, that he himself is in the right, and that he declares to be in the right everyone who trusts in the faithfulness of Jesus.

The God of both Jew and Gentile

[27]So what happens to boasting? It is ruled out! Through what sort of law? The law of works? No: through the law of faith! [28]We

calculate, you see, that a person is declared to be in the right on the basis of faith, apart from works of the law. [29]Or does God
belong only to Jews? Doesn't he belong to the nations as well? Yes, of course, to the nations as well, [30]since God is one. He will
make the declaration 'in the right' over the circumcised on the basis of faith, and over the uncircumcised through faith.
[31]Do we then abolish the law through faith? Certainly not! Rather, we establish the law.

God's covenant with Abraham

4 What shall we say, then? Have we found Abraham to be our ancestor in a human, fleshly sense? [2]After all, if Abraham was
reckoned 'in the right' on the basis of works, he has grounds to boast – but not in God's presence!
[3]So what does the Bible say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was calculated in his favour, putting him in the right.' [4]Now when
someone 'works', the 'reward' they get is not calculated on the basis of generosity, but on the basis of what they are owed. [5]But if
someone doesn't 'work', but simply believes in the one who declares the ungodly to be in the right, that person's faith is
calculated in their favour, putting them in the right.
[6]We see the same thing when David speaks of the blessing that comes to someone whom God calculates to be in the right apart
from works:

[7]Blessed are those whose lawbreaking is forgiven
and whose sins have been covered over;
[8]Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not calculate sin.

Abraham the father of both uncircumcised and circumcised

[9]So, then, does this blessing come on circumcised people or on uncircumcised? This is the passage we quoted: 'His faith was
calculated to Abraham as indicating that he was in the right.' [10]How was it calculated? When he was circumcised or when he was
uncircumcised? It wasn't when he was circumcised; it was when he was uncircumcised! [11]He received circumcision as a sign and
seal of the status of covenant membership, on the basis of faith, which he had when he was still uncircumcised. This was so that
he could be the father of all who believe even when uncircumcised, so that the status of covenant membership can be calculated to
their account as well. [12]He is also, of course, the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who follow the
steps of the faith which Abraham possessed while still uncircumcised.

Abraham is the father of all believers

[13]The promise, you see, didn't come to Abraham or to his family through the law – the promise, that is, that he would inherit the
world. It came through the covenant justice of faith. [14]For if those who belong to the law are going to inherit, then faith is empty,
and the promise has been abolished. [15]For the law stirs up God's anger; but where there is no law, there is no lawbreaking.
[16]That's why it's 'by faith': so that it can be in accordance with grace, and so that the promise can thereby be validated for the
entire family – not simply those who are from the law, but those who share the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all, [17]just
as the Bible says, 'I have made you the father of many nations.' This happened in the presence of the God in whom he believed,
the God who gives life to the dead and calls into existence things that do not exist.

Abraham's faith – and ours

[18]Against all hope, but still in hope, Abraham believed that he would become the father of many nations, in line with what had
been said to him: 'That's what your family will be like.' [19]He didn't become weak in faith as he considered his own body (which
was already as good as dead, since he was about a hundred years old), and the lifelessness of Sarah's womb. [20]He didn't waver in
unbelief when faced with God's promise. Instead, he grew strong in faith and gave glory to God, [21]being fully convinced that God
had the power to accomplish what he had promised. [22]That is why 'it was calculated to him in terms of covenant justice'.
[23]But it wasn't written for him alone that 'it was calculated to him'. [24]It was written for us as well! It will be calculated to us,
too, since we believe in the one who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, [25]who was handed over because of our trespasses and
raised because of our justification.

Peace and hope

5 The result is this: since we have been declared 'in the right' on the basis of faith, we have peace with God through our Lord
Jesus the Messiah. [2]Through him we have been allowed to approach, by faith, into this grace in which we stand; and we
celebrate the hope of the glory of God.
[3]That's not all. We also celebrate in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces patience, [4]patience produces a
well-formed character, and a character like that produces hope. [5]Hope, in its turn, does not make us ashamed, because the love of
God has been poured out in our hearts through the holy spirit who has been given to us.

Jesus' death reveals God's love and guarantees final salvation

[6]This is all based on what the Messiah did: while we were still weak, at that very moment he died on behalf of the ungodly. [7]It's a
rare thing to find someone who will die on behalf of an upright person – though I suppose someone might be brave enough to die

for a good person. [8]But this is how God demonstrates his own love for us: the Messiah died for us while we were still sinners.
[9]How much more, in that case – since we have been declared to be in the right by his blood – are we going to be saved by him from God's coming anger! [10]When we were enemies, you see, we were reconciled to God through the death of his son; if that's so, how much more, having already been reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. [11]And that's not all. We even celebrate in God, through our Lord Jesus the Messiah, through whom we have now received this reconciliation.

The big picture in shorthand: Adam and the Messiah

[12]Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one human being, and death through sin, and in that way death spread to all humans, in that all sinned . . . [13]Sin was in the world, you see, even in the absence of the law, though sin is not calculated when there is no law. [14]But death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over the people who did not sin by breaking a command, as Adam had done – Adam, who was the imprint of the one who would come.
[15]But it isn't 'as the trespass, so also the gift'. For if many died by one person's trespass, how much more has God's grace, and the gift in grace through the one person Jesus the Messiah, abounded to the many. [16]And nor is it 'as through the sin of the one, so also the gift'. For the judgment which followed the one trespass resulted in a negative verdict, but the free gift which followed many trespasses resulted in a positive verdict. [17]For if, by the trespass of the one, death reigned through that one, how much more will those who receive the abundance of grace, and of the gift of covenant membership, of 'being in the right', reign in life through the one man Jesus the Messiah.

The triumphant reign of grace

[18]So, then, just as, through the trespass of one person, the result was condemnation for all people, even so, through the upright act of one person, the result is justification – life for all people. [19]For just as through the disobedience of one person many received the status of 'sinner', so through the obedience of one person many will receive the status of 'in the right'.
[20]The law came in alongside, so that the trespass might be filled out to its full extent. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more; [21]so that, just as sin reigned in death, even so, through God's faithful covenant justice, grace might reign to the life of the age to come, through Jesus the Messiah, our Lord.

Leaving the state of sin through baptism

6 What are we to say, then? Shall we continue in the state of sin, so that grace may increase? [2]Certainly not! We died to sin; how can we still live in it? [3]Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into the Messiah, Jesus, were baptized into his death? [4]That means that we were buried with him, through baptism, into death, so that, just as the Messiah was raised from the dead through the father's glory, we too might behave with a new quality of life. [5]For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection.

Dead to sin, alive to God

[6]This is what we know: our old humanity was crucified with the Messiah, so that the bodily solidarity of sin might be abolished, and that we should no longer be enslaved to sin. [7]A person who has died, you see, has been declared free from all charges of sin.
[8]But if we died with the Messiah, we believe that we shall live with him. [9]We know that the Messiah, having been raised from the dead, will never die again. Death no longer has any authority over him. [10]The death he died, you see, he died to sin, once and only once. But the life he lives, he lives to God. [11]In the same way you, too, must calculate yourselves as being dead to sin, and alive to God in the Messiah, Jesus.

The call to holy living

[12]So don't allow sin to rule in your mortal body, to make you obey its desires. [13]Nor should you present your limbs and organs to sin to be used for its wicked purposes. Rather, present yourselves to God, as people alive from the dead, and your limbs and organs to God, to be used for the righteous purposes of his covenant. [14]Sin won't actually rule over you, you see, since you are not under law but under grace.

The two types of slavery

[15]What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! [16]Don't you know that if you present yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you really are slaves of the one you obey, whether that happens to be sin, which leads to death, or obedience, which leads to final vindication? [17]Thank God that, though you once were slaves to sin, you have become obedient from the heart to the pattern of teaching to which you were committed. [18]You were freed from sin, and now you have been enslaved to God's covenant justice ([19]I'm using a human picture because of your natural human weakness!). For just as you presented your limbs and organs as slaves to uncleanness, and to one degree of lawlessness after another, so now present your limbs and organs as slaves to covenant justice, which leads to holiness.

Where the two roads lead

[20]When you were slaves of sin, you see, you were free in respect of covenant justice. [21]What fruit did you ever have from the things of which you are now ashamed? Their destination is death. [22]But now that you have been set free from sin and enslaved to God, you have fruit for holiness. Its destination is the life of the age to come. [23]The wages paid by sin, you see, are death; but God's free gift is the life of the age to come, in the Messiah, Jesus our Lord.

Dying to the law

7 Surely you know, my dear family – I am, after all, talking to people who know the law! – that the law rules a person as long as that person is alive? [2]The law binds a married woman to her husband during his lifetime; but if he dies, she is free from the law as regards her husband. [3]So, then, she will be called an adulteress if she goes with another man while her husband is alive; but if the husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress if she goes with another man.

[4]In the same way, my dear family, you too died to the law through the body of the Messiah, so that you could belong to someone else – to the one who was raised from the dead, in fact – so that we could bear fruit for God. [5]For when we were living a mortal human life, the passions of sins which were through the law were at work in our limbs and organs, causing us to bear fruit for death. [6]But now we have been cut loose from the law; we have died to the thing in which we were held tightly. The aim is that we should now be enslaved in the new life of the spirit, not in the old life of the letter.

When the law arrived: Sinai looks back to the fall

[7]What then shall we say? That the law is sin? Certainly not. But I would not have known sin except through the law. I would not have known covetousness if the law had not said, 'You shall not covet.' [8]But sin grabbed its opportunity through the commandment, and produced all kinds of covetousness within me.

Apart from the law, sin is dead. [9]I was once alive apart from the law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life [10]and I died. The commandment which pointed to life turned out, in my case, to bring death. [11]For sin grabbed its opportunity through the commandment. It deceived me, and, through it, killed me.

[12]So, then, the law is holy; and the commandment is holy, upright and good.

Looking back on life under the law

[13]Was it that good thing, then, that brought death to me? Certainly not! On the contrary; it was sin, in order that it might appear as sin, working through the good thing and producing death in me. This was in order that sin might become very sinful indeed, through the commandment.

[14]We know, you see, that the law is spiritual. I, however, am made of flesh, sold as a slave under sin's authority. [15]I don't understand what I do. I don't do what I want, you see, but I do what I hate. [16]So if I do what I don't want to do, I am agreeing that the law is good.

[17]But now it is no longer I that do it; it's sin, living within me. [18]I know, you see, that no good thing lives in me, that is, in my human flesh. For I can will the good, but I can't perform it. [19]For I don't do the good thing I want to do, but I end up doing the evil thing I don't want to do. [20]So if I do what I don't want to do, it's no longer 'I' doing it; it's sin, living inside me.

The double 'law' and the miserable 'I'

[21]This, then, is what I find about the law: when I want to do what is right, evil lies close at hand! [22]I delight in God's law, you see, according to my inmost self; [23]but I see another 'law' in my limbs and organs, fighting a battle against the law of my mind, and taking me as a prisoner in the law of sin which is in my limbs and organs.

[24]What a miserable person I am! Who is going to rescue me from the body of this death? [25]Thank God – through Jesus our king and Lord! So then, left to my own self I am enslaved to God's law with my mind, but to sin's law with my human flesh.

God's action in Messiah and spirit

8 So, therefore, there is no condemnation for those in the Messiah, Jesus! [2]Why not? Because the law of the spirit of life in the Messiah, Jesus, released you from the law of sin and death.

[3]For God has done what the law (being weak because of human flesh) was incapable of doing. God sent his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as a sin-offering; and, right there in the flesh, he condemned sin. [4]This was in order that the right and proper verdict of the law could be fulfilled in us, as we live not according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

The work of the spirit

[5]Look at it like this. People whose lives are determined by human flesh focus their minds on matters to do with the flesh, but people whose lives are determined by the spirit focus their minds on matters to do with the spirit. [6]Focus the mind on the flesh, and you'll die; but focus it on the spirit, and you'll have life, and peace. [7]The mind focused on the flesh, you see, is hostile to God. It doesn't submit to God's law; in fact, it can't. [8]Those who are determined by the flesh can't please God.

[9]But you're not people of flesh; you're people of the spirit (if indeed God's spirit lives within you; note that anyone who doesn't have the spirit of the Messiah doesn't belong to him). [10]But if the Messiah is in you, the body is indeed dead because of

sin, but the spirit is life because of covenant justice. [11]So, then, if the spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead lives within you, the one who raised the Messiah from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies, too, through his spirit who lives within you.

Children of God, led by the spirit

[12]So then, my dear family, we are in debt – but not to human flesh, to live our life in that way. [13]If you live in accordance with the flesh, you will die; but if, by the spirit, you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.
[14]All who are led by the spirit of God, you see, are God's children. [15]You didn't receive a spirit of slavery, did you, to go back again into a state of fear? But you received the spirit of sonship, in whom we call out 'Abba, father!' [16]When that happens, it is the spirit itself giving supporting witness to what our own spirit is saying, that we are God's children. [17]And if we're children, we are also heirs: heirs of God, and fellow heirs with the Messiah, as long as we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

Creation renewed and patient hope

[18]This is how I work it out. The sufferings we go through in the present time are not worth putting in the scale alongside the glory that is going to be unveiled for us. [19]Yes: creation itself is on tiptoe with expectation, eagerly awaiting the moment when God's children will be revealed. [20]Creation, you see, was subjected to pointless futility, not of its own volition, but because of the one who placed it in this subjection, in the hope [21]that creation itself would be freed from its slavery to decay, to enjoy the freedom that comes when God's children are glorified.
[22]Let me explain. We know that the entire creation is groaning together, and going through labour pains together, up until the present time. [23]Not only so: we too, we who have the first fruits of the spirit's life within us, are groaning within ourselves, as we eagerly await our adoption, the redemption of our body. [24]We were saved, you see, in hope. But hope isn't hope if you can see it! Who hopes for what they can see? [25]But if we hope for what we don't see, we wait for it eagerly – but also patiently.

Prayer, sonship and the sovereignty of God

[26]In the same way, too, the spirit comes alongside and helps us in our weakness. We don't know what to pray for as we ought to; but that same spirit pleads on our behalf, with groanings too deep for words. [27]And the Searcher of Hearts knows what the spirit is thinking, because the spirit pleads for God's people according to God's will.
[28]We know, in fact, that God works all things together for good to those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. [29]Those he foreknew, you see, he also marked out in advance to be shaped according to the model of the image of his son, so that he might be the firstborn of a large family. [30]And those he marked out in advance, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

Nothing shall separate us from God's love

[31]What then shall we say to all this?
If God is for us, who is against us?
[32]God, after all, did not spare his own son; he gave him up for us all!
How then will he not, with him, freely give all things to us?
[33]Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones?
It is God who declares them in the right.
[34]Who is going to condemn?
It is the Messiah, Jesus, who has died, or rather has been raised;
who is at God's right hand, and who also prays on our behalf!
[35]Who shall separate us from the Messiah's love?
Suffering, or hardship, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? [36]As the Bible says,

Because of you we are being killed all day long; we are regarded as sheep destined for slaughter.

[37]No: in all these things we are completely victorious through the one who loved us. [38]I am persuaded, you see, that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor the present, nor the future, nor powers, [39]nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in King Jesus our Lord.

The privileges and tragedy of Israel

9 I'm speaking the truth in the Messiah, I'm not lying. I call my conscience as witness, in the holy spirit, [2]that I have great sorrow and endless pain in my heart. [3]Left to my own self, I am half inclined to pray that I would be accursed, cut off from the Messiah, on behalf of my own family, my own flesh-and-blood relatives. [4]They are Israelites; the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship and the promises all belong to them. [5]The patriarchs are their ancestors; and it is from them, according to the flesh, that the Messiah has come – who is God over all, blessed for ever, Amen!

Abraham's two families

[6]But it can't be the case that God's word has failed! Not all who are from Israel, you see, are in fact Israel. [7]Nor is it the case that all the children count as 'seed of Abraham'. No: 'in Isaac shall your seed be named'. [8]That means that it isn't the flesh-and-blood children who are God's children; rather, it is the children of the promise who will be calculated as 'seed'. [9]This was what the promise said, you see: 'Around this time I shall return, and Sarah shall have a son.'

[10]And that's not all. The same thing happened when Rebecca conceived children by one man, our ancestor Isaac. [11]When they had not yet been born, and had done nothing either good or bad – so that what God had in mind in making his choice might come to pass, [12]not because of works but because of the one who calls – it was said to her, 'the elder shall serve the younger'. [13]As the Bible says, 'I loved Jacob, but I hated Esau.'

God's purpose and justice

[14]So what are we going to say? Is God unjust? Certainly not! [15]He says to Moses, you see, 'I will have mercy on those on whom I will have mercy, and I will pity those I will pity.' [16]So, then, it doesn't depend on human willing, or on human effort; it depends on God who shows mercy. [17]For the Bible says to Pharaoh: 'This is why I have raised you up, to show my power in you, and so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.' [18]So, then, he has mercy on the one he wants, and he hardens the one he wants.

[19]You will say to me, then, 'So why does he still blame people? Who can stand against his purpose?' [20]Are you, a mere human being, going to answer God back? 'Surely the clay won't say to the potter, "Why did you make me like this?"' [21]Doesn't the potter have authority over the clay, so that he can make from the same lump one vessel for honour, and another for dishonour? [22]Supposing God wanted to demonstrate his anger and make known his power, and for that reason put up very patiently with the vessels of anger created for destruction, [23]in order to make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, the ones he prepared in advance for glory – [24]including us, whom he called not only from among the Jews but also from among the Gentiles?

God calls a remnant

[25]This is what he says in Hosea,

> I will call 'not my people' 'my people';
> and 'not beloved' I will call 'beloved'.
> [26]And in the place where it was said to them,
> 'You are not my people',
> there they will be called 'sons of the living God'.

[27]Isaiah cries out, concerning Israel,

> Even if the number of Israel's sons are like the sand by the sea,
> only a remnant shall be saved;
> [28]for the Lord will bring judgment on the earth, complete and decisive.

[29]As Isaiah said in an earlier passage,

> If the Lord of hosts had not left us seed,
> we would have become like Sodom, and been made like Gomorrah.

Israel, the nations and the Messiah

[30]What then shall we say? That the nations, who were not aspiring towards covenant membership, have obtained covenant membership, but it is a covenant membership based on faith. [31]Israel meanwhile, though eager for the law which defined the covenant, did not attain to the law. [32]Why not? Because they did not pursue it on the basis of faith, but as though it was on the basis of works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, [33]as the Bible says,

> Look: I am placing in Zion
> a stone that will make people stumble,
> a rock that will trip people up;
> and the one who believes in him
> will never be put to shame.

10 My dear family, the longing of my heart, and my prayer to God on their behalf, is for their salvation. [2]I can testify on their behalf that they have a zeal for God; but it is not based on knowledge. [3]They were ignorant, you see, of God's covenant faithfulness, and they were trying to establish a covenant status of their own; so they didn't submit to God's faithfulness. [4]The Messiah, you see, is the goal of the law, so that covenant membership may be available for all who believe.

The fulfilment of the covenant

[5]Moses writes, you see, about the covenant membership defined by the law, that 'the person who performs the law's commands

shall live in them.' [6]But the *faith*-based covenant membership puts it like this: 'Don't say in your heart, "Who shall go up to heaven?"' (in other words, to bring the Messiah down), [7]'or, "Who shall go down into the depths?"' (in other words, to bring the Messiah up from the dead). [8]But what does it say? 'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart' (that is, the word of faith which we proclaim); [9]because if you profess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. [10]Why? Because the way to covenant membership is by believing with the heart, and the way to salvation is by professing with the mouth.[11]The Bible says, you see, 'Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.' [12]For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, since the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich towards all who call upon him. [13]'All who call upon the name of the Lord', you see, 'will be saved.'

The call to the world, and the failure of Israel

[14]So how are they to call on someone when they haven't believed in him? And how are they to believe if they don't hear? And how will they hear without someone announcing it to them? [15]And how will people make that announcement unless they are sent? As the Bible says, 'How beautiful are the feet of the ones who bring good news of good things.'

[16]But not all obeyed the good news. Isaiah asks, you see, 'Lord, who has believed our report?' [17]So faith comes from hearing, and hearing comes from the word of the Messiah.

[18]This might make us ask, did they not hear? But they certainly did:

Their sound went out into all the world,
and their words to the ends of the earth.

[19]But I ask, did Israel not know? To begin with, Moses says,

I will make you jealous with a non-nation;
and stir you to anger with a foolish people.

[20]Then Isaiah, greatly daring, puts it like this:

I was found by those who were not looking for me;
I became visible to those who were not asking for me.

[21]But in respect of Israel he says,

All day long I have stretched out my hands
to a disbelieving and disagreeable people.

The remnant of grace

11 So I ask, has God abandoned his people? Certainly not! I myself am an Israelite, from the seed of Abraham and the tribe of Benjamin. [2]'God has not abandoned his people', the ones he chose in advance.

Don't you know what the Bible says in the passage about Elijah, describing how he pleads with God against Israel? [3]'Lord,' he says, 'they have killed your prophets, they have thrown down your altars; I'm the only one left, and they are trying to kill me!' [4]But what is the reply from the divine word? 'I have left for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.'

[5]In the same way, at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. [6]But if it is by grace, it is no longer by works, otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

A stumble with a purpose

[7]What then? Did Israel not obtain what it was looking for? Well, the chosen ones obtained it – but the rest were hardened, [8]as the Bible says:

God gave them a spirit of stupor,
eyes that wouldn't see, and ears that wouldn't hear,
right down to this present day.

[9]And David says,

Let their table become a snare and a trap,
and a stumbling block and a punishment for them;
[10]let their eyes be darkened so that they can't see,
and make their backs bend low for ever.

[11]So I ask, then: Have they tripped up in such a way as to fall completely? Certainly not! Rather, by their trespass, salvation has come to the nations, in order to make them jealous. [12]If their trespass means riches for the world, and their impoverishment means riches for the nations, how much more will their fullness mean!

[13]Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Insofar as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I celebrate my particular ministry, [14]so that, if

possible, I can make my 'flesh' jealous, and save some of them. [15]If their casting away, you see, means reconciliation for the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?

The two olive trees

[16]Take another illustration: if the first fruits are holy, so is the whole lump.
And another: if the root is holy, so are the branches.
[17]But if some of the branches were broken off, and you – a *wild* olive tree! – were grafted in among them, and came to share in the root of the olive with its rich sap, [18]don't boast over the branches. If you do boast, remember this: it isn't you that supports the root, but the root that supports you.
[19]I know what you'll say next: 'Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.' [20]That's all very well. They were broken off because of unbelief – but you stand firm by faith. Don't get big ideas about it; instead, be afraid. [21]After all, if God didn't spare the natural branches, there's a strong possibility he won't spare you.
[22]Note carefully, then, that God is both kind and severe. He is severe to those who have fallen, but he is kind to you, provided you continue in his kindness – otherwise you too will be cut off. [23]And they, too, if they do not remain in unbelief, will be grafted back in. God is able, you see, to graft them back in. [24]For if you were cut out of what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will they, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.

Mercy upon all

[25]My dear brothers and sisters, you mustn't get the wrong idea and think too much of yourselves. That is why I don't want you to remain in ignorance of this mystery: a hardening has come for a time upon Israel, until the fullness of the nations comes in. [26]That is how 'all Israel shall be saved', as the Bible says:

The Deliverer will come from Zion,
and will turn away ungodliness from Jacob.
[27]And this will be my covenant with them,
whenever I take away their sins.

[28]As regards the good news, they are enemies – for your sake! But as regards God's choice they are beloved because of the patriarchs. [29]God's gifts and God's call, you see, cannot be undone. [30]For just as *you* were once disobedient to God, but now have received mercy through *their* disobedience, [31]so *they* have now disbelieved as well, in order that, through the mercy which has come *your* way, they too may now receive mercy. [32]For God has shut up all people in disobedience, so that he may have mercy upon all.

To God be the glory

[33]O, the depth of the riches
and the wisdom and knowledge of God!
We cannot search his judgments,
we cannot fathom his ways.
[34]For 'who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has given him counsel?
[35]Who has given a gift to him
which needs to be repaid?'
[36]For from him, through him and to him are all things.
Glory to him for ever! Amen.

The living sacrifice

12 So, my dear family, this is my appeal to you by the mercies of God: offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. Worship like this brings your mind into line with God's. [2]What's more, don't let yourselves be squeezed into the shape dictated by the present age. Instead, be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you can work out what God's will is, what is good, acceptable and complete.
[3]Through the grace which was given to me, I have this to say to each one of you: don't think of yourselves more highly than you ought to think. Rather, think soberly, in line with faith, the true standard which God has marked out for each of you. [4]As in one body we have many limbs and organs, you see, and all the parts have different functions, [5]so we, many as we are, are one body in the Messiah, and individually we belong to one another.

Living together in the Messiah

[6]Well then, we have gifts that differ in accordance with the grace that has been given to us, and we must use them appropriately. If it is prophecy, we must prophesy according to the pattern of the faith. [7]If it is serving, we must work at our serving; if teaching, at our teaching; [8]if exhortation, at our exhortation; if giving, with generosity; if leading, with energy; if doing acts of kindness, with

cheerfulness.
[9]Love must be real. Hate what is evil, stick fast to what is good. [10]Be truly affectionate in showing love for one another; compete with each other in giving mutual respect. [11]Don't get tired of working hard. Be on fire with the spirit. Work as slaves for the Lord. [12]Celebrate your hope; be patient in suffering; give constant energy to prayer; [13]contribute to the needs of God's people; make sure you are hospitable to strangers.

Living alongside the world

[14]Bless those who persecute you; bless them, don't curse them. [15]Celebrate with those who are celebrating, mourn with the mourners. [16]Come to the same mind with one another. Don't give yourselves airs, but associate with the humble. Don't get too clever for yourselves.
[17]Never repay anyone evil for evil; think through what will seem good to everyone who is watching. [18]If it's possible, as far as you can, live at peace with all people. [19]Don't take revenge, my dear people, but allow God's anger room to work. The Bible says, after all, 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord.' [20]No: 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink. If you do this, you will pile up burning coals on his head.' [21]Don't let evil conquer you. Rather, conquer evil with good.

The divine purpose, and limited role, of ruling authorities

13 Every person must be subject to the ruling authorities. There is no authority, you see, except from God, and those that exist have been put in place by God. [2]As a result, anyone who rebels against authority is resisting what God has set up, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. [3]For rulers hold no terrors for people who do good, but only for people who do evil.
If you want to have no fear of the ruling power, do what is good, and it will praise you. [4]It is God's servant, you see, for you and your good. But if you do evil, be afraid; the sword it carries is no empty gesture. It is God's servant, you see: an agent of justice to bring his anger on evildoers. [5]That is why it is necessary to submit, not only to avoid punishment but because of conscience.
[6]That, too, is why you pay taxes. The officials in question are God's ministers, attending to this very thing. [7]So pay each of them what is owed: tribute to those who collect it, revenue to those who collect it. Respect those who should be respected. Honour the people one ought to honour.

Love, the law and the coming day

[8]Don't owe anything to anyone, except the debt of mutual love. If you love your neighbour, you see, you have fulfilled the law. [9]Commandments like 'don't commit adultery, don't kill, don't steal, don't covet' – and any other commandment – are summed up in this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' [10]Love does no wrong to its neighbour; so love is the fulfilment of the law.
[11]This is all the more important because you know what time it is. The hour has come for you to wake up from sleep. Our salvation, you see, is nearer now than it was when first we came to faith. [12]The night is nearly over, the day is almost here. So let's put off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light. [13]Let's behave appropriately, as in the daytime: not in wild parties and drunkenness, not in orgies and shameless immorality, not in bad temper and jealousy. [14]Instead, put on the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, and don't make any allowance for the flesh and its lusts.

The weak and the strong

14 Welcome someone who is weak in faith, but not in order to have disputes on difficult points. [2]One person believes it is all right to eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. [3]The one who eats should not despise the one who does not, and the one who does not should not condemn the one who does – because God has welcomed them.
[4]Who do you think you are to judge someone else's servants? They stand or fall before their own master. And stand they will, because the master can make them stand.
[5]One person reckons one day more important than another. Someone else regards all days as equally important. Each person must make up their own mind. [6]The one who celebrates the day does so in honour of the Lord. The one who eats, does so in honour of the Lord, and gives thanks to God; the one who does not eat abstains in honour of the Lord, and gives thanks to God.

The final judgment is the only one that counts

[7]None of us lives to ourselves; none of us dies to ourselves. [8]If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, then, whether we live or whether we die, we belong to the Lord. [9]That is why the Messiah died and came back to life, so that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.
[10]You, then: why do you condemn your fellow Christian? Or you: why do you despise a fellow Christian? We must all appear before the judgment seat of God, [11]as the Bible says:

> As I live, says the Lord, to me every knee shall bow,
> and every tongue shall give praise to God.

[12]So then, we must each give an account of ourselves to God.

The way of love and peace

[13]Do not, then, pass judgment on one another any longer. If you want to exercise your judgment, do so on this question: how to avoid placing obstacles or stumbling blocks in front of a fellow family member.
[14]I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself, except that some things do become unclean for the person who regards them as such. [15]For if your brother or sister is being harmed by what you eat, you are no longer behaving in accordance with love. Don't let your food destroy someone for whom the Messiah died!
[16]So don't let something that is good for you make other people blaspheme. [17]God's kingdom, you see, isn't about food and drink, but about justice, peace, and joy in the holy spirit. [18]Anyone who serves the Messiah like this pleases God and deserves respect from other people. [19]So, then, let's find and follow the way of peace, and discover how to build each other up. [20]Don't pull down God's work on account of food. Everything is pure, but it becomes evil for anyone who causes offence when they eat. [21]It is good not to eat meat, or drink wine, or anything else which makes your fellow Christian stumble.
[22]Hold firmly to the faith which you have as a matter between yourself and God. When you've thought something through, and can go ahead without passing judgment on yourself, God's blessing on you! [23]But anyone who doubts is condemned even in the act of eating, because it doesn't spring from faith. Whatever is not of faith is sin.

Unity: modelled by the Messiah, encouraged by scripture

15 We, the 'strong' ones, should bear with the frailty of the 'weak', and not please ourselves. [2]Each one of us should please our neighbour for his or her good, to build them up.
[3]The Messiah, you see, did not please himself. Instead, as the Bible says, 'the reproaches of those who reproached you are fallen on me'. [4]Whatever was written ahead of time, you see, was written for us to learn from, so that through patience, and through the encouragement of the Bible, we might have hope. [5]May the God of patience and encouragement grant you to come to a common mind among yourselves, in accordance with the Messiah, Jesus, [6]so that, with one mind and one mouth, you may glorify the God and father of our Lord Jesus the Messiah.

United praise under the Messiah's universal rule

[7]Welcome one another, therefore, as the Messiah has welcomed you, to God's glory. [8]Let me tell you why: the Messiah became a servant of the circumcised people in order to demonstrate the truthfulness of God – that is, to confirm the promises to the patriarchs, [9]and to bring the nations to praise God for his mercy. As the Bible says:

> That is why I will praise you among the nations,
> and will sing to your name.

[10]And again it says,

> Rejoice, you nations, with his people.

[11]And again,

> Praise the Lord, all nations,
> and let all the peoples sing his praise.

[12]And Isaiah says once more:

> There shall be the root of Jesse,
> the one who rises up to rule the nations;
> the nations shall hope in him.

[13]May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the holy spirit.

Coming to Rome at last

[14]When I think of you, my dear family, I myself am thoroughly convinced that you are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and well able to give one another instruction. [15]But I have written to you very boldly at some points, calling things to your mind through the grace which God has given me [16]to enable me to be a minister of King Jesus for the nations, working in the priestly service of God's good news, so that the offering of the nations may be acceptable, sanctified in the holy spirit.
[17]This is the glad confidence I have in King Jesus, and in God's own presence. [18]Far be it from me, you see, to speak about anything except what the Messiah has accomplished through me for the obedience of the nations, in word and deed, [19]in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of God's spirit. I have completed announcing the good news of the Messiah from Jerusalem round as far as Illyricum. [20]My driving ambition has been to announce the good news in places where the Messiah has not been named, so that I can avoid building on anyone else's foundation. [21]Instead, as the Bible says,

> People who hadn't been told about him will see;

people who hadn't heard will understand.

[22]That's why I have faced so many obstacles to stop me coming to you. [23]But now, finding myself with no more room in these regions, I have a great longing to come to you now at last after so many years, [24]and so to make my way to Spain. You see, I'm hoping to see you as I pass through, and to be sent on my way there by you, once I have been refreshed by you for a while.

Aid for Jerusalem

[25]Now, though, I am going to Jerusalem to render service to God's people there. [26]Macedonia and Achaea, you see, have happily decided to enter into partnership with the poor believers in Jerusalem. [27]They were eager to do this, and indeed they owe them a debt. If the nations have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, it is right and proper that they should minister to their earthly needs. [28]So when I have completed this, and tied up all the loose ends, I will come via you to Spain. [29]And I know that when I come to you I shall come with the full blessing of the Messiah.

[30]I urge you, my dear family, through our Lord Jesus the Messiah and through the love of the spirit: fight the battle for me in your prayers to God on my behalf, [31]so that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judaea, and so that my service for Jerusalem may be welcomed gladly by God's people. [32]If this happens, I will come to you in joy, through the will of God, and be refreshed by being with you. [33]May the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

Commending Phoebe, greeting friends

16 Let me introduce to you our sister Phoebe. She is a deacon in the church at Cenchreae. [2]I want you to welcome her in the Lord, as is proper for one of God's people. Please give her whatever practical assistance she may need from you. She has been a benefactor to many people, myself included.

[3]Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow-workers in King Jesus. [4]They put their lives on the line for me. It isn't only me, but all the Gentile churches, that owe them a debt of gratitude. [5]Greet the church in their house as well.

Greet my dear Epainetus; he was the first fruits of the Messiah's harvest in Asia. [6]Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you. [7]Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives and fellow prisoners, who are well known among the apostles, and who were in the Messiah before I was. [8]Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord. [9]Greet Urbanus, our fellow-worker in the Messiah, and my dear Stachys. [10]Greet Apelles, who has proved his worth in the Messiah. Greet the people from the Aristobulus household.

[11]Greet my relative Herodion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the household of Narcissus. [12]Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who have worked hard in the Lord. Greet dear Persis, who has done a great deal of work in the Lord. [13]Greet Rufus, one of the Lord's chosen, and also his mother – my mother too, in effect! [14]Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the family with them.

[15]Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, Olympas too, and all God's people who are with them. [16]Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the Messiah's churches send you greetings.

Warnings and greetings

[17]I urge you, my dear family, to watch out for those who cause divisions and problems, contrary to the teaching you learned. Avoid them. [18]People like that are serving their own appetites instead of our Lord the Messiah. They deceive the hearts of simple-minded people with their smooth and flattering speech. [19]Your obedience, you see, is well known to all, and so I am rejoicing over you. But I want you to be wise when it comes to good, and innocent when it comes to evil. [20]The God of peace will quickly crush the satan under your feet. May the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

[21]Timothy, my fellow-worker, sends you greetings, as do Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, my relatives. [22]I, Tertius, the scribe for this letter, greet you in the Lord. [23]Gaius, who is host to me and the whole church, sends you greetings. Erastus the city treasurer sends you greetings, as does another brother, Quartus.

Final blessing

[25]Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel, the proclamation of Jesus the Messiah, in accordance with the unveiling of the mystery kept hidden for long ages [26]but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings, according to the command of the eternal God, for the obedience of faith among all the nations – [27]to the only wise God, through Jesus the Messiah, to whom be glory to the coming ages! Amen.

1 Corinthians

Skim through Paul's first letter to Corinth, and it reads like a shopping list of 'questions you might want to ask your apostle': what should we do about personality cults, sexual ethics, food associated with pagan temples, how to celebrate the Lord's Supper, spiritual gifts, and the question of resurrection. That is a fair impression – at one level. Paul does indeed address those issues and more. But there are five threads, silken strands of biblically rooted theological thought, which, woven tightly together, hold the entire discourse in place, like a single jeweller's rope displaying carefully arranged pearls.

The first thread is the shocking message of the crucified Messiah: a scandal to Jews, says Paul, and folly to Gentiles, but for those who are called, God's power and God's wisdom. The central fact Paul wants the status-conscious Corinthians to remember is that their very existence hangs on something their neighbours are bound to regard as sheer stupidity, and their Jewish friends down the road will see as blasphemous nonsense. The 'word of the cross' works its way through the letter, colouring ethical and practical teaching all the way: 'the Messiah died for our sins in accordance with the Bible' (15.3) is the start of the official tradition which Paul finally quotes.

The second thread is the claim that through this crazy message a different sort of 'wisdom' has been unveiled, and with it a different kind of *thinking*. 'We have the mind of the Messiah', Paul claims (2.16), though you have to work at it: 'in your thinking be grown-ups' (14.20). Ordinary ways of thinking and behaving require thorough revaluation: Jesus' death and resurrection and the gift of the spirit have introduced into the world a radically new way.

The third thread is the consequent call to *unity*. A bustling city like Corinth had many social divisions. Personality cults were a natural outgrowth of different social expectations. Divisions between rich and poor would show up embarrassingly at the Lord's Table. It is easy for different spiritual gifts to become status symbols. And so on. All such posturing must go: there is one 'body of the Messiah' (chapter 12), and each believer is a limb or an organ within that body. All have parts to play; none can do without the others. That is why Paul follows that point with the matchless short poem about love (chapter 13).

The fourth thread is the parallel call to *holiness*. Various lifestyles common in a city like Corinth ('everybody does it') are simply out of the question for those who have been 'bought with a price' from dehumanizing practices. Chapters 5 and 6 are particularly clear on this. Marriage and sex are vital areas requiring careful practical and pastoral advice (chapter 7). The question of how to stay holy in a world full of pagan worship and practice (chapters 8—10) is balanced with the challenge to avoid a dualism in which 'the world' is seen as evil: on the contrary, God made it, and it's all good – but we must not be enslaved by anything.

The fifth and final thread Paul leaves for the last, but once you see it you realize it's been there all through. The resurrection of Jesus, and the consequent revision of the ancient Jewish timetable for how God was going to put the whole world right, mean that one must live in the present in the light of that ultimate future. Your body will be raised, so what you do with it matters now! The work you do in the present is not wasted (15.58). There is continuity between the present and the future, as well as the radical discontinuity marked by a new world in which death will be no more.

Thankful for God's grace

1 Paul, called by God's will to be an apostle of King Jesus, and Sosthenes our brother; [2]to God's assembly at Corinth, made holy in King Jesus, called to be holy, with everyone who calls on the name of our Lord, King Jesus, in every place – their Lord, indeed, as well as ours! [3]Grace to you and peace from God our father and King Jesus the Lord.

[4]I always thank my God for you, for the grace of God that was given to you in King Jesus. [5]You were enriched in him in everything, in every kind of speech and knowledge, [6]just as the messianic message was established among you, [7]so that you aren't missing out on any spiritual gift as you wait eagerly for our Lord, King Jesus, to be revealed. [8]He will establish you right through to the end, so that you are blameless on the day of our Lord, King Jesus. [9]God is faithful! And it is through God that you have been called into the fellowship of his son, King Jesus, our Lord.

Beware of divisions!

[10]Now I must appeal to you, my brothers and sisters, through the name of King Jesus our Lord, that you should all be in agreement, and that there should be no divisions among you. Instead, you should be fully equipped with the same mind and the same opinion.

[11]You see, my dear family, Chloe's people have put me in the picture about you – about the fact that you are having quarrels. [12]What I'm talking about is this. Each one of you is saying, 'I'm with Paul!', 'I'm with Apollos!', 'I'm with Cephas!', 'I'm with the Messiah!'

[13]Well! Has the Messiah been cut up into pieces? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized into Paul's name?! [14]I'm grateful to God that I didn't baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, [15]so that none of you could say that you were baptized into *my* name. ([16]All right, I did baptize Stephanas and his household as well. Apart from that, I don't know if I baptized anybody else.) [17]This is the point, you see: the Messiah didn't send me to baptize; he sent me to announce the gospel! Not with words of wisdom, either, otherwise the Messiah's cross would lose its power.

God's folly

[18]The word of the cross, you see, is madness to people who are being destroyed. But to us – those who are being saved – it is God's power. [19]This is what the Bible says, after all:

I will destroy the wisdom of the wise;
the shrewdness of the clever I'll abolish.

[20]Where is the wise person? Where is the educated person? Where is the debater of this present age? Don't you see that God has turned the world's wisdom into folly? [21]This is how it's happened: in God's wisdom, the world didn't know God through wisdom, so it gave God pleasure, through the folly of our proclamation, to save those who believe. [22]Jews look for signs, you see, and Greeks search for wisdom; [23]but we announce the crucified Messiah, a scandal to Jews and folly to Gentiles, [24]but to those who are called, Jews and Greeks alike, the Messiah – God's power and God's wisdom.[25]God's folly is wiser than humans, you see, and God's weakness is stronger than humans.

Boasting in the Lord

[26]Think back to your own call, my brothers and sisters. Not many of you were wise in human terms. Not many of you were powerful. Not many were nobly born. [27]But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong; [28]God chose the insignificant and despised things of the world – yes, even things that don't exist! – to abolish the power of the things that do exist, [29]so that no creature could boast in God's presence. [30]Who and what you now are is a gift from God in King Jesus, who has become for us God's wisdom – and righteousness, sanctification and redemption as well; [31]so that, as the Bible puts it, 'Anyone who boasts should boast in the Lord.'

The powerful message of the cross

2 This is how it was for me, too, my dear family. When I came to you, I didn't come and proclaim God's mystery to you by means of a superior style of speaking or wisdom. [2]No: I decided to know nothing in my dealings with you except Jesus the Messiah, especially his crucifixion. [3]I came to you in weakness, in great fear and trembling. [4]My speech and my proclamation were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in transparent proof brought home powerfully by the spirit, [5]so that your faith might not be in human wisdom but in God's power.

God's strange wisdom

[6]We do, however, speak wisdom among the mature. But this isn't a wisdom of this present world, or of the rulers of this present world – those same rulers who are being done away with. [7]No: we speak God's hidden wisdom in a mystery. This is the wisdom God prepared ahead of time, before the world began, for our glory.
[8]None of the rulers of this present age knew about this wisdom. If they had, you see, they wouldn't have crucified the Lord of glory. [9]But, as the Bible says,

Human eyes have never seen,
human ears have never heard,
it's never entered human hearts:
all that God has now prepared
for those who truly love him.

[10] – and that's what God has revealed to us through the spirit! The spirit, you see, searches everything, yes, even the depths of God. [11]Think of it this way: who knows what is really going on inside a person, except the spirit of the person which is inside them? Well, it's like that with God. Nobody knows what is going on inside God except God's spirit. [12]And we haven't received the spirit of the world, but the spirit that comes from God, so that we can know the things that have been given to us by God.
[13]That, then, is what we speak. We don't use words we've been taught by human wisdom, but words we've been taught by the spirit, interpreting spiritual things to spiritual people.

Spiritual or merely human?

[14]Someone living at the merely human level doesn't accept the things of God's spirit. They are foolishness to such people, you see, and they can't understand them because they need to be discerned spiritually. [15]But spiritual people discern everything, while nobody else can discern the truth about them! [16]For 'Who has known the mind of the Lord, so as to instruct him?' But we have the mind of the Messiah.
3 In my own case, my dear family, I couldn't speak to you as spiritual people, but as people who were all too obviously merely human, little babies in the Messiah. [2]I fed you with milk, not solid food, because you weren't able to take it – and you still can't, even now! [3]You're still determined to live in the old way! Yes, wherever there is jealousy and quarrelling, doesn't that mean you're living in the old way, behaving as any merely human being might do? [4]When someone says 'I'm with Paul!', and someone else says 'I'm with Apollos!', are you not mere humans?

God's farm, God's building

[5]So what d'you suppose Apollos actually is? What d'you think Paul is? I'll tell you: servants, through whom you came to faith, each one as the Lord gave. [6]I planted and Apollos watered, but it was God who gave the growth. [7]It follows that the person who

plants isn't anything special, and the person who waters isn't anything special; what matters is God who gives the growth. [8]The person who plants and the person who waters are just the same, and each will receive his own reward according to his own work. [9]We are God's fellow-workers, you see: you are God's farm, God's building.

[10]According to God's grace, I laid the foundation like a wise master builder, and someone else is building on it. Everyone should take care how they build on it. [11]Nobody can lay any foundation, you see, except the one which is laid, which is Jesus the Messiah!

The coming day, the coming fire

[12]If anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass or straw – [13]well, everyone's work will become visible, because the Day will show it up, since it will be revealed in fire. Then the fire will test what sort of work everyone has done. [14]If the building work that someone has done stands the test, they will receive a reward. [15]If someone's work is burned up, they will be punished by bearing the loss; they themselves will be saved, however, but only as though through a fire.

[16]Don't you see? You are God's Temple! God's spirit lives in you! [17]If anyone destroys God's Temple, God will destroy them. God's Temple is holy, you see, and that is precisely what you are.

Everything belongs to you

[18]Don't let anyone deceive themselves. If anyone among you supposes they are wise in the present age, let them become foolish, so that they can become wise. [19]The wisdom of this world, you see, is folly with God. This is what the Bible says: 'He catches the wise in their trickery.' [20]And again, 'The Lord knows the thinking of the wise – and he knows that it's all a sham!'

[21]So don't let anyone boast about mere human beings. For everything belongs to you, [22]whether it's Paul or Apollos or Cephas, whether it's the world or life or death, whether it's the present or the future – everything belongs to you! [23]And you belong to the Messiah; and the Messiah belongs to God.

Judgment then rather than now

4 This is how we should be thought of: as servants of the Messiah, and household managers for God's mysteries. [2]And this is what follows: the main requirement for a manager is to be trustworthy. [3]Having said that, I regard it as a matter of minimal concern to think that I should be interrogated by you, or indeed by any human court. I don't even interrogate myself. [4]I don't actually know of anything that stands against me, but that isn't what vindicates me; it's the Lord who interrogates me.

[5]So don't pass judgment on anything before the time when the Lord comes! He will bring to light the secrets of darkness, and will lay bare the intentions of the heart. Then everyone will receive praise – from God.

Apostles on display

[6]I have applied all this to myself and Apollos because of you, my dear family, so that you may learn from us, as the saying goes, not to go beyond what the Bible says – so that nobody gets puffed up in favour of one person and against another.

[7]Who is going to concede that you are special, after all? What have you got that you didn't receive? Well then, if you received it, why boast as if you didn't? [8]Do you really suppose you've already had all the food you need? Do you think you've already become rich? Do you think you've already been crowned as royalty, leaving us behind? I wish you really were already reigning, so that we could reign alongside you!

[9]This is how I look at it, you see: God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like people sentenced to death. We have become a public show for the world, for angels and humans alike. [10]We are fools because of the Messiah, but you are wise in the Messiah! We are weak, but you are strong! You are celebrated, we are nobodies! [11]Yes, right up to the present moment we go hungry and thirsty; we are badly clothed, roughly treated, with no home to call our own. [12]What's more, we work hard, doing manual labour. When we are insulted, we give back blessings. When we are persecuted, we put up with it. [13]When we are slandered, we speak gently in return. To this day we have become like the rubbish of the world, fit only to be scraped off the plate and thrown away with everything else.

Puffed up or powerful?

[14]I'm not writing this to make you ashamed! I am simply treating you as dear children, and putting you straight. [15]You've got a thousand babysitters in Christ, I know, but you haven't got many fathers – because I became your father in the Messiah, Jesus, through the gospel.

[16]So let me appeal to you: copy me! [17]That's why I have sent Timothy to you; he's my child in the Lord, and I love him and trust him. He will remind you how I conduct myself in the Messiah Jesus, just as I teach everywhere, in each assembly.

[18]Some people are getting puffed up, as though I wasn't going to come to you. [19]But I will come to you quickly, if the Lord wants it that way; and then I'll find out not what these puffed-up people are saying but how powerful they are. [20]The kingdom of God, you see, isn't about talk – it's about power. [21]What d'you want, then? Shall I come to you with a big stick, or with love, and in a gentle spirit?

Scandal and judgment

5 Everybody's talking about the sex scandal that's going on in your community, not least because it's a kind of immorality that the pagans don't practise! Well I never – a man taking his father's wife! [2]And you're puffed up! Why aren't you in mourning? Why aren't you getting rid of the person who's done such a thing?

[3]Let me tell you what I've already done. I may be away from you physically, but I'm present in the spirit; and I've already passed judgment, as though I was there with you, on the person who has behaved in this way. [4]When you are assembled together in the name of our Lord Jesus, and my spirit is there too with the power of our Lord Jesus, [5]you must hand over such a person to the satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord Jesus.

Get rid of the 'leaven'!

[6]Your boasting is no good. Don't you know that a little yeast works its way through the whole lump of dough? [7]Cleanse out the old yeast, so that you can be a new lump, the yeast-free lump you really are. It's Passover-time, you see, and our Passover lamb – the Messiah, I mean – has already been sacrificed! [8]What we now have to do is to keep the festival properly: none of the yeast of the old life, and none of the yeast of depravity and wickedness, either. What we need is yeast-free bread, and that means sincerity and truth.

[9]I wrote to you in the previous letter not to become associated with immoral people. [10]I didn't (of course) mean immoral people in the world at large, or greedy people, or thieves, or idolaters. To avoid them, you'd have to remove yourselves from the world altogether! [11]No; I was referring to people who call themselves Christians but who are immoral, or greedy, or idolaters, or blasphemers, or drunkards or robbers. You shouldn't associate with them; you shouldn't even eat with a person like that. [12]Why should I worry about judging people outside? It's the people *in*side you should judge, isn't it? [13]God judges the people outside. 'Drive out the wicked person from your company.'

Lawsuits in the church?

6 Can it really be the case that one of you dares to go to law against a neighbour, to be tried before unjust people, and not before God's people? [2]Don't you know that God's people will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you really incompetent to try smaller matters? [3]Don't you know that we shall be judging angels? Why not then also matters to do with ordinary life? [4]So if you have lawsuits about ordinary matters, are you actually going to appoint as judges people whom the church despises? [5]I'm saying this to bring shame on you. Is it really true that there is no wise person among you who is able to decide between one Christian and another? [6]But one Christian is being taken to court by another, and before unbelievers at that!

[7]Actually, to have lawsuits with one another at all represents a major setback for you. Why not rather let yourselves be wronged? Why not rather put up with loss? [8]But you yourselves are wronging and defrauding people, and fellow Christians at that!

Inheriting God's kingdom – or not

[9]Don't you know that the unjust will not inherit God's kingdom? Don't be deceived! Neither immoral people, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor practising homosexuals of whichever sort, [10]nor thieves, nor greedy people, nor drunkards, nor abusive talkers, nor robbers will inherit God's kingdom. [11]That, of course, is what some of you were! But you were washed clean; you were made holy; you were put back to rights – in the name of the Lord, King Jesus, and in the spirit of our God.

What is the body for?

[12]'Everything is lawful for me' – but not everything is helpful! 'Everything is lawful for me' – but I'm not going to let anything give me orders! [13]'Food for the stomach, and the stomach for food, and God will destroy the one and the other' – but the body is not meant for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. [14]What's more, God raised the Lord; and he will raise us, too, through his power.

[15]Don't you know that your bodies are members of the Messiah? Shall I then take the members of the Messiah and make them members of a prostitute? Of course not! [16]Or don't you know that anyone who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her? 'The two shall become one flesh' – that's what it says. [17]But the one who joins himself to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.

[18]Run away from immorality. Every sin that it's possible for someone to commit happens outside the body; but immorality involves sinning against your own body. [19]Or don't you know that your body is a temple of the holy spirit within you, the spirit God gave you, so that you don't belong to yourselves? [20]You were quite an expensive purchase! So glorify God in your body.

Life within marriage

7 Let me now turn to the matters you wrote about. 'It is good for a man to have no sexual contact with a woman.' [2]Well, yes; but the temptation to immorality means that every man should maintain sexual relations with his own wife, and every woman with her own husband. [3]The man should give his wife her marital rights, and the woman should do the same for her husband. [4]The woman isn't in charge of her own body; her husband is. In the same way, the man isn't in charge of his own body; his wife is. [5]Don't deny one another, except perhaps by agreement for a period of time, so that you may have more space for prayer. But then come together again, in case the satan might tempt you because of your weakness of will.

[6]I'm not saying this as a command, but as a concession. [7]I would be happy to see everyone be in the same situation as myself.

But each person has his or her own gift from God, one this way, another that way.

Marriage and divorce

[8]To unmarried people, and to widows, I have this to say: it's perfectly all right for you to remain like me. [9]But if you don't have power over your passions, then get married. Much better to marry than to have desire smouldering away inside you!

[10]I have a command, too, for married people – actually, it's not just from me, it's from the Lord: that a woman should not separate from her husband. [11]If she does, she should remain unmarried or return to her husband. So, too, a man should not divorce his wife.

[12]To everyone else I have this to say (this is just me, not the Lord). If a Christian has an unbelieving wife, and she is happy to live with him, he shouldn't divorce her. [13]If a woman has an unbelieving husband, and he is happy to live with her, she shouldn't divorce him. [14]The unbelieving husband, you see, is made holy by his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy by her husband; otherwise your children would be impure, whereas in fact they are holy. [15]But if the unbelieving partner wants to separate, let them separate; a brother or sister is not bound in a case like that. God has called you in peace. [16]If you're a wife, how d'you know whether or not you will save your husband? If you're a husband, how d'you know whether or not you will save your wife?

Stay the way you were called

[17]This is the overriding rule: everyone should conduct their lives as the Lord appointed, as God has called them. This is what I lay down in all the churches. [18]If someone was circumcised when he was called, he shouldn't try to remove the marks. If someone was uncircumcised when he was called, he shouldn't get circumcised. [19]Circumcision is nothing; uncircumcision is nothing; what matters is keeping God's commandments!

[20]Everyone should stay within the calling they had when they were called. [21]Were you a slave when you were called? Don't worry about it (but if you get the chance of freedom, seize it!). [22]The one who is in the Lord and called as a slave is the Lord's freedman, just as the one who is called as a free person is the Messiah's slave. [23]You were bought at a high price; don't become the slaves of human beings. [24]So, brothers and sisters, let each person remain before God in the state in which they were called.

On remaining unmarried

[25]Now when it comes to unmarried people, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my opinion as (thanks to the Lord's mercy!) a trustworthy person. [26]This, then, is what I think is for the best: just at the moment we are in the middle of a very difficult time, and it's best for people to remain as they are. [27]Are you bound to a wife? Don't try to dissolve the marriage. Have you had your marriage dissolved? Don't look for another wife. [28]But if you do marry, you are not sinning, and if an unmarried woman marries, she is not sinning. But people who go that way will have trouble at a human level, and I would prefer to spare you that.

[29]This is what I mean, my brothers and sisters. The present situation won't last long; for the moment, let those who have wives live as though they weren't married, [30]those who weep as though they were not weeping, those who celebrate as though they were not celebrating, those who buy as though they had no possessions, [31]those who use the world as though they were not making use of it. The pattern of this world, you see, is passing away.

Divided loyalties

[32]I want you to be free from worries. The unmarried man worries about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord; [33]but the married man worries about the things of the world, in other words, how to please his wife – [34]and he is pulled in both directions. So too the unmarried woman or girl worries about the things of the Lord, how to be holy both in body and spirit; but the married woman worries about the things of the world, in other words, how to please her husband.

[35]I'm saying this for your own benefit. I'm not placing restrictions on you; my aim is that nothing will get in the way of your appropriate behaviour and steady devotion to the Lord.

[36]If anyone thinks he is behaving improperly towards his fiancée – if he finds the situation overly stressful, and matters reach a point of necessity – then let him do as he wishes, he won't be sinning: let them marry. [37]But the man who settles it firmly in his heart and is not under necessity, but in control of his own will, and has made his judgment in his own heart to keep her as his fiancée, will do well. [38]So the one who marries his fiancée will do well; and the one who holds back from marrying will do better.

[39]A woman is bound in marriage as long as her husband lives. But if the husband dies she is free to marry anyone she likes, only in the Lord. [40]But in my opinion she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think I too have the spirit of God.

Meat offered to idols

8 Now when it comes to meat offered to idols, we know that 'We all have knowledge'. Knowledge puffs you up, but love builds you up! [2]If anybody thinks they 'know' something, they don't yet 'know' in the way they ought to know. [3]But if anybody loves God, they are 'known' – by him.

[4]So when it comes to food that has been offered to idols, we know that 'idols are nothing in the world', and that 'there is no God but one'. [5]Yes, indeed: there may be many so-called 'gods', whether in heaven or on earth, just as there are many 'gods' and

many ‘lords’. [6]But for us

There is one God, the father,
from whom are all things, and we live to him and for him;
and one Lord, Jesus the Messiah,
through whom are all things, and we live through him.

Respecting weak consciences

[7]The problem is that not everybody has this ‘knowledge’. Some have been accustomed up to now to eating idol-food with the assumption that it really does belong to the idol. This has left them with a weak conscience, and now that conscience will be polluted. [8]But the food we eat won’t recommend us to God. We won’t be any worse off if we don’t eat, and we won’t be any better off if we do.

[9]But you must take care in case this official right of yours becomes a danger to the weak. [10]Look at it like this: if someone with a weak conscience sees you, a person with ‘knowledge’, sitting down to eat in an idol-house, that conscience of theirs is likely to make up its mind actually to eat idol-food, isn’t it? [11]And so, you see, the weak person – a brother or sister for whom the Messiah died! – is then destroyed by your ‘knowledge’. [12]That means you’ll be sinning against your brother or sister, and attacking their weak conscience; and in doing this you’ll be sinning against the Messiah. [13]So, for this reason, if food causes my brother or sister to stumble, I will never ever eat meat, so that I won’t make my brother or sister trip up.

The ‘rights’ of an apostle

9 I’m a free man, aren’t I? I’m an apostle, aren’t I? I’ve seen Jesus our Lord, haven’t I? You are my work in the Lord, aren’t you? [2]I may not be an apostle to other people, but I certainly am to you; in fact, you are the authorized stamp of my apostleship in the Lord.

[3]This is the defence I make to anyone who wants to bring a charge against me. [4]Do we not have the right to eat and drink? [5]Do we not have the right to take a Christian wife with us on our travels, as the other apostles do, as the Lord’s brothers do, as Cephas does? [6]Or are Barnabas and I the only ones who don’t have the right to be set free from the need to work? [7]Who serves in the army at their own expense? Who plants a vineyard and doesn’t eat its fruit? Who looks after animals and doesn’t drink the milk?

[8]I’m not just using human illustrations to make the point; the law says the same thing, doesn’t it? [9]This is what is written in Moses’s law: ‘You must not muzzle a threshing ox.’ God isn’t concerned for oxen, is he? [10]Doesn’t it refer completely to us? Yes, it does – because it’s written that the one who ploughs should do so in hope of the produce, and the thresher should thresh in hope of a share in the crop. [11]So if we have sown spiritual things among you, is it such a big thing that we should reap worldly things? [12]If others have that kind of right over you, don’t we have it even more?

Giving up rights for the gospel

But we haven’t made use of this right. Instead, we put up with everything, so as to place no obstacle in the way of the Messiah’s gospel.

[13]Don’t you know that those who work in the Temple eat the Temple food, and those who serve at the altar share in the food from the altar? [14]In the same way the Lord has laid it down that those who announce the gospel should get their living from the gospel.

[15]But I haven’t made use of any of this. I’m not writing this in order to make it happen like this for me. It would be better for me to die than . . . Nobody’s going to deprive me of my boast! [16]If I announce the gospel, you see, that’s no reason for me to be proud. I’m under compulsion! Woe betide me if I *don’t* announce the gospel! [17]If I do it willingly, I have a reward; if I do it unwillingly – well, this is the commission that’s been entrusted to me! [18]So what is my reward? Just this: that when I announce the gospel I should give it away free of charge; that I shouldn’t make use of my rights in the gospel.

The apostle’s freedom – to be enslaved to everyone

[19]The reason for all this is as follows. I am indeed free from everyone; but I have enslaved myself to everyone, so that I can win all the more. [20]I became like a Jew to the Jews, to win Jews. I became like someone under the law to the people who are under the law, even though I’m not myself under the law, so that I could win those under the law. [21]To the lawless I became like someone lawless (even though I’m not lawless before God, but under the Messiah’s law), so that I could win the lawless. [22]I became weak to the weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people, so that in all ways I might save some. [23]I do it all because of the gospel, so that I can be a partner in its benefits.

The Christian athlete

[24]Don’t you know that when people run on the race-track everybody runs, but only one person gets the prize? Run in such a way that you’ll win it. [25]Everyone who goes in for athletics exercises self-discipline in everything. They do it to gain a crown that perishes; we do it for an imperishable one. [26]Well then: I don’t run in an aimless fashion! I don’t box like someone punching the air! [27]No: I give my body rough treatment, and make it my slave, in case, after announcing the message to others, I myself should end up being disqualified.

The first exodus

10 I don't want you to be ignorant, my brothers and sisters, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all went through the sea. [2]They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. [3]They all ate the same spiritual food [4]and drank the same spiritual drink. They drank, you see, from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was the Messiah. [5]But God wasn't pleased with most of them, as you can tell by the fact that he laid them low in the desert.

Don't make the same mistake again!

[6]Now these things were patterns for us, so that we should not start to crave for wicked things as they did. [7]Nor should we commit idolatry, as some of them did – as the Bible says, 'The people sat down to eat and drink, and got up to play.' [8]Nor should we become immoral, like some of them became immoral, and twenty-three thousand fell on a single day. [9]Nor should we put the Messiah to the test, as some of them put him to the test, and were destroyed by serpents. [10]Nor should we grumble, as some of them grumbled and were destroyed by the destroyer.

[11]Now these things happened to them as a pattern, and they were written for our instruction, since it's upon us that the ends of the ages have now come. [12]As a result, anyone who reckons they are standing upright should watch out in case they fall over. [13]Every test that comes upon you is normal for human beings. But God is faithful: he won't let you be tested beyond your ability. Along with the testing, he will provide the way of escape, so that you can bear it.

The table of the Lord and the table of demons

[14]Therefore, my dear people, run away from idolatry. [15]I'm speaking as to intelligent people: you yourselves must weigh my words. [16]The cup of blessing which we bless is a sharing in the Messiah's blood, isn't it? The bread we break is a sharing in the Messiah's body, isn't it? [17]There is one loaf; well, then, there may be several of us, but we are one body, because we all share the one loaf.

[18]Consider ethnic Israel. Those who eat from the sacrifices share in the altar, don't they? [19]So what am I saying? That idol-food is real, or that an idol is a real being? [20]No: but when they offer sacrifices, they offer them to demons, not to God. And *I don't want you to be table-partners with demons*. [21]You can't drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You can't share in the table of the Lord and the table of demons. [22]Surely you don't want to provoke the Lord to jealousy? We aren't stronger than him, are we?

Do everything to God's glory

[23]'Everything is lawful', but not everything is helpful. 'Everything is lawful', but not everything builds you up. [24]Nobody should seek their own advantage, but the other person's instead.

[25]Eat whatever is sold in the market without making any judgments on the basis of conscience. [26]'The earth and its fullness', after all, 'belong to the Lord'. [27]If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner, and you want to go, eat whatever is put in front of you without making any judgments on the basis of conscience. [28]But if someone says 'This was offered in sacrifice', then don't eat it – because of the person who told you about it, and because of conscience, [29]by which I don't mean your own conscience, but your neighbour's. For why should my freedom be condemned by someone else's conscience? [30]If I eat my share gratefully, why should someone else speak evil of me because of something I've given thanks for?

[31]So, then, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do everything to God's glory. [32]Be blameless before Jews and Greeks and the church of God, [33]just as I try to please everybody in everything, not pursuing my own advantage, but that of the great majority, so that they may be saved.

11 Copy me, just as I'm copying the Messiah.

Male and female in the worshipping church

[2]I congratulate you that you are remembering me in everything, and you are keeping the traditions as I handed them on to you. [3]But I want you to know this: that the Messiah is the 'head' of every man, and the husband is the 'head' of every wife, and God is the 'head' of the Messiah. [4]Every man who prays or prophesies while wearing something on his head brings shame on his 'head'; [5]and every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered brings shame on her 'head'. It would be just the same if she had her head shaved. [6]For if a woman isn't covered, then she should be shaved; but if it's shameful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, then let her be covered.

[7]A man ought not to cover his head, you see; he is the image and glory of God. But a wife is the glory of her husband. [8]For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. [9]And man was not created for the sake of woman, but woman for the sake of man. [10]That's why the wife must have authority on her head, because of the angels. [11]However, woman is not apart from man, nor man apart from woman, in the Lord; [12]for just as woman came from man, so now man comes into the world by means of woman. And everything is from God.

[13]Judge the matter for yourselves. Is it really appropriate for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? [14]Doesn't nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is shameful to him, [15]but if a woman has long hair, it's her glory? Her hair is given her, you see, instead of a covering. [16]If anyone wants to dispute this, we have no other custom, nor do the churches of God.

Rich and poor at the table of the Lord

[17]What I have to talk about now isn't a matter for praise. When you meet together, you make things worse, not better! [18]What I mean is this: to begin with, I hear that when you come together in the assembly there are divisions among you. Well, I believe it – at least partly. [19]There are bound to be groupings among you; that's how the genuine ones among you will stand out, I suppose! [20]So when you gather together into one meeting, it isn't the Lord's Supper that you eat. [21]Everyone brings their own food to eat, and one person goes hungry while another gets drunk. [22]Haven't you got houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise God's assembly, and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? No, in this matter I shan't!

Recognizing the body

[23]This, you see, is what I received from the Lord, and handed on to you. On the night when the Lord Jesus was betrayed, he took bread, [24]gave thanks, broke it, and said, 'This is my body; it's for you! Do this as a memorial of me.' [25]He did the same with the cup after supper, and said, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Whenever you drink it, do this as a memorial of me.' [26]For whenever you eat this bread and drink the cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes.

[27]It follows from this that anyone who eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. [28]Everyone should test themselves; that's how you should eat the bread and drink the cup. [29]You see, if you eat and drink without recognizing the body, you eat and drink judgment on yourself. [30]That's why several of you are weak and sick, and some have died. [31]But if we learned how to judge ourselves, we would not incur judgment. [32]But when we are judged by the Lord, we are punished, so that we won't be condemned along with the world.

[33]So, my brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat, treat one another as honoured guests by waiting for each other. [34]If anyone is hungry, they should eat at home, so that you don't come together and find yourselves facing judgment. I will put the other matters in order when I come.

The same spirit at work

12 Now: about things relating to the spirit's work, my brothers and sisters, I don't want you to remain ignorant. [2]You know that when you were still pagans you were led off, carried away again and again, after speechless idols. [3]So I want to make it clear to you that nobody who is speaking by God's spirit ever says 'Jesus be cursed!'; and nobody can say 'Jesus is Lord!', except by the holy spirit.

[4]There are different types of spiritual gifts, but the same spirit; [5]there are different types of service, but the same Lord; [6]and there are different types of activity, but it is the same God who operates all of them in everyone. [7]The point of the spirit being revealed in each one is so that all may benefit. [8]One person is given a word of wisdom through the spirit; another, a word of knowledge by the same spirit; [9]another, faith through the same spirit; another, gifts of healing by the one spirit; [10]another, the working of mighty deeds; another, prophecy; another, the ability to distinguish spirits; another, various kinds of languages; another, the interpretation of languages. [11]It is the one spirit, the same one, whose work produces all these things, and the spirit gives different gifts to each one in accordance with the spirit's own wishes.

Many members, one body

[12]Let me explain. Just as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is the Messiah. [13]For we all were baptized into one body, by one spirit – whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free – and we were all given one spirit to drink.

[14]For the body, indeed, is not one member, but many. [15]If the foot were to say, 'Because I'm not a hand, I'm not part of the body', that wouldn't make it any less a part of the body, would it? [16]And if the ear were to say, 'Because I'm not an eye, I'm not part of the body', that wouldn't make it any less a part of the body, would it? [17]If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were the sense of hearing, what would happen to the sense of smell? [18]But as it is, God has organized the members, placing each one individually in the body according to his wishes. [19]If all the parts were one member, where would the body be? [20]So the result is this: there are many members, but one body.

The responsibilities of each member

[21]The eye can't say to the hand, 'I don't need you'; and, again, the head can't say to the feet, 'I don't need you'. [22]No: the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are all the more necessary, [23]and we give much greater honour to the parts of the body we reckon more dishonourable, so that the parts we hide in shame have a far greater dignity [24]which our more presentable parts don't need. In fact, God has made the body a single, organized whole; he has given greater honour to the lesser part, [25]so that there won't be any division in the body, but that all the members may have the same concern for one another. [26]If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it. If one member is exalted, all the members celebrate along with it.

Gifts and ministries

[27]Now you together are the Messiah's body, and individually you are members of it. [28]In the church, God has placed apostles first, then prophets, then teachers, then powerful deeds, then gifts of healing, helpful deeds, organizational gifts, different types of

languages. [29]Not everyone is an apostle, are they? Not everyone is a prophet! Not everyone is a teacher! Not everyone does powerful deeds! [30]Not everyone has gifts of healing! Not everyone speaks with tongues! Not everyone interprets!
[31]You should be eager for the better kinds of gifts.

The need for love and the character of love

Now I'm going to show you a better way, a much better way.

13 If I speak in human languages, or even
in those of angels, but do not have love,
then I've become a clanging gong or else
a clashing cymbal. [2]And if I should have
prophetic gifts, and know all mysteries,
all knowledge, too; have faith, to move the mountains,
but have no love – I'm nothing. [3]If I give
all my possessions to the poor, and, for pride's sake,
my very body, but do not have love,
it's useless to me.

[4]Love's great-hearted; love is kind,
knows no jealousy, makes no fuss,
is not puffed up, [5]no shameless ways,
doesn't force its rightful claim,
doesn't rage or bear a grudge,
[6]doesn't cheer at others' harm,
rejoices, rather, in the truth.
[7]Love bears all things, believes all things,
love hopes all things, endures all things.

Love: the bridge to God's future

[8]Love never fails. But prophecies will be
abolished; tongues will stop; and knowledge, too,
be done away. [9]We know, you see, in part;
we prophesy in part; [10]but, with perfection,
the partial is abolished. [11]As a child
I spoke, and thought, and reasoned like a child;
when I grew up, I threw off childish ways.

[12]For at the moment all that we can see
are puzzling reflections in a mirror;
then, face to face. I know in part, for now;
but then I'll know completely, through and through,
even as I'm completely known. [13]So, now,
faith, hope, and love remain, these three; and, of them,
love is the greatest.

Priorities in worship

14 Pursue love; and long for the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. [2]Someone who speaks in a tongue, you see, isn't speaking to human beings but to God. Nobody can understand such speakers, because they speak mysteries in the spirit. [3]But the one who prophesies speaks to other people, to build them up, to strengthen them, and to console them. [4]The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself or herself; but the one who prophesies builds up the church.
[5]I would be delighted for all of you to speak in tongues, but I would be even more delighted to have you all prophesying. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in a tongue, unless they also give an interpretation so that the church may be built up.

Speaking clearly in church

[6]Well then, my brothers and sisters, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how am I going to bring you any benefit unless I speak to you either in a revelation or in a word of knowledge or in a prophecy or in teaching? [7]It's the same with lifeless objects that make a sound, like a flute or a lyre. If they don't give a distinct note, how will anyone know what tune is being blown or plucked? [8]Think about it: if the trumpet doesn't make a clear sound, who will get ready to fight?
[9]It's the same with you. Unless your tongue gives a distinct message, how will anyone be able to tell what you're talking about? You will be like someone speaking into thin air. [10]To be sure, there are all kinds and types of languages in the world, and none of

them is meaningless. [11]But if I don't know the force of the words, I will remain a foreigner to the speaker, and the speaker will be a foreigner to me. [12]It's the same with you. Since you are so eager for spiritual matters, try to specialize in doing things that will build up the church.

Praying with mind as well as spirit

[13]So the one who speaks in a tongue should pray to be able to say the same thing in clear speech. [14]If I pray in a tongue, you see, my spirit prays, but my mind remains fruitless. [15]Why is that important? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the mind as well. I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the mind as well. [16]You see, if you say a blessing in the spirit, how can someone who isn't one of the inner circle say the 'Amen' to your prayer? They won't know what you're talking about! [17]You may well be giving thanks in fine style, but the other person isn't being built up. [18]I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. [19]But in the assembly I would rather speak five words with my mind, to teach other people, than a thousand words in a tongue.

Signs for believers and unbelievers

[20]Brothers and sisters, don't be children in your thinking. Be babies when it comes to evil, but in your thinking be grown-ups. [21]This is what it says in the law: 'I will speak to this people in foreign languages and with the lips of strangers, and even so they won't listen to me, says the Lord.' [22]So tongues are not meant for believers, but are a warning for unbelievers; while prophecy is not designed for unbelievers, but for those who come to faith. [23]What I mean is this: if the whole assembly comes together and everybody speaks in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers come in, they'll say you're crazy, won't they? [24]But if everyone prophesies, and outsiders or unbelievers come in, they will be called to account by everyone, judged by everyone, [25]the secrets of their hearts will be laid bare, and so they will fall down on their faces and worship God, declaring that 'God is truly among you'.

Final instructions for worship

[26]So where does this leave us, my brothers and sisters? When you come together, one person has a psalm, another some teaching, another a revelation, another a tongue, and another some interpretation. Let everything be done for the general upbuilding. [27]If anyone speaks in a tongue, there should be two or at most three, each taking their turn, and one of them should put it into plain speech. [28]But if none of them can do that, let them be silent in the assembly, and speak to themselves and to God.

[29]As for prophets, let two or three speak, and the others evaluate what is said. [30]If fresh revelation comes to someone sitting there, the first person should be silent. [31]You can all prophesy one by one, so that everyone can learn, and everyone can be encouraged. [32]The spirits of prophets are under the control of prophets, [33]since God is the God, not of chaos, but of peace.

As in all the assemblies of God's people, [34]the women should keep silence in the assemblies. They are not permitted to speak; they should remain in submission, just as the law declares. [35]If they want to understand something more, they should ask their own husbands when they get home. It's shameful, you see, for a woman to speak in the assembly. [36]Do you suppose God's word began with you? Are you the only ones it has reached?

[37]If anyone thinks they are a prophet, or spiritual, they should acknowledge that what I write to you is the Lord's command. [38]If anyone disregards this, they can be disregarded.

[39]So, my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and don't forbid speaking in tongues. [40]But everything should be done in a seemly fashion, and in proper order.

The gospel of the Messiah, crucified, buried and risen

15 Let me remind you, brothers and sisters, about the good news which I announced to you. You received this good news, and you're standing firm on it, [2]and you are saved through it, if you hold fast the message I announced to you – unless it was for nothing that you believed!

[3]What I handed on to you at the beginning, you see, was what I received, namely this: 'The Messiah died for our sins in accordance with the Bible; [4]he was buried; he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Bible; [5]he was seen by Cephas, then by the Twelve; [6]then he was seen by over five hundred brothers and sisters at once, most of whom are still with us, though some fell asleep; [7]then he was seen by James, then by all the apostles; [8]and, last of all, as to one ripped from the womb, he appeared even to me.'

[9]I'm the least of the apostles, you see. In fact, I don't really deserve to be called 'apostle' at all, because I persecuted God's church! [10]But I am what I am because of God's grace, and his grace to me wasn't wasted. On the contrary. I worked harder than all of them – though it wasn't me, but God's grace which was with me. [11]So whether it was me or them, that was the way we announced it, and that was the way you believed.

What if the Messiah wasn't raised?

[12]Well, then: if the royal proclamation of the Messiah is made on the basis that he's been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no such thing as resurrection of the dead? [13]If there is no such thing as resurrection of the dead, the Messiah hasn't been raised, either; [14]and if the Messiah hasn't been raised, our royal proclamation is empty, and so is your faith. [15]We even turn out to have been misrepresenting God, because we gave it as our evidence about God that he raised the Messiah, and he

didn't! – if, that is, the dead are not raised. [16]For if the dead aren't raised, the Messiah wasn't raised either; [17]and if the Messiah wasn't raised, your faith is pointless, and you are still in your sins. [18]What's more, people who have fallen asleep in the Messiah have perished for good. [19]If it's only for this present life that we have put our hope in the Messiah, we are the most pitiable members of the human race.

The reign of the Messiah

[20]But in fact the Messiah has been raised from the dead, as the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. [21]For since it was through a human that death arrived, it's through a human that the resurrection from the dead has arrived. [22]All die in Adam, you see, and all will be made alive in the Messiah.

[23]Each, however, in proper order. The Messiah rises as the first fruits; then those who belong to the Messiah will rise at the time of his royal arrival. [24]Then comes the end, the goal, when he hands over the kingly rule to God the father, when he has destroyed all rule and all authority and power. [25]He has to go on ruling, you see, until 'he has put all his enemies under his feet'. [26]Death is the last enemy to be destroyed, [27]because 'he has put all things in order under his feet'. But when it says that everything is put in order under him, it's obvious that this doesn't include the one who put everything in order under him. [28]No: when everything is put in order under him, then the son himself will be placed in proper order under the one who placed everything in order under him, so that God may be all in all.

Resurrection gives meaning to present Christian living

[29]Otherwise, what are people doing when they get baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead simply aren't raised, why should people get baptized on their behalf?

[30]And why should we face danger every hour? [31]I die every day – yes, that's something for you to boast about, my dear family, and that's the boast I have in the Messiah, Jesus our Lord! [32]If, in human terms, I fought with wild animals at Ephesus, what use is that to me? If the dead are not raised, 'let's eat and drink, because tomorrow we're going to die'!

[33]Don't be deceived: 'bad company kills off good habits'! [34]Sober up; straighten up; stop sinning. Yes, some of you simply don't know God! I'm saying this to bring shame on you.

The transformed resurrection body

[35]But someone is now going to say: 'How are the dead raised? What sort of body will they come back with?' [36]Stupid! What you sow doesn't come to life unless it dies. [37]The thing you sow isn't the body that is going to come later; it's just a naked seed of, let's say, wheat, or some other plant. [38]God then gives it a body of the sort he wants, with each of the seeds having its own particular body.

[39]Not all physical objects have the same kind of physicality. There is one kind of physicality for humans, another kind for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. [40]Some bodies belong in the heavens, and some on the earth; and the kind of glory appropriate for the ones in the heavens is different from the kind of glory appropriate for the ones on the earth. [41]There is one kind of glory for the sun, another for the moon, and another for the stars, since the stars themselves vary, with different degrees of glory.

[42]That's what it's like with the resurrection of the dead. It is sown decaying, and raised undecaying. [43]It is sown in shame, and raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, and raised in power. [44]It is sown as the embodiment of ordinary nature, and raised as the embodiment of the spirit. If ordinary nature has its embodiment, then the spirit too has its embodiment. [45]That's what it means when the Bible says, 'The first man, Adam, became a living natural being'; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

[46]But you don't get the spirit-animated body first; you get the nature-animated one, and you get the spirit-animated one later. [47]The first man is from the ground, and is made of earth; the second man is from heaven. [48]Earthly people are like the man of earth; heavenly people are like the man from heaven. [49]We have borne the image of the man made of earth; we shall also bear the image of the man from heaven.

The mystery and the victory

[50]This is what I'm saying, my dear family. Flesh and blood can't inherit God's kingdom; decay can't inherit undecaying life. [51]Look! I'm telling you a mystery. We won't all sleep; we're all going to be changed – [52]in a flash, at the blink of an eye, at the last trumpet. This is how it will be, you see: the trumpet's going to sound, the dead will be raised undecaying, and we're going to be changed. [53]This decaying body must put on the undecaying one; this dying body must put on deathlessness. [54]When the decaying puts on the undecaying, and the dying puts on the undying, then the saying that has been written will come true:

> Death is swallowed up in victory!
> [55]Death, where's your victory gone?
> Death, where's your sting gone?

[56]The 'sting' of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. [57]But thank God! He gives us the victory, through our Lord Jesus the Messiah.

[58]So, my dear family, be firmly fixed, unshakeable, always full to overflowing with the Lord's work. In the Lord, as you know, the work you're doing will not be worthless.

The collection and Paul's plans

16 Now when it comes to the collection for God's people, you should do the same as I laid down for the churches in Galatia.
[2]On the first day of each week, every one of you should set aside and store up whatever surplus you have gained, so that when I come I won't have to take an actual collection. [3]Then, when I get to you, I will write formal letters to send the people you approve, whoever they are, to Jerusalem with your gift. [4]If it's appropriate for me to go as well, we can travel together.
[5]I shall come to you when I've been through Macedonia. I intend to pass through Macedonia, you see, [6]and I may well end up staying with you, perhaps even through the winter. Then you will be able to send me on to wherever I shall be going to next. [7]I don't want just to see you for a short time; I'm hoping to stay with you for a while, if the Lord allows me to. [8]I shall be staying on in Ephesus until Pentecost. [9]A huge and important door has opened for me here, and there is plenty of opposition.

Timothy and Apollos

[10]If Timothy comes, take care that he isn't fearful when he's with you. He's doing the Lord's work, after all, just as I am.
[11]Nobody should look down on him. Send him on in peace, so that he can come to me. I'm expecting him, and so is the family here.
[12]As for our brother Apollos, I did my best to persuade him to go to you with the other family members, but it simply wasn't for the best that he should come just now. He will come when the right moment appears.
[13]Keep alert, stand firm in the faith, be brave, be strong! [14]Whatever you do, do it with love.

The love that stitches it all together

[15]One more word of exhortation for you, my dear family. You know the household of Stephanas: they were the first fruits of Achaea, and they have set themselves to serve God's people. [16]You should submit to people like that, and to everyone who is working with them and labouring hard. [17]I have thoroughly enjoyed the visit of Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus; they have made up for the fact that I haven't been able to see you. [18]They have refreshed my spirit and yours. Give proper recognition to such people.
[19]The churches in Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Prisca send you many greetings in the Lord, together with the church in their house. [20]All the family send you greetings. Greet one another with the holy kiss.
[21]I, Paul, add my greetings in my own hand.
[22]If anyone doesn't love the Lord, let them be accursed! Come, Lord, come! [23]The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. [24]My love be with you all in the Messiah, Jesus.

2 Corinthians

Paul's second letter to Corinth – that is, the second letter as we now have them; there seem to have been others which have not survived – is about as different from the first one as it could be. In the first, Paul is on top of the situation: working his way through quite different topics like a skilled handyman going around the house and fixing lots of different problems. The house and its occupants will be in bad shape if these problems don't get fixed; but Paul is up for the task. Now, in the second letter, it is Paul himself who is in bad shape.

He has just suffered such a terrible time in Asia that he had despaired of life itself (1.8). Everything had gone wrong: his work had failed, his opponents in the region had got the better of him, he was facing possible execution – and the church in Corinth, called into being by God through his own preaching and tireless pastoring, had found other teachers and apostles whom they much preferred. They had told him that if he wanted to come back he'd have to produce letters of recommendation so they could see he was really up to the job. After all, who could respect a beaten-up jailbird?

It is difficult, and ultimately unnecessary, to reconstruct exactly what had passed between Corinth and Paul. What matters is Paul's response, which might be classified as the foundation charter for genuine Christian ministry. He explains what being an apostle is all about. It means having the gospel of Jesus – the shame and the pain, the horror and the death – etched into your very soul, so that the astonishing life of Jesus may shine through, perhaps in the communities you serve, perhaps in your own life as well.

That is the theme of the first main section, following the long introduction in 1.1—2.13. From 2.14 to 6.13 he gets into his stride: if you want 'letters of recommendation' for me, look in the mirror! God's spirit had worked through Paul, and that's why there is a community of the new covenant in Corinth. As always in scripture, new covenant leads to new creation (5.17). The new world has burst in upon the old one, pointing ahead to bodily resurrection (5.1–5) and for the moment working itself out through 'the ministry of reconciliation' (5.18—6.2), all rooted in the Messiah's own sin-bearing death (5.21). Having had people say he was a poor speaker, and having argued that fine words are not the point, Paul rounds off this section with a wonderful piece of ironic rhetoric (6.3–10).

A short passage on marriage (6.14—7.1) gives way to a sigh of relief when, as Paul arrives in Macedonia, his friend Titus returns from Corinth with good news. The mood has changed. This prepares the way for chapters 8 and 9, in which Paul is delicately urging them to be ready with money for the relief effort on behalf of Jerusalem.

Then he returns to the fray. Chapters 10 to 13 are a direct attack on the shadowy opponents who have been seducing the Corinthians with their 'super-apostolic' style. Here again Paul's rhetoric takes flight. *He boasts of all the wrong things*: if they want a real super-apostle, he'll show them what such a creature looks like. He's been beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, in constant danger, working night and day, putting up with terrible conditions. And when it comes to spiritual experience . . . well, the thing that really mattered was Paul's 'thorn in the flesh' (see 12.7), and the fact that, when he prayed about it three times, the word he got back was 'my grace is enough for you; my power comes to perfection in weakness' (12.9). This is the lesson of 2 Corinthians, both in what is said and in the way Paul says it. The servant will be modelled on the master. Paul carries the authority of the crucified Lord.

The God of all comfort

1 Paul, an apostle of King Jesus through God's will, and Timothy our brother; to God's assembly in Corinth, with all God's people in the whole of Achaea: [2]grace and peace to you from God our father and the Lord, King Jesus!

[3]Let us bless God, the father of our Lord, King Jesus; he is the father of mercies and the God of all comfort. [4]He comforts us in all our trouble, so that we can then comfort people in every kind of trouble, through the comfort with which God comforts us. [5]Just as we have an overflowing share of the Messiah's sufferings, you see, so we have an overflowing share in comfort through the Messiah. [6]If we are troubled, it's because of your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it's for the sake of your comfort, which comes about as you bear patiently with the same sufferings that we are going through. [7]And our hope about you remains firm, because we know that, just as you've shared in our sufferings, so you will also share in our comfort.

Unbearably crushed

[8]You see, my dear family, we don't want to keep you in the dark about the suffering we went through in Asia. The load we had to carry was far too heavy for us; it got to the point where we gave up on life itself. [9]Yes: deep inside ourselves we received the death sentence. This was to stop us relying on ourselves, and to make us rely on the God who raises the dead. [10]He rescued us from such a great and deadly peril, and he'll do it again; we have placed our hope in him, that he'll do it again! [11]But you must cooperate with us through prayer for us, so that when God gives us this gift, answering the prayers of so many, all the more will give thanks because of what's happened to us.

[12]This is what we boast of, you see; this is what our conscience is telling us: that our conduct in the world, and in particular in relation to you, has been marked by holiness and godly sincerity, not in merely human wisdom but in God's grace. [13]We are not writing anything to you, after all, except what you can read and understand. And I hope you will go on understanding right through to the end, [14]just as you have understood us already – well, partly, at least! We are your pride and joy, just as you are ours, on the day of our Lord Jesus.

Paul's plans and God's 'Yes'

[15]I was quite sure of this. That's why I wanted to come to you again, so that you could have a double blessing. [16]I intended to go

on to Macedonia by way of you, and to come back to you from Macedonia and have you send me on to Judaea.
[17]Was I just fooling around when I was making plans like this? Was I concocting schemes in a merely human way, prepared to say 'Yes, yes', and 'No, no', at the same moment? [18]God can bear me faithful witness that our word to you was not a mixture of Yes and No. [19]The son of God, Jesus the Messiah, who was proclaimed among you by Silvanus, Timothy and myself, wasn't a Yes-and-No person; in him it's always Yes! [20]All God's promises, you see, find their Yes in him; and that's why we say the Yes, the Amen through him when we pray to God and give him glory. [21]It's God who strengthens us with you into the Messiah, the anointed one; and he has anointed us, too. [22]God has stamped his seal on us, by giving us the spirit in our hearts as a first payment and guarantee of what is to come.

Painful visit, painful letter

[23]For my own part, I call on God as witness, against my own life, that the reason I haven't yet come back to Corinth is because I wanted to spare you. [24]This isn't because I am making myself the lord and master over your faith; your faith is the reason you stand fast! Rather, it's because we are cooperating with you for your joy.
2 You see, I settled it in my mind that I wouldn't make you another sad visit. [2]After all, if I make you sad, who is there to cheer *me* up except the one who is sad because of me? [3]And I wrote what I did so that I wouldn't come and find sadness where I should have found joy. I have this confidence about all of you, that my joy belongs to all of you. [4]No: I wrote to you in floods of tears, out of great trouble and anguish in my heart, not so that I could make you sad but so that you would know just how much overflowing love I have towards you.

Time to forgive

[5]But if anyone has caused sadness, it isn't me that he has saddened, but, in a measure (I don't want to emphasize this too much), all of you. [6]The punishment that the majority has imposed is quite enough; [7]what's needed now is rather that you should forgive and console him, in case someone like that might be swallowed up by such abundant sorrow. [8]Let me urge you, then, to reaffirm your love for him.
[9]The reason I wrote to you, you see, was in order to know whether you would pass the test and be obedient in everything. [10]If you forgive anyone anything, so do I; and whatever I have forgiven – if indeed I have forgiven anyone anything! – it's all happened under the eyes of the Messiah, and for your own sake. [11]The point is that we shouldn't be outsmarted by the satan. We know what he's up to!

The smell of life, the smell of death

[12]However, when I came to Troas to announce the Messiah's gospel, and found an open door waiting for me in the Lord, [13]I couldn't get any quietness in my spirit because I didn't find my brother Titus there. So I left them and went off to Macedonia.
[14]But thanks be to God – the God who always leads us in his triumphal procession in the Messiah, and through us reveals everywhere the sweet smell of knowing him. [15]We are the Messiah's fragrance before God, you see, to those who are being saved and to those who are being lost. [16]To the latter, it's a smell which comes from death and leads to death; but to the former it's the smell of life which leads to life.
Who can rise to this challenge? [17]We aren't mere pedlars of God's word, as so many people are. We speak with sincerity; we speak from God; we speak in God's presence; we speak in the Messiah.

The letter and the spirit

3 So: we're starting to 'recommend ourselves' again, are we? Or perhaps we need – as some do – official references to give to you? Or perhaps even to get from you? [2]*You* are our official reference! It's written on our hearts! Everybody can know it and read it! [3]It's quite plain that you are a letter from the Messiah, with us as the messengers – a letter not written with ink but with the spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on the tablets of beating hearts.
[4]That's the kind of confidence we have towards God, through the Messiah. [5]It isn't as though we are qualified in ourselves to reckon that we have anything to offer on our own account. Our qualification comes from God: [6]God has qualified us to be stewards of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the spirit. The letter kills, you see, but the spirit gives life.

Death and glory

[7]But just think about it: when death was being distributed, carved in letters of stone, it was a glorious thing, so glorious in fact that the children of Israel couldn't look at Moses's face because of the glory of his face – a glory that was to be abolished. [8]But in that case, when the spirit is being distributed, won't that be glorious too? [9]If distributing condemnation is glorious, you see, how much more glorious is it to distribute vindication! [10]In fact, what used to be glorious has come in this respect to have no glory at all, because of the new glory which goes so far beyond it. [11]For if the thing which was to be abolished came with glory, how much more glory will there be for the thing that lasts.

The veil and the glory

[12]So, because that's the kind of hope we have, we speak with great freedom. [13]We aren't like Moses: he put a veil over his face, to

stop the children of Israel from gazing at the end of what was being abolished. [14]The difference is that their minds were hardened.
You see, the same veil lies over the reading of the old covenant right up to this very day. It isn't taken away, because it's in the
Messiah that it is abolished.
[15]Yes, even to this day, whenever Moses is read, the veil lies upon their hearts; [16]but 'whenever he turns back to the Lord, the
veil is removed'. [17]Now 'the Lord' here means the spirit; and where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. [18]And all of us,
without any veil on our faces, gaze at the glory of the Lord as in a mirror, and so are being changed into the same image, from
glory to glory, just as you'd expect from the Lord, the spirit.

Light out of darkness

4 For this reason, since we have this work entrusted to us in accordance with the mercy we have received, we don't lose heart.
[2]On the contrary, we have renounced the secret things that make people ashamed. We don't use tricks; we don't falsify
God's word. Rather, we speak the truth openly, and recommend ourselves to everybody's conscience in the presence of God.
[3]However, if our gospel still remains 'veiled', it is veiled for people who are perishing. [4]What's happening there is that the god
of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they won't see the light of the gospel of the glory of the Messiah, who
is God's image. [5]We don't proclaim ourselves, you see, but Jesus the Messiah as Lord, and ourselves as your servants because of
Jesus; [6]because the God who said 'let light shine out of darkness' has shone in our hearts, to produce the light of the knowledge of
the glory of God in the face of Jesus the Messiah.

Treasure in earthenware pots

[7]But we have this treasure in earthenware pots, so that the extraordinary quality of the power may belong to God, not to us. [8]We
are under all kinds of pressure, but we are not crushed completely; we are at a loss, but not at our wits' end; [9]we are persecuted,
but not abandoned; we are cast down, but not destroyed. [10]We always carry the deadness of Jesus about in the body, so that the
life of Jesus may be revealed in our body. [11]Although we are still alive, you see, we are always being given over to death because
of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may be revealed in our mortal humanity. [12]So this is how it is: death is at work in us – but life in
you!

The God of all comfort

[13]We have the same spirit of faith as you see in what is written, 'I believed, and so I spoke.' We too believe, and so we speak,
[14]because we know that the God who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us with Jesus and present us with you. [15]It's all because of
you, you see! The aim is that, as grace abounds through the thanksgiving of more and more people, it will overflow to God's
glory.
[16]For this reason we don't lose heart. Even if our outer humanity is decaying, our inner humanity is being renewed day by day.
[17]This slight momentary trouble of ours is working to produce a weight of glory, passing and surpassing everything, lasting for
ever; [18]for we don't look at the things that can be seen, but at the things that can't be seen. After all, the things you can see are
here today and gone tomorrow; but the things you can't see are everlasting.

A house waiting in the heavens

5 For we know that if our earthly house, our present 'tent', is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house no human
hands have built: it is everlasting, in the heavenly places. [2]At the present moment, you see, we are groaning, as we long to
put on our heavenly building, [3]in the belief that by putting it on we won't turn out to be naked. [4]Yes: in the present 'tent', we
groan under a great weight. But we don't want to put it off; we want to put on something else on top, so that what is doomed to
die may be swallowed up with life. [5]It is God who has been at work in us to do this, the God who has given us the spirit as the
first instalment and guarantee.

The judgment seat of the Messiah

[6]So we are always confident: we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. [7]We live our lives by
faith, you see, not by sight. [8]We are confident, and we would much prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.
[9]So we work hard, as a point of honour, to please him, whether we are at home or away. [10]For we must all appear before the
judgment seat of the Messiah, so that each may receive what has been done through the body, whether good or bad.

The Messiah's love makes us press on

[11]So we know the fear of the Lord; and that's why we are persuading people – but we are open to God, and open as well, I hope,
to your consciences. [12]We aren't trying to recommend ourselves again! We are giving you a chance to be proud of us, to have
something to say to those who take pride in appearances rather than in people's hearts.
[13]If we are beside ourselves, you see, it's for God; and if we are in our right mind, it's for you. [14]For the Messiah's love makes
us press on. We have come to the conviction that one died for all, and therefore all died. [15]And he died for all in order that those
who live should live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised on their behalf.

New creation, new ministry

[16]From this moment on, therefore, we don't regard anybody from a merely human point of view. Even if we once regarded the Messiah that way, we don't do so any longer. [17]Thus, if anyone is in the Messiah, there is a new creation! Old things have gone, and look – everything has become new!

[18]It all comes from God. He reconciled us to himself through the Messiah, and he gave us the ministry of reconciliation. [19]This is how it came about: God was reconciling the world to himself in the Messiah, not counting their transgressions against them, and entrusting us with the message of reconciliation. [20]So we are ambassadors, speaking on behalf of the Messiah, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore people on the Messiah's behalf to be reconciled to God. [21]The Messiah did not know sin, but God made him to be sin on our behalf, so that in him we might embody God's faithfulness to the covenant.

6 So, as we work together with God, we appeal to you in particular: when you accept God's grace, don't let it go to waste! [2]This is what he says:

I listened to you when the time was right,
I came to your aid on the day of salvation.

Look! The right time is now! Look! The day of salvation is here!

God's servants at work

[3]We put no obstacles in anybody's way, so that nobody will say abusive things about our ministry. [4]Instead, we recommend ourselves as God's servants: with much patience, with sufferings, difficulties, hardships, [5]beatings, imprisonments, riots, hard work, sleepless nights, going without food, [6]with purity, knowledge, great-heartedness, kindness, the holy spirit, genuine love, [7]by speaking the truth, by God's power, with weapons for God's faithful work in left and right hand alike, [8]through glory and shame, through slander and praise; as deceivers, and yet true; [9]as unknown, yet very well known; as dying, and look – we are alive; as punished, yet not killed; [10]as sad, yet always celebrating; as poor, yet bringing riches to many; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

[11]We have been wide open in our speaking to you, my dear Corinthians! Our heart has been opened wide! [12]There are no restrictions at our end; the only restrictions are in your affection! [13]I'm speaking as though to children: you should open your hearts wide as well in return. That's fair enough, isn't it?

Don't be mismatched

[14]Don't be drawn into partnership with unbelievers. What kind of sharing can there be, after all, between justice and lawlessness? What partnership can there be between light and darkness? [15]What kind of harmony can the Messiah have with Beliar? What has a believer in common with an unbeliever? [16]What kind of agreement can there be between God's temple and idols? We are the temple of the living God, you see, just as God said:

I will live among them and walk about with them;
I will be their God, and they will be my people.
[17]So come out from the midst of them,
and separate yourselves, says the Lord;
no unclean thing must you touch.
Then I will receive you gladly,
[18]and I will be to you as a father,
and you will be to me as sons and daughters,
says the Lord, the Almighty.

7 So, my beloved people, with promises like these, let's make ourselves clean from everything that defiles us, outside and inside, and let's become completely holy in the fear of God.

The God who comforts the downcast

[2]Make room for us! We haven't wronged anybody, we haven't ruined anybody, we haven't taken advantage of anybody. [3]I'm not saying this to pass judgment against you; I've already said that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. [4]I speak to you freely and openly; I regularly boast about you; I am full of comfort, and fuller still of joy, over and above all our trouble.

[5]You see, even when we arrived in Macedonia, we couldn't relax or rest. We were troubled in every way; there were battles outside and fears inside. [6]But the God who comforts the downcast comforted us by the arrival of Titus, [7]and not only by his arrival but in the comfort he had received from you, as he told us about your longing for us, your lamenting, and your enthusiasm for me personally.

As a result, I was more inclined to celebrate; [8]because, if I did make you sad by my letter, I don't regret it; and, if I did regret it, it was because I saw that I made you sad for a while by what I had written. [9]Anyway, I'm celebrating now, not because you were saddened, but because your sadness brought you to repentance. It was a sadness from God, you see, and it did you no harm at all on our account; [10]because God's way of sadness is designed to produce a repentance which leads to salvation, and there's nothing to regret there! But the world's way of sadness produces death.

Our boasting proved true!

[11]Just look and see what effect God's way of sadness has had among you! It's produced eagerness, explanations, indignation, fear, longing, keenness, and punishment. You have shown yourselves faultless in the whole business. [12]So if I'm writing to you, it's not because of the person who's done the wrong, nor because of the people who were wronged, but so that you can recognize for yourselves, in God's presence, just how eager you really have been for us. [13]We have been comforted by all of this.

The real celebration, though, on top of all our comfort, came because Titus was so overjoyed. You really did cheer him up and set his mind at rest. [14]I wasn't ashamed of the various boasts I had made to him about you. Just as I had always spoken the truth to you, so our boast to Titus turned out to be true as well. [15]He is constantly yearning for you deeply as he remembers the obedience you showed, all of you, and how you welcomed him with fear and trembling. [16]I am celebrating the fact that I have confidence in you in everything.

The generosity of the Macedonian churches

8 Let me tell you, my dear family, about the grace which God has given to the Macedonian churches. [2]They have been sorely tested by suffering. But the abundance of grace which was given to them, and the depths of poverty they have endured, have overflowed in a wealth of sincere generosity on their part. [3]I bear them witness that of their own accord, up to their ability and even beyond their ability, [4]they begged us eagerly to let them have the privilege of sharing in the work of service for God's people. [5]They didn't just do what we had hoped; they gave themselves, first to the Lord, and then to us as God willed it. [6]This put us in a position where we could encourage Titus that he should complete this work of grace that he had begun among you. [7]You have plenty of everything, after all – plenty of faith, and speech, and knowledge, and all kinds of eagerness, and plenty of love coming from us to you; so why not have plenty of this grace too?

Copying the generosity of the Lord Jesus

[8]I'm not saying this as though I was issuing an order. It's a matter of putting their enthusiasm and your own love side by side, and making sure you genuinely pass the test. [9]For you know the grace of our Lord, King Jesus: he was rich, but because of you he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. [10]Let me give you my serious advice on this: you began to be keen on this idea, and to start putting it into practice, a whole year ago; it will now be greatly to your advantage [11]to complete your performance of it. If you do so, your finishing the job as far as you are able will be on the same scale as your eagerness in wanting to do it. [12]If the eagerness is there, you see, the deed is acceptable, according to what you have, not according to what you don't have. [13]The point is not, after all, that others should get off lightly and you be made to suffer, but rather that there should be equality. [14]At the present time your abundance can contribute to their lack, so that their abundance can contribute to your lack. That's what makes for equality, [15]just as the Bible says: 'The one who had much had nothing to spare, and the one who had little didn't go short.'

Paul's companions are on their way

[16]But God be thanked, since he put the same eagerness for you into Titus's heart. [17]He welcomed the appeal we made, and of his own accord he was all the more eager to come to you. [18]We have sent along with him the brother who is famous through all the churches because of his work for the gospel. [19]Not only so, but he was formally chosen by the churches to be our travelling companion as we engage in this work of grace, both for the Lord's own glory and to show our own good faith. [20]We are trying to avoid the possibility that anyone would make unpleasant accusations about this splendid gift which we are administering. [21]We are thinking ahead, you see, about what will look best, not only to the Lord, but to everybody else as well.

[22]Anyway, along with the two of them we are sending our brother, who has proved to us how eager and enthusiastic he is in many situations and on many occasions; he now seems all the more eager because he is convinced about you. [23]If there's any question about Titus, he is my partner, and a fellow-worker for you. As for our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, the Messiah's glory. [24]So please give them a fine demonstration of your love, and of our boasting about you! Show all the churches that you mean business!

Please have the gift ready!

9 When it comes to the service you are doing for God's people, you see, I don't need to write to you. [2]For I know your eagerness, and indeed I boasted about it to the Macedonians, saying that Achaea had been ready since last year. Your enthusiasm has stimulated most of them into action. [3]I have sent the brothers so that our boasting about you in this respect may turn out to be true – so that you may be ready, just as I said you were. [4]Otherwise, imagine what it would be like if people from Macedonia came with me and found you weren't ready! That would bring shame on us in this business, not to say on you. [5]So I thought it necessary to exhort the brothers that they should go on to you in advance, and get everything about your gracious gift in order ahead of time. You've already promised it, after all. Then it really will appear as a gift of grace, not something that has had to be extorted from you.

God loves a cheerful giver

[6]This is what I mean: someone who sows sparingly will reap sparingly as well. Someone who sows generously will reap

generously. [7]Everyone should do as they have determined in their heart, not in a gloomy spirit or simply because they have to, since 'God loves a cheerful giver'. [8]And God is well able to lavish all his grace upon you, so that in every matter and in every way you will have enough of everything, and may be lavish in all your own good works, [9]just as the Bible says:

> They spread their favours wide, they gave to the poor,
> their righteousness endures for ever.

[10]The one who supplies 'seed to be sown and bread to eat' will supply and increase your seed, and multiply the yield of your righteousness. [11]You will be enriched in every way in all single-hearted goodness, which is working through us to produce thanksgiving to God. [12]The service of this ministry will not only supply what God's people so badly need, but it will also overflow with many thanksgivings to God. [13]Through meeting the test of this service you will glorify God in two ways: first, because your confession of faith in the Messiah's gospel has brought you into proper order, and second, because you have entered into genuine and sincere partnership with them and with everyone. [14]What's more, they will then pray for you and long for you because of the surpassing grace God has given to you. [15]Thanks be to God for his gift, the gift we can never fully describe!

The battle for the mind

10 Think of the Messiah, meek and gentle; then think of me, Paul – yes, Paul himself! – making his appeal to you. You know what I'm like: I'm humble when I'm face to face with you, but I'm bold when I'm away from you! [2]Please, please don't put me in the position of having to be bold when I'm with you, of having to show how confident I dare to be when I'm standing up to people who think we are behaving in a merely human way. [3]Yes, we are mere humans, but we don't fight the war in a merely human way. [4]The weapons we use for the fight, you see, are not merely human; they carry a power from God that can tear down fortresses! We tear down clever arguments, [5]and every proud notion that sets itself up against the knowledge of God. We take every thought prisoner and make it obey the Messiah. [6]We are holding ourselves in readiness to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

[7]Look at what's in front of your face. If anyone trusts that they belong to the Messiah, let them calculate it once more: just as they belong to the Messiah, so also do we! [8]For if I do indeed boast a bit too enthusiastically about the authority which the Lord has given me – which is for building you up, not for pulling you down! – I shan't be ashamed. [9]I wouldn't want to look as if I were trying to frighten you with my letters. [10]I know what they say: 'His letters are serious and powerful, but when he arrives in person he is weak, and his words aren't worth bothering about.' [11]Anyone like that should reckon on this: the way we talk in letters, when we're absent, will be how we behave when we're present.

Boasting in the Lord

[12]We wouldn't dare, you see, to figure out where we belong on some scale or other, or compare ourselves with people who commend themselves. They measure themselves by one another, and compare themselves with one another. That just shows how silly they are! [13]But when we boast, we don't go off into flights of fancy; we boast according to the measure of the rule God has given us to measure ourselves by, and that rule includes our work with you! [14]We weren't going beyond our assigned limits when we reached you; we were the first to get as far as you with the gospel of the Messiah. [15]We don't boast without a measuring rule in the work someone else has done. This is what we hope for: that, as your faith increases, we will be given a much larger space for work, according to our rule, [16]which is to announce the gospel in the lands beyond you, not to boast in what has already been accomplished through the rule someone else has been given. [17]'Anyone who boasts should boast in the Lord!' [18]Who is it, after all, who gains approval? It isn't the person who commends himself. It's the person whom the Lord commends.

Super-apostles?

11 I'd be glad if you would bear with me in a little bit of foolishness. Yes: bear with me, please! [2]I'm jealous over you, and it's God's own jealousy: I arranged to marry you off, like a pure virgin, to the one man I presented you to, namely the Messiah. [3]But the serpent tricked Eve with its cunning, and in the same way I'm afraid that your minds may be corrupted from the single-mindedness and purity which the Messiah's people should have. [4]For if someone comes and announces a different Jesus from the one we announced to you, or if you receive a different spirit, one you hadn't received before, or a different gospel, one you hadn't accepted before, you put up with that all right. [5]According to my calculations, you see, I am every bit as good as these super-apostles. [6]I may be untutored in speaking, but that certainly doesn't apply to my knowledge. Surely that's been made quite clear to you, in every way and on every point!

No, they are false apostles!

[7]Did I then commit a sin when I humbled myself in order to exalt you? When I announced the gospel of God to you without charging you for it? [8]I robbed other churches by accepting payment from them in order to serve you; [9]and when I was with you, and was in need of anything, I didn't lay a burden on anybody, because my needs were more than met by the brothers who came from Macedonia. That's how I stopped myself from being a burden to you – and I intend to carry on in the same way. [10]As the Messiah's truthfulness is in me, this boast of mine will not be silenced in the regions of Achaea. [11]Why? Because I don't love you? God knows …!

[12]I'm going to continue to do what I've always done, so as to cut off any opportunity (for those who want such an opportunity!)

for anyone to look as if they can match us in the things they boast about. [13]Such people are false apostles! The only work they do is to deceive! They transform themselves so that they look like apostles of the Messiah – [14]and no wonder. The satan himself transforms himself to look like an angel of light, [15]so it isn't surprising if his servants transform themselves to look like servants of righteousness. They will end up where their deeds are taking them.

The boasting of a reluctant fool

[16]I'll say it again: don't let anyone think I'm a fool! But if they do – well, all right then, welcome me as a fool, so that I can do a little bit of boasting! [17]What I'm going to say now, I'm not saying as if it came from the Lord, but as if I was a fool, as if I really did want to indulge myself in this kind of boasting. [18]Plenty of people are boasting in human terms, after all, so why shouldn't I boast as well? [19]After all, you put up with fools readily enough, since you are so wise yourselves. [20]You put up with it if someone makes you their slave, or if they eat up your property, or overpower you, or give themselves airs, or slap you in the face. [21]Well, I'm ashamed to say it: we weren't strong enough for that!

Boasting of weaknesses

Whatever anyone else dares to boast about (I'm talking nonsense, remember), I'll boast as well. [22]Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. [23]Are they servants of the Messiah? – I'm talking like a raving madman – I'm a better one. I've worked harder, been in prison more often, been beaten more times than I can count, and I've often been close to death. [24]Five times I've had the Jewish beating, forty lashes less one. [25]Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; I was adrift in the sea for a night and a day. [26]I've been constantly travelling, facing dangers from rivers, dangers from brigands, dangers from my own people, dangers from foreigners, dangers in the town, dangers in the countryside, dangers at sea, dangers from false believers. [27]I've toiled and laboured, I've burnt the candle at both ends, I've been hungry and thirsty, I've often gone without food altogether, I've been cold and naked.

[28]Quite apart from all that, I have this daily pressure on me, my care for all the churches. [29]Who is weak and I'm not weak? Who is offended without me burning with shame?

[30]If I must boast, I will boast of my weaknesses. [31]The God and father of the Lord Jesus, who is blessed for ever, knows that I'm not lying: [32]in Damascus, King Aretas, the local ruler, was guarding the city of Damascus so that he could capture me, [33]but I was let down in a basket through a window and over the wall, and I escaped his clutches.

The vision and the thorn

12 I just have to boast – not that there's anything to be gained by it; but I'll go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. [2]Someone I know in the Messiah, fourteen years ago (whether in the body or out of the body I don't know, though God knows), was snatched up to the third heaven. [3]I know that this particular 'Someone' (whether in the body or apart from the body I don't know, God knows) – [4]this person was snatched up to paradise, and heard . . . words you can't pronounce, which humans aren't allowed to repeat. [5]I will boast of Someone like that, but I won't boast of myself, except of my weaknesses. [6]If I did want to boast, you see, I wouldn't be mad; I'd be speaking the truth. But I'm holding back, so that nobody will think anything of me except what they can see in me or hear from me, [7]even considering how remarkable the revelations were.

As a result, so that I wouldn't become too exalted, a thorn was given to me in my flesh, a messenger from the satan, to keep stabbing away at me. [8]I prayed to the Lord three times about this, asking that it would be taken away from me, [9]and this is what he said to me: 'My grace is enough for you; my power comes to perfection in weakness.' So I will be all the more pleased to boast of my weaknesses, so that the Messiah's power may rest upon me. [10]So I'm delighted when I'm weak, insulted, in difficulties, persecuted and facing disasters, for the Messiah's sake. When I'm weak, you see, then I am strong.

The signs of a true apostle

[11]I've been a fool! You forced me into it. If I *was* to have received an official commendation, it ought actually to have come from you! After all, I'm not inferior to the super-apostles, even though I am nothing. [12]The signs of a true apostle, you see, were performed among you in all patience, with signs and wonders and powers. [13]In what way have you been worse off than all the other churches, except in the fact that I myself didn't become a burden to you? Forgive me this injustice!

[14]Now look: this is the third time I'm ready to come to you. And I'm not going to be a burden, because I'm not looking for what belongs to you, but you yourselves. Children, after all, shouldn't be saving up for their parents, but parents for their children! [15]For my part, I will gladly spend and be spent on your behalf. If I love you all the more, am I going to be loved any the less?

[16]Grant me this, that I didn't lay any burden on you. But – maybe I was a trickster, and I took you by deceit! [17]Did I cheat you by any of the people I sent to you? [18]I urged Titus to go to you, and I sent the brother with him. Did Titus cheat you? He behaved in the same spirit as me, didn't he? He conducted himself in the same manner, didn't he?

What will happen when Paul arrives?

[19]You will imagine we are explaining ourselves again. Well, we're speaking in God's presence, in the Messiah! My beloved ones, it has all been intended to build you up. [20]I'm afraid, you see, that when I come I may find you rather different from what I would wish – and *I* may turn out to be rather different from what *you* would wish! I'm afraid there may still be fighting, jealousy, anger,

selfishness, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder. [21]I'm afraid that perhaps, when I come once more, my God may humble me again in front of you, and I will have to go into mourning over many who sinned before, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and shameless immorality that they have practised.

13 This is the third time I'm coming to you. 'Every charge must be substantiated at the mouth of two or three witnesses.' [2]I said it before when I was with you the second time, and I say it now in advance while I'm away from you, to all those who had sinned previously, and all the others, that when I come back again I won't spare them – [3]since you are looking for proof of the Messiah who speaks in me, the Messiah who is not weak towards you but powerful in your midst! [4]He was crucified in weakness, you see, but he lives by God's power. For we too are weak in him, but we shall live with him, for your benefit, by God's power.

Test yourselves!

[5]Test yourselves to see if you really are in the faith! Put yourselves through the examination. Or don't you realize that Jesus the Messiah is in you? – unless, that is, you've failed the test. [6]I hope you will discover that we didn't fail the test. [7]But we pray to God that you will never, ever, do anything wrong; not so that we can be shown up as having passed the test, but so that you will do what is right, even if that means that we appear like people who've failed. [8]For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. [9]We celebrate, you see, when we are weak but you are strong.

This is what we pray for, that you may become complete and get everything in order. [10]That's why I'm writing this to you while I'm away, so that when I come I won't have to use my authority to be severe with you. The Lord has given me this authority, after all, not to pull down but to build up.

Grace, love and fellowship

[11]All that remains, my dear family, is this: celebrate, put everything in order, strengthen one another, think in the same way, be at peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. [12]Greet one another with the holy kiss. All God's people send you their greetings.

[13]The grace of King Jesus the Lord, the love of God, and the fellowship of the holy spirit be with you all.

Galatians

In the letter to the churches in southern Anatolia – the churches Paul and Barnabas had founded on the first missionary journey in Acts 13 and 14 – we see Paul bursting onto the literary scene like a firefighter leaping into action while still zipping up his jacket. Galatians is written in a hurry, addressing an emergency: some rival missionaries, and one in particular, have followed Paul into his new-founded churches and are telling them that Paul, as a second-order apostle, only gave them half the message. They need the other half – which is that they should get circumcised, to become part of God's covenant people.

Paul agrees with the premise that Jesus-believers are members of the Abrahamic covenant. But his point is that all who believe the gospel, who are baptized 'into the Messiah', *are already the 'seed of Abraham', heirs according to the promise* (3.29). They do not need circumcision. Indeed, if they submit to it, they are saying in effect that God has not after all launched his new world with Jesus.

That is the point of the letter: Jesus the Messiah 'gave himself for our sins, to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of God our father' (1.4). What matters, then, is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision: 'what matters is new creation' (6.15). God's radical act in the death of Jesus has overthrown the 'powers' that have kept the world captive, and opened up a new creation whose watchword is '[he] loved me and gave himself for me' (2.20). If keeping the Jewish law (including circumcision) was what mattered, you wouldn't have needed a crucified Messiah (2.21).

The letter proceeds in three main stages. The first two chapters explain Paul's own background, including a rare description of his initial meeting with the risen Jesus. He speaks of his own vocation in terms reminiscent of the call of the ancient prophets: he is no second-order apostle, but a primary witness, commissioned by Jesus himself. He explains how he confronted even Peter over the same issue: *all those who believe in Jesus belong at the same table, circumcised or not.*

The central section (3.1—4.11) takes the story back to Abraham. God promised the patriarch a worldwide faith-family, and that promise has now been fulfilled. But the law of Moses cannot be the means of that fulfilment, since it held out only condemnation for those who broke it (all Jews, in other words), and made a strict separation between Jew and Gentile. Here is the fundamental insight of the letter: *the Mosaic law was a temporary dispensation* until the Abrahamic promises would be fulfilled by the once-for-all divine action in the Messiah. To go back now would be like the freed slaves in Exodus wanting to go back to Egypt.

The rest of the letter (4.12–end) comes in several stages, reinforcing the message from various angles, and stressing that, though some might want to reinstate the law to regulate behaviour, that would mean going back to the old, unredeemed world of 'flesh' – the very place from which one might hope to escape. The new gift of the spirit, however, will produce 'fruit': love, joy, peace, and the rest. Paul signs off (taking the pen from the scribe) with a personal flourish: if it's marks on the body you want, he has the Messiah's marks on his. His first arrival in Galatia had been marked by severe persecution, including stoning: those wounds are enough for him, showing that he at least is part of the Jesus-shaped new creation.

Paul's distress over the Galatians

1 Paul, an apostle . . . (my apostleship doesn't derive from human sources, nor did it come through a human being; it came through Jesus the Messiah, and God the father who raised him from the dead) . . . [2]and the family who are with me; to the churches of Galatia. [3]Grace to you and peace from God our father and Jesus the Messiah, our Lord, [4]who gave himself for our sins, to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of God our father, [5]to whom be glory to the ages of ages. Amen.

[6]I'm astonished that you are turning away so quickly from the one who called you by grace, and going after another gospel – [7]not that it is another gospel, it's just that there are some people stirring up trouble for you and wanting to pervert the gospel of the Messiah. [8]But even if we – or an angel from heaven! – should announce a gospel other than the one we announced to you, let such a person be accursed. [9]I said it before and I now say it again: if anyone offers you a gospel other than the one you received, let that person be accursed.

Paul's conversion and call

[10]Well now . . . does *that* sound as though I'm trying to make up to people – or to God? Or that I'm trying to curry favour with people? If I were still pleasing people, I wouldn't be a slave of the Messiah.

[11]You see, brothers and sisters, let me make it clear to you: the gospel announced by me is not a mere human invention. [12]I didn't receive it from human beings, nor was I taught it; it came through an unveiling of Jesus the Messiah.

[13]You heard, didn't you, the way I behaved when I was still within 'Judaism'. I persecuted the church of God violently, and ravaged it. [14]I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age and people; I was extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions. [15]But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, was pleased [16]to unveil his son in me, so that I might announce the good news about him among the nations – immediately I did not confer with flesh and blood. [17]Nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me. No; I went away to Arabia, and afterwards returned to Damascus.

Paul's first visit to Peter

[18]Then, after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to speak with Cephas. I stayed with him for two weeks. [19]I didn't see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother. [20](Look, I'm not lying! The things I'm writing to you are written in God's presence.) [21]Then I went to the regions of Syria and Cilicia. [22]I remained unknown by sight to the messianic assemblies in Judaea. [23]They simply heard that the one who had been persecuting them was now announcing the good news of the faith which he once tried to destroy. [24]And they glorified God because of me.

Standing firm against opposition

2 Then, after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem. I took Barnabas with me, and Titus. [2]I went up because of a revelation. I laid before them the gospel which I announce among the Gentiles (I did this privately, in the presence of the key people), in case somehow I might be running, or might have run, to no good effect. [3]But even the Greek, Titus, who was with me, was not forced to get circumcised . . . [4]but because of some pseudo-family members who had been secretly smuggled in, who came in on the side to spy on the freedom which we have in the Messiah, Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery . . . [5]I didn't yield authority to them, no, not for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be maintained for you.

Paul's agreement with Peter and James

[6]However, those who appeared to be Something – what sort of 'thing' they were makes no difference to me, God shows no partiality – those of reputation added nothing extra to me. [7]On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcision, just as Peter had been with the gospel for the circumcision [8](for the one who gave Peter the power to be an apostle to the circumcision gave me the power to go to the Gentiles). They knew, moreover, the grace that had been given to me. [9]So James, Cephas and John, who were reputed to be 'pillars', gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcision. [10]The only extra thing they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor – the very thing I was eager to do.

Paul confronts Peter in Antioch

[11]But when Cephas came to Antioch, I stood up to him face to face. He was in the wrong. [12]Before certain persons came from James, Peter was eating with the Gentiles. But when they came, he drew back and separated himself, because he was afraid of the circumcision-people. [13]The rest of the Jews did the same, joining him in this play-acting. Even Barnabas was carried along by their sham. [14]But when I saw that they weren't walking straight down the line of gospel truth, I said to Cephas in front of them all: 'Look here: you're a Jew, but you've been living like a Gentile. How can you force Gentiles to become Jews?'

Justified by faith, not works of law

[15]We are Jews by birth, not 'Gentile sinners'. [16]But we know that a person is not declared 'righteous' by works of the Jewish law, but through the faithfulness of Jesus the Messiah.

That is why we too believed in the Messiah, Jesus: so that we might be declared 'righteous' on the basis of the Messiah's faithfulness, and not on the basis of works of the Jewish law. On that basis, you see, no creature will be declared 'righteous'.

[17]Well, then; if, in seeking to be declared 'righteous' in the Messiah, we ourselves are found to be 'sinners', does that make the Messiah an agent of 'sin'? Certainly not! [18]If I build up once more the things which I tore down, I demonstrate that I am a lawbreaker.

[19]Let me explain it like this. Through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with the Messiah. [20]I am, however, alive – but it isn't me any longer, it's the Messiah who lives in me. And the life I do still live in the flesh, I live within the faithfulness of the son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

[21]I don't set aside God's grace. If 'righteousness' comes through the law, then the Messiah died for nothing.

God's promise and Abraham's faith

3 You witless Galatians! Who has bewitched you? King Jesus was portrayed on the cross before your very eyes! [2]There's just one thing I want to know from you. Did you receive the spirit by doing the works of Torah, or by hearing and believing? [3]You are so witless: you began with the spirit, and now you're ending with the flesh? [4]Did you really suffer so much for nothing – if indeed it is going to be for nothing? [5]The one who gives you the spirit and performs powerful deeds among you – does he do this through your performance of Torah, or through hearing and believing?

[6]It's like Abraham. 'He believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.' [7]So you know that it's people of faith who are children of Abraham. [8]The Bible foresaw that God would justify the nations by faith, so it announced the gospel to Abraham in advance, when it declared that 'the nations will be blessed in you'. [9]So you see: the people of faith are blessed along with faithful Abraham.

Redeemed from the law's curse

[10]Because, you see, those who belong to the 'works-of-the-law' camp are under a curse! Yes, that's what the Bible says: 'Cursed is everyone who doesn't stick fast by everything written in the book of the law, to perform it.' [11]But, because nobody is justified before God in the law, it's clear that 'the righteous shall live by faith'. [12]The law, however, is not by faith: rather, 'the one who does them shall live in them'.

[13]The Messiah redeemed us from the curse of the law, by becoming a curse on our behalf, as the Bible says: 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.' [14]This was so that the blessing of Abraham could flow through to the nations in King Jesus – and so that we might receive the promise of the spirit, through faith.

Christ the seed, Christ the mediator

[15]My brothers and sisters, let me use a human illustration. When someone makes a covenanted will, nobody sets it aside or adds to it. [16]Well, the promises were made 'to Abraham and his seed', that is, his family. It doesn't say 'his seeds', as though referring to several families, but indicates a single family by saying 'and to your seed', meaning the Messiah.

[17]This is what I mean. God made this covenanted will; the law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, can't undermine it and make the promise null and void. [18]If the inheritance came through the law, it would no longer be by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

[19]Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the family should come to whom it had been promised. It was laid down by angels, at the hand of a mediator. [20]He, however, is not the mediator of the 'one' – but God is one!

[21]Is the law then against God's promises? Of course not! No, if a law had been given that could have given life, then covenant membership really would have been by the law. [22]But the Bible shut up everything together under the power of sin, so that the promise – which comes by the faithfulness of Jesus the Messiah – might be given to those who believe.

The coming of faith

[23]Before this faithfulness arrived, we were kept under guard by the law, in close confinement until the coming faithfulness should be revealed. [24]Thus the law was like a babysitter for us, looking after us until the coming of the Messiah, so that we might be given covenant membership on the basis of faithfulness.

[25]But now that faithfulness has come, we are no longer under the rule of the babysitter. [26]For you are all children of God, through faith, in the Messiah, Jesus.

[27]You see, every one of you who has been baptized into the Messiah has put on the Messiah. [28]There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no longer slave or free; there is no 'male and female'; you are all one in the Messiah, Jesus.

[29]And, if you belong to the Messiah, you are Abraham's family. You stand to inherit the promise.

The son and the spirit

4 Let me put it like this. As long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave – even if, in fact, he is master of everything! [2]He is kept under guardians and stewards until the time set by his father.

[3]Well, it's like that with us. When we were children, we were kept in 'slavery' under the 'elements of the world'. [4]But when the fullness of time arrived, God sent out his son, born of a woman, born under the law, [5]so that he might redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

[6]And, because you are sons, God sent out the spirit of his son into our hearts, calling out 'Abba, father!' [7]So you are no longer a slave, but a son! And, if you're a son, you are an heir, through God.

The true God and the false gods

[8]However, at that stage you didn't know God, and so you were enslaved to beings that, in their proper nature, are not gods. [9]But now that you've come to know God – or, better, to be known *by* God – how can you turn back again to that weak and poverty-stricken line-up of elements that you want to serve all over again? [10]You are observing days, and months, and seasons, and years! [11]I am afraid for you; perhaps my hard work with you is all going to be wasted.

Paul's appeal to his children

[12]Become like me! – because I became like you, my dear family. This is my plea to you. You didn't wrong me: [13]no, you know that it was through bodily weakness that I announced the gospel to you in the first place. [14]You didn't despise or scorn me, even though my condition was quite a test for you, but you welcomed me as if I were God's angel, as if I were the Messiah, Jesus! [15]What's happened to the blessing you had then? Yes, I can testify that you would have torn out your eyes, if you'd been able to, and given them to me. [16]So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?

[17]The other lot are eager for you, but it's not in a good cause. They want to shut you out, so that you will then be eager for them. [18]Well, it's always good to be eager in a good cause, and not only when I'm there with you. [19]My children – I seem to be in labour with you all over again, until the Messiah is fully formed in you! [20]I wish I were there with you right now, and could change my tone of voice. I really am at a loss about you.

Abraham's two sons

[21]So, you want to live under the law, do you? All right, tell me this: are you prepared to hear what the law says? [22]For the Bible says that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave-girl and one by the free woman. [23]Now the child of the slave-girl was born according to the flesh, while the child of the free woman was born according to promise.

[24]Treat this as picture-language. These two women stand for two covenants: one comes from Mount Sinai, and gives birth to slave-children; that is Hagar. [25](Sinai, you see, is a mountain in Arabia, and it corresponds, in the picture, to the present Jerusalem, since she is in slavery with her children.) [26]But the Jerusalem which is above is free – and she is our mother.

[27]For the Bible says,

> Celebrate, childless one, who never gave birth!
> Go wild and shout, girl that never had pains!

The barren woman has many more children
than the one who has a husband!

[28]Now you, my family, are children of promise, in the line of Isaac. [29]But things now are like they were then: the one who was born according to the flesh persecuted the one born according to the spirit. [30]But what does the Bible say? 'Throw out the slave-girl and her son! For the son of the slave-girl will not inherit with the son of the free.' [31]So, my family, we are not children of the slave-girl, but of the free.

Freedom in Christ

5 The Messiah set us free so that we could enjoy freedom! So stand firm, and don't get yourselves tied down by the chains of slavery.
[2]Look here: I, Paul, am telling you that if you get circumcised, the Messiah will be of no use to you. [3]I testify once more, against every person who gets circumcised, that he is thereby under obligation to perform the entire law. [4]You are split off from the Messiah, you people who want to be justified by the law! You have dropped out of grace. [5]For we are waiting eagerly, by the spirit and by faith, for the hope of righteousness. [6]For in the Messiah, Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any power. What matters is faith, working through love.

Warnings against compromise

[7]You were running well. Who got in your way and stopped you being persuaded by the truth? [8]This persuasion didn't come from the one who called you! [9]A little yeast works its way through the whole lump. [10]I am persuaded in the Lord that you won't differ from me on this. But the one who is troubling you will bear the blame, whoever he may be. [11]As for me, my dear family, if I am still announcing circumcision, why are people still persecuting me? If I were, the scandal of the cross would have been neutralized. [12]If only those who are making trouble for you would cut the whole lot off!

The law and the spirit

[13]When God called you, my dear family, he called you to make you free. But you mustn't use that freedom as an opportunity for the flesh. Rather, you must become each other's servants, through love. [14]For the whole law is summed up in one word, namely this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' [15]But if you bite each other and devour each other, watch out! You may end up being destroyed by each other.
[16]Let me say this to you: live by the spirit, and you won't do what the flesh wants you to. [17]For the flesh wants to go against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. They are opposed to each other, so that you can't do what you want. [18]But if you are led by the spirit, you are not under the law.
[19]Now the works of the flesh are obvious. They are such things as fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, [20]idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, strife, jealousy, bursts of rage, selfish ambition, factiousness, divisions, [21]moods of envy, drunkenness, wild partying, and similar things. I told you before, and I tell you again: people who do such things will not inherit God's kingdom.

Fruit of the spirit

[22]But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, great-heartedness, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, [23]gentleness, self-control. There is no law that opposes things like that! [24]And those who belong to the Messiah, Jesus, crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. [25]If we live by the spirit, let's line up with the spirit. [26]We shouldn't be conceited, vying with one another and jealous of each other.

Bearing one another's burdens

6 My dear family, if someone is found out in some trespass, then you – the 'spiritual' ones! – should set such a person right, in a spirit of gentleness. Watch out for yourselves: you too may be tested. [2]Carry each other's burdens; that's the way to fulfil the Messiah's law. [3]If you think you're something when you are not, you deceive yourself. [4]Every one of you should test your own work, and then you will have a reason to boast of yourself, not of somebody else. [5]Each of you, you see, will have to carry your own load.

Practical support in the church

[6]If someone is being taught the word, they should share with the teacher all the good things they have. [7]Don't be misled; God won't have people turning their noses up at him. What you sow is what you'll reap. [8]Yes: if you sow in the field of your flesh you will harvest decay from your flesh, but if you sow in the field of the spirit you will harvest eternal life from the spirit. [9]Don't lose your enthusiasm for behaving properly. You'll bring in the harvest at the proper time, if you don't become weary. [10]So, then, while we have the chance, let's do good to everyone, and particularly to the household of the faith.

Boasting in the cross

[11]Look at the large-size letters I'm writing to you in my own hand. [12]It's the people who want to make a fine showing in the flesh who are trying to force you into getting circumcised – for this purpose only, that they may avoid persecution for the Messiah's cross. [13]You see, even the circumcised ones don't keep the law; rather, they want you to be circumcised, so that they may boast about your flesh.

[14]As for me, God forbid that I should boast – except in the cross of our Lord Jesus the Messiah, through whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. [15]Circumcision, you see, is nothing; neither is uncircumcision! What matters is new creation. [16]Peace and mercy on everyone who lines up by that standard – yes, on God's Israel.

[17]For the rest, let nobody make trouble for me. You see, I carry the marks of Jesus on my body.

[18]The grace of our Lord Jesus the Messiah be with your spirit, my dear family. Amen.

Ephesians

Ephesians is a circular; the words ‘in Ephesus’ in the opening address are a later addition. A good guess is that Paul wrote it from prison in Ephesus itself to the small and recently founded churches in the wider district, including those in Colossae, Hierapolis and Laodicea, up the Lycus Valley.

The letter divides easily into two. The first three chapters are framed with prayer, the long opening shout of praise (1.3–14) and the intercession and celebration to which it gives rise (1.15–23), and the prayer for the whole church to find love as its root and firm foundation (3.14–21). Paul is not only praying; he is modelling a richly Trinitarian worship, celebrating the fact that Jesus is *already* enthroned as the world’s true Lord (1.20–22). Paul’s imprisonment, and the fact that the letter ends with a serious warning about spiritual warfare, indicate that the church is now living in a time of ‘now and not yet’; the balance looks different from different angles of vision, but nothing is gained by forgetting the ‘now’ just because circumstances are difficult. In between chapters 1 and 3, Paul briefly expounds the effect of the gospel: sinners are rescued by grace through faith in order to be agents of new creation (2.1–10), and Gentiles are brought in along with Jews so that there is a single family, the ultimate new Temple in which God himself dwells by the spirit (2.11–22). A community like this will be a standing sign to the powers of the world that Jesus is Lord and they are not (3.10).

The second half of the letter is a sustained appeal for *unity* and *holiness*, two of Paul’s constant themes. God gives the church multiple ministries, not to pull the community apart but to enable it to grow like a single body (4.1–16). This community must live as renewed humans, avoiding the standard corruptions of surrounding paganism (4.17—5.20). This will show particularly in married life; here, indeed (5.21–33), Paul offers a glimpse of a patterned understanding of the whole scriptural narrative, rooted in the first chapters of Genesis. God’s purpose was to bring heaven and earth together in the Messiah (1.10); at present he is bringing Jew and Gentile together by the spirit (2.11–22); and this is to be reflected in the mutual love and submission of husband and wife, as well as in the wider life of Jesus-shaped households.

The letter ends with a warning about the spiritual warfare to be faced by anyone who tries to pray and live in this way. He offers an extended metaphor, still used by many as an aid to daily prayer: God’s complete armour. Finally, off goes Paul’s messenger, his ‘dear brother Tychicus’, to the little churches, taking the letter (6.21), and giving news of Paul himself. He, says Paul, will ‘encourage your hearts’ (6.22). Ephesians has been doing that ever since.

Blessings on the sovereign God!

1 From Paul, one of King Jesus’ apostles through God’s purpose, to the holy ones in Ephesus who are also loyal believers in King Jesus: [2]may God our father and the Lord Jesus, the king, give you grace and peace!

[3]Let us bless God, the father of our Lord Jesus, the king! He has blessed us in the king with every spirit-inspired blessing in the heavenly realm.

The choice and the plan

[4]He chose us in him before the world was made, so as to be holy and irreproachable before him in love. [5]He foreordained us for himself, to be adopted as sons and daughters through Jesus the king. That’s how he wanted it, and that’s what gave him delight, [6]so that the glory of his grace, the grace he poured on us in his beloved one, might receive its due praise.

[7]In the king, and through his blood, we have deliverance – that is, our sins have been forgiven – through the wealth of his grace [8]which he lavished on us. Yes, with all wisdom and insight [9]he has made known to us the secret of his purpose, just as he wanted it to be and set it forward in him [10]as a blueprint for when the time was ripe. His plan was to sum up the whole cosmos in the king – yes, everything in heaven and on earth, in him.

The inheritance and the spirit

[11]In him we have received the inheritance! We were foreordained to this, according to the intention of the one who does all things in accordance with the counsel of his purpose. [12]This was so that we, we who first hoped in the king, might live for the praise of his glory. [13]In him you too, who heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed it – in him you were marked out with the spirit of promise, the holy one. [14]The spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance, until the time when the people who are God’s special possession are finally reclaimed and freed. This, too, is for the praise of his glory.

Knowing the power of the king

[15]Because of all this, and because I’d heard that you are loyal and faithful to Jesus the master, and that you show love to all God’s holy people, [16]I never stop giving thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. [17]I pray that the God of King Jesus our Lord, the father of glory, would give you, in your spirit, the gift of being wise, of seeing things people can’t normally see, because you are coming to know him [18]and to have the eyes of your inmost self opened to God’s light. Then you will know exactly what the hope is that goes with God’s call; you will know the wealth of the glory of his inheritance in his holy people; [19]and you will know the outstanding greatness of his power towards us who are loyal to him in faith, according to the working of his strength and power.

[20]This was the power at work in the king when God raised him from the dead and sat him at his right hand in the heavenly places, [21]above all rule and authority and power and lordship, and above every name that is invoked, both in the present age and

also in the age to come. [22]Yes: God has ‘put all things under his feet’, and has given him to the church as the head over all. [23]The church is his body; it is the fullness of the one who fills all in all.

Warning signs on the wrong road

2 So where do you come into it all? Well, you were dead because of your offences and sins! [2]That was the road you used to travel, keeping in step with this world’s ‘present age’; in step, too, with the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is, even now, at work among people whose whole lives consist of disobeying God. [3]Actually, that’s how all of us used to behave, conditioned by physical desires. We used to do what our flesh and our minds were urging us to do. What was the result? We too were subject to wrath in our natural state, just like everyone else.

[4]But when it comes to mercy, God is rich! He had such great love for us that [5]he took us at the very point where we were dead through our offences, and made us alive together with the king (yes, you are saved by sheer grace!). [6]He raised us up with him, and made us sit with him – in the heavenly places, in King Jesus! [7]This was so that in the ages to come he could show just how unbelievably rich his grace is, the kindness he has shown us in King Jesus.

Grace, not works

[8]How has this all come about? You have been saved by grace, through faith! This doesn’t happen on your own initiative; it’s God’s gift. [9]It isn’t on the basis of works, so no one is able to boast. [10]This is the explanation: God has made us what we are. God has created us in King Jesus for the good works that he prepared, ahead of time, as the road we must travel.

Two into one will go

[11]So then, remember this! In human terms, that is, in your ‘flesh’, you are ‘Gentiles’. You are the people who the so-called ‘circumcision’ refer to as the so-called ‘uncircumcision’ – circumcision, of course, being something done by human hands to human flesh. [12]Well, once upon a time you were separated from the king. You were detached from the community of Israel. You were foreigners to the covenants which contained the promise. There you were, in the world with no hope and no god!

[13]But now, in King Jesus, you have been brought near in the king’s blood – yes, you, who used to be a long way away! [14]He is our peace, you see. He has made the two to be one. He has pulled down the barrier, the dividing wall, that turns us into enemies of each other. He has done this in his flesh, [15]by abolishing the law with its commands and instructions.

The point of doing all this was to create, in him, one new human being out of the two, so making peace. [16]God was reconciling both of us to himself in a single body, through the cross, by killing the enmity in him.

Unveiling the new Temple

[17]So the Messiah came and gave the good news. Peace had come! Peace, that is, for those of you who were a long way away, and peace, too, for those who were close at hand. [18]Through him, you see, we both have access to the father in the one spirit.

[19]This is the result. You are no longer foreigners or strangers. No: you are fellow-citizens with God’s holy people. You are members of God’s household. [20]You are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with King Jesus himself as the cornerstone. [21]In him the whole building is fitted together, and grows into a holy temple in the Lord. [22]You, too, are being built up together, in him, into a place where God will live by the spirit.

God’s secret plan unveiled at last

3 It’s because of all this that I, Paul, the prisoner of King Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles . . .

[2]I’m assuming, by the way, that you’ve heard about the plan of God’s grace that was given to me to pass on to you? [3]You know – the secret purpose that God revealed to me, as I wrote briefly just now? [4]Anyway . . .

When you read this you’ll be able to understand the special insight I have into the king’s secret. [5]This wasn’t made known to human beings in previous generations, but now it’s been revealed by the spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets. [6]The secret is this: that, through the gospel, the Gentiles are to share Israel’s inheritance. They are to become fellow members of the body, along with them, and fellow-sharers of the promise in King Jesus.

[7]This is the gospel that I was appointed to serve, in line with the free gift of God’s grace that was given to me. It was backed up with the power through which God accomplishes his work.

Wisdom for the rulers

[8]I am the very least of all God’s people. However, he gave me this task as a gift: that I should be the one to tell the Gentiles the good news of the king’s wealth, wealth no one could begin to count. [9]My job is to make clear to everyone just what the secret plan is, the purpose that’s been hidden from the very beginning of the world in God who created all things. [10]This is it: that God’s wisdom, in all its rich variety, was to be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places – through the church!

[11]This was God’s eternal purpose, and he’s accomplished it in King Jesus our Lord. [12]We have confidence, and access to God, in him, in full assurance, through his faithfulness. [13]So, I beg you: don’t lose heart because of my sufferings on your behalf! That’s your glory!

God's love, God's power – in us

[14]Because of this, I am kneeling down before the father, [15]the one who gives the name of 'family' to every family that there is, in heaven and on earth. [16]My prayer is this: that he will lay out all the riches of his glory to give you strength and power, through his spirit, in your inner being; [17]that the king may make his home in your hearts, through faith; that love may be your root, your firm foundation; [18]and that you may be strong enough (with all God's holy ones) to grasp the breadth and length and height and depth, [19]and to know the king's love – though actually it's so deep that nobody can really know it! So may God fill you with all his fullness.

[20]So: to the one who is capable of doing far, far more than we can ask or imagine, granted the power which is working in us – [21]to him be glory, in the church, and in King Jesus, to all generations, and to the ages of ages! Amen!

Live up to your calling!

4 So, then, this is my appeal to you – yes, it's me, the prisoner in the Lord! You must live up to the calling you received. [2]Bear with one another in love; be humble, meek and patient in every way with one another. [3]Make every effort to guard the unity that the spirit gives, with your lives bound together in peace.

[4]There is one body and one spirit; you were, after all, called to one hope which goes with your call. [5]There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; [6]one God and father of all, who is over all, through all and in all.

[7]But grace was given to each one of us, according to the measure the king used when he was distributing gifts. [8]That's why it says,

When he went up on high
he led bondage itself into bondage
and he gave gifts to people.

[9]When it says here that 'he went up', what this means is that he also came down into the lower place, that is, the earth. [10]The one who came down is the one who also 'went up' – yes, above all the heavens! – so that he might fill all things.

Grown-up Christianity

[11]So these were the gifts that he gave. Some were to be apostles, others prophets, others evangelists, and others pastors and teachers. [12]Their job is to give God's people the equipment they need for their work of service, and so to build up the king's body. [13]The purpose of this is that we should all reach unity in our belief and loyalty, and in knowing God's son. Then we shall reach the stature of the mature Man measured by the standards of the king's fullness.

[14]As a result, we won't be babies any longer! We won't be thrown this way and that on a stormy sea, blown about by every gust of teaching, by human tricksters, by their cunning and deceitful scheming. [15]Instead, we must speak the truth in love, and so grow up in everything into him – that is, into the king, who is the head. [16]He supplies the growth that the whole body needs, linked as it is and held together by every joint which supports it, with each member doing its own proper work. Then the body builds itself up in love.

Off with the old, on with the new

[17]So this is what I want to say; I am bearing witness to it in the Lord. You must no longer behave like the Gentiles, foolish-minded as they are. [18]Their understanding is darkened; they are cut off from God's life because of their deep-seated ignorance, which springs from the fact that their hearts are hard. [19]They have lost all moral sensitivity, and have given themselves over to whatever takes their fancy. They go off greedily after every kind of uncleanness.

[20]But that's not how you learned the king! – [21]if indeed you did hear about him, and were taught in him, in accordance with the truth about Jesus himself. [22]That teaching stressed that you should take off your former lifestyle, the old humanity. That way of life is decaying, as a result of deceitful lusts. [23]Instead, you must be renewed in the spirit of your mind, [24]and you must put on the new humanity, which is being created the way God intended it, displaying justice and genuine holiness.

The kindness that imitates God himself

[25]Put away lies, then. 'Each of you, speak the truth with your neighbour,' because we are members of one another. [26]'Be angry, but don't sin'; don't let the sun go down on you while you're angry, [27]and don't leave any loophole for the devil. [28]The thief shouldn't steal any longer, but should rather get on with some honest manual work, so as to be able to share with people in need.

[29]Don't let any unwholesome words escape your lips. Instead, say whatever is good and will be useful in building people up, so that you will give grace to those who listen.

[30]And don't disappoint God's holy spirit – the spirit who put God's mark on you to identify you on the day of freedom. [31]All bitterness and rage, all anger and yelling, and all blasphemy – put it all away from you, with all wickedness. [32]Instead, be kind to one another, cherish tender feelings for each other, forgive one another, just as God forgave you in the king.

5 So you should be imitators of God, like dear children. [2]Conduct yourselves in love, just as the Messiah loved us, and gave himself for us, as a sweet-smelling offering and sacrifice to God.

Darkness and light in matters of sex

[3]As for fornication, uncleanness of any kind, or greed: you shouldn't even mention them! You are, after all, God's holy people. [4]Shameful, stupid or coarse conversations are quite out of place. Instead, there should be thanksgiving.
[5]You should know this, you see: no fornicator, nobody who practises uncleanness, no greedy person (in other words, an idolator), has any inheritance in the Messiah's kingdom, or in God's. [6]Don't let anyone fool you with empty words. It's because of these things, you see, that God's wrath is coming on people who are disobedient.
[7]So don't share in their practices. [8]After all, at one time you were darkness, but now, in the Lord, you are light! So behave as children of light. [9]Light has its fruit, doesn't it, in everything that's good, and just, and true. [10]Think through what's going to be pleasing to the Lord. Work it out.

Light and darkness

[11]So don't get involved in the works of darkness, which all come to nothing. Instead, expose them! [12]The things they do in secret, you see, are shameful even to talk about. [13]But everything becomes visible when it's exposed to the light, [14]since everything that is visible is light. That's why it says:

Wake up, you sleeper!
Rise up from the dead!
The Messiah will shine on you!

[15]So take special care how you conduct yourselves. Don't be unwise, but be wise. [16]Make use of any opportunity you have, because these are wicked times we live in. [17]So don't be foolish; rather, understand what the Lord's will is. [18]And don't get drunk with wine; that way lies dissipation. Rather, be filled with the spirit! [19]Speak to each other in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and chanting in your heart to the Lord, [20]always giving thanks for everything to God the father in the name of our Lord Jesus the Messiah.

Wives and husbands

[21]Be subject to one another out of reverence for the Messiah.
[22]Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. [23]The man, you see, is the head of the woman, just as the Messiah, too, is head of the church. He is himself the saviour of the body. [24]But, just as the church is subject to the Messiah, in the same way women should be subject in everything to their husbands.
[25]Husbands, love your wives, as the Messiah loved the church, and gave himself for it, [26]so that he could make it holy, cleansing it by washing it with water through the word. [27]He did this in order to present the church to himself in brilliant splendour, without a single spot or blemish or anything of the kind – that it might be holy and without blame. [28]That's how husbands ought to love their own wives, just as they love their own bodies.
Someone who loves his wife loves himself. [29]After all, nobody ever hates his own flesh: he feeds it and takes care of it, just as the Messiah does with the church, [30]because we are parts of his body. [31]'That's why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two become one flesh.'
[32]The hidden meaning in this saying is very deep; but I am reading it as referring to the Messiah and the church. [33]Anyway, each one of you must love your wife as you love yourself; and the wife must see that she respects her husband.

Children, parents, slaves and masters

6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord. This is right and proper. [2]'Honour your father and your mother' – this is the first commandment that comes with a promise attached! – [3]'so that things may go well with you and that you may live a long life on earth.'
[4]Fathers, don't make your children angry. Bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.
[5]Slaves, obey your human masters, with respect and devotion, with the same single-mindedness that you have towards the Messiah. [6]You must get on with your work, not only when someone is watching you, as if you were just trying to please another human being, but as slaves of the Messiah. Do God's will from your heart. [7]Get on with your tasks with a kind and ready spirit as if you were serving the master himself and not human beings. [8]After all, you know that if anyone, slave or free, does something good, they will receive it back from the master.
[9]Masters, do the same to them! Give up using threats. You know, after all, that the master in heaven is their master and yours, and he is no respecter of persons.

God's complete armour

[10]What else is there to say? Just this: be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his power. [11]Put on God's complete armour. Then you'll be able to stand firm against the devil's trickery. [12]The warfare we're engaged in, you see, isn't against flesh and blood. It's against the leaders, against the authorities, against the powers that rule the world in this dark age, against the wicked spiritual elements in the heavenly places.
[13]For this reason, you must take up God's complete armour. Then, when wickedness grabs its moment, you'll be able to

withstand, to do what needs to be done, and still to be on your feet when it's all over. [14]So stand firm! Put the belt of truth round your waist; put on justice as your breastplate; [15]for shoes on your feet, ready for battle, take the good news of peace. [16]With it all, take the shield of faith; if you've got that, you'll be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. [17]Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is God's word.

Prayer and peace

[18]Pray on every occasion in the spirit, with every type of prayer and intercession. You'll need to keep awake and alert for this, with all perseverance and intercession for all God's holy ones – [19]and also for me! Please pray that God will give me his words to speak when I open my mouth, so that I can make known, loud and clear, the secret truth of the gospel. [20]That, after all, is why I'm a chained-up ambassador! Pray that I may announce it boldly; that's what I'm duty-bound to do.

[21]It's important that you should know how things are with me, and what I'm up to; so our dear brother Tychicus will tell you about it. He is a loyal servant in the Lord. [22]I've sent him to you with this in mind, so that you may know how things are with us, and so that he may encourage your hearts.

[23]Peace be to the whole family, and love with faith, from God the father and the Lord Jesus, the Messiah. [24]Grace be with all who love our Lord, King Jesus, with a love that never dies!

Philippians

The letter to Philippi celebrates a joyful 'partnership': the many-layered 'fellowship' between Paul and the first church in Europe. Sharing as they did in the Messiah's love at a deep level, they had also entered into partnership at the practical level of resources. Paul was in prison. They had sent Epaphroditus to him with a gift of money, but he had become ill on the journey and so had delayed his return (2.25–30). So Paul writes to thank them for the money and to assure them, warding off any suspicions, that their messenger has been faithful to his commission.

The letter is therefore joyful, and Paul is determined that his uncertain future in prison (will he face the death penalty?) will not detract from this. As far as he is concerned, his imprisonment has brought the gospel to public attention, and Jesus will be glorified whatever the outcome. He himself will be content, confident that if he dies he will be with the Messiah, which would be far better, but that if he remains alive it will be because he has fruitful work to do (1.21–26). All this forms a foundation for Paul to go into more detail about his hopes and prayers for the church in Philippi.

His concern, as so often, was for the church to maintain its public witness in the face of misunderstanding and hostility. Opponents will be everywhere, not least when a small group believes that 'Jesus is Lord' in a place like Philippi, a Roman colony, committed to the belief that Caesar was Lord. So trouble will come, but the church must link arms and celebrate the victory of Jesus in a hard-won unity and a costly holiness.

Paul carefully frames this appeal around what has become a famous poem. The poem itself is found in 2.6–11, with six three-line stanzas and the all-important single line in the middle. The first half tells of the descent of the one who was always 'in God's form', always 'equal with God', but who humbled himself to become human and to die the death of a disgraced slave. The five verses before the poem (2.1–5) appeal for unity; the seven verses afterwards (2.12–18) appeal for holiness. Paul can only say a little in a letter; his hearers must work out for themselves what this 'salvation' means in practice (2.12), and for that they need the Messiah's mind.

A brief paragraph about Timothy, and another about Epaphroditus, lead us to what looks as though it was going to be a conclusion; but there is more. Conditions in prison may not have favoured fluent dictation; the break between chapters 2 and 3 seems awkward to us, but that does not undermine the deeper unity of the letter as a whole. Chapter 3 is indeed closely linked to chapters 1 and 2: Paul tells his own story, as a model for what it means to have the Messiah's mind, showing how he abandoned his own apparent privileges as a loyal Jew in order to gain the ultimate Jewish prize: the Messiah himself, and resurrection! Philippians is all about learning to think messianically and to let that thinking inform every aspect of life. That is how the Philippian church, like Paul, will 'have strength for everything in the one who gives me power' (4.13).

Paul's reasons for thanks

1 From Paul and Timothy, slaves of King Jesus, to all God's holy ones in King Jesus who are in Philippi, together with the
overseers and ministers: [2]grace to you and peace, from God our father and King Jesus the Lord.

[3]I thank my God every time I think of you! [4]I always pray with joy, whenever I pray for you all, [5]because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. [6]Of this I'm convinced: the one who began a good work in you will thoroughly complete it by the day of King Jesus.

[7]It's right for me to think this way about all of you. You have me in your hearts, here in prison as I am, working to defend and bolster up the gospel. You are my partners in grace, all of you! [8]Yes: God can bear witness how much I'm longing for all of you with the deep love of King Jesus.

[9]And this is what I'm praying: that your love may overflow still more and more, in knowledge and in all astute wisdom. [10]Then you will be able to tell the difference between good and evil, and be sincere and faultless on the day of the Messiah, [11]filled to overflowing with the fruit of right living, fruit that comes through King Jesus to God's glory and praise.

The king is proclaimed

[12]Now, my dear family, I want you to know that the things I've been through have actually helped the gospel on its way. [13]You see, everybody in the Imperial Guard, and all the rest for that matter, have heard that I am here, chained up, because of the Messiah, the king. [14]My imprisonment has given new confidence to most of the Lord's family; they are now much more prepared to speak the word boldly and fearlessly.

[15]There are some, I should say, who are proclaiming the king because of envy and rivalry; but there are others who are doing it out of good will. [16]These last are acting from love, since they know that I'm in prison because of defending the gospel; [17]but the others are announcing the king out of selfishness and jealousy. They are not acting from pure motives; they imagine that they will make more trouble for me in my captivity.

[18]So what? Only this: the king is being announced, whether people mean it or not! I'm happy to celebrate that!

To live or to die?

Yes, and I really am going to celebrate: [19]because I know that this will result in my rescue, through your prayer and the support of the spirit of King Jesus. [20]I'm waiting eagerly and full of hope, because nothing is going to put me to shame. I am going to be bold and outspoken, now as always, and the king is going to gain a great reputation through my body, whether in life or in death.

[21]You see, for me to live means the Messiah; to die means to make a profit. [22]If it's to be living on in the flesh, that means fruitful work for me.

Actually, I don't know which I would choose. [23]I'm pulled both ways at once: I would really love to leave all this and be with the king, because that would be far better. [24]But staying on here in the flesh is more vital for your sake. [25]Since I've become convinced of this, I know that I will remain here, and stay alongside all of you, to help you to advance and rejoice in your faith, [26]so that the pride you take in King Jesus may overflow because of me, when I come to visit you once again.

The gospel in public

[27]The one thing I would stress is this: your public behaviour must match up to the gospel of the king. That way, whether I do come and see you or whether I remain elsewhere, the news that I get about you will indicate that you are standing firm with a single spirit, struggling side by side with one united intent for the faith of the gospel, [28]and not letting your opponents intimidate you in any way. This is a sign from God: one that signifies their destruction, but your salvation.

[29]Yes: God has granted you that, on behalf of the king, you should not only believe in him, but also suffer for his sake. [30]You are engaged in the same struggle which you once watched me go through; and, as you now hear, I'm still going through it.

Unity in everything

2 So if our shared life in the king brings you any comfort; if love still has the power to make you cheerful; if we really do have a partnership in the spirit; if your hearts are at all moved with affection and sympathy – [2]then make my joy complete! Bring your thinking into line with one another.

Here's how to do it. Hold on to the same love; bring your innermost lives into harmony; fix your minds on the same object. [3]Never act out of selfish ambition or vanity; instead, regard everybody else as your superior. [4]Look after each other's best interests, not your own.

The mind of the Messiah

[5]This is how you should think among
yourselves – with the mind that you have
because you belong to the Messiah, Jesus:

[6]Who, though in God's form, did not
regard his equality with God
as something he ought to exploit.

[7]Instead, he emptied himself,
and received the form of a slave,
being born in the likeness of humans.

And then, having human appearance,
[8]he humbled himself, and became
obedient even to death,
yes, even the death of the cross.

[9]And so God has greatly exalted him,
and to him in his favour has given
the name which is over all names:

[10]That now at the name of Jesus
every knee within heaven shall bow –
on earth, too, and under the earth;

[11]And every tongue shall confess
that Jesus, Messiah, is Lord,
to the glory of God, the father.

How salvation is worked out

[12]So, my dear people: you always did what I said, so please now carry on in the same way, not just as though I was there with you, but much more because I'm not! Your task now is to work at bringing about your own salvation; and naturally you'll be taking this with utter seriousness. [13]After all, God himself is the one who's at work among you, who provides both the will and the energy to enable you to do what pleases him.

[14]There must be no grumbling and disputing in anything you do. [15]That way, nobody will be able to fault you, and you'll be pure and spotless children of God in the middle of a twisted and depraved generation. You are to shine among them like lights in the world, [16]clinging on to the word of life. That's what I will be proud of on the day of the Messiah. It will prove that I didn't run a useless race, or work to no purpose.

[17]Yes: even if I am to be poured out like a drink-offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I shall celebrate, and celebrate jointly with you all. [18]In the same way, you should celebrate, yes, and celebrate with me.

On Timothy

[19]I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I in turn may be encouraged by getting news about you. [20]I have nobody else of his quality: he will care quite genuinely about how you are. [21]Everybody else, you see, looks after their own interests, not those of Jesus the Messiah. [22]But you know how Timothy has proved himself. Like a child with a father he has worked as a slave alongside me for the sake of the gospel. [23]So I'm hoping to send him just as soon as I see how it will turn out with me. [24]And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come very soon as well.

On Epaphroditus

[25]But I did think it was necessary to send Epaphroditus to you. He is my brother; he has worked alongside me and fought alongside me; and he's served as your agent in tending to my needs. [26]He was longing for you all, you see, and he was upset because you heard that he was sick. [27]And he really was sick, too; he nearly died. But God took pity on him – yes, and on me as well, so that I wouldn't have one sorrow piled on top of another.

[28]This has made me all the more eager to send him, so that you'll see him again and be glad, and my own anxieties will be laid to rest. [29]So give him a wonderfully happy welcome in the Lord, and hold people like him in special respect. [30]He came close to death through risking his life for the king's work, so that he could complete the service to me that you hadn't been able to perform.

Warning: don't trust in the flesh

3 So then, my dear family, it comes down to this: celebrate in the Lord! It's no trouble for me to write the same things to you, and it's safe for you.

[2]Watch out for the dogs! Watch out for the 'bad works' people! Watch out for the 'incision' party, that is, the mutilators! [3]We are the 'circumcision', you see – we who worship God by the spirit, and boast in King Jesus, and refuse to trust in the flesh.

[4]Mind you, I've got good reason to trust in the flesh. If anyone else thinks they have reason to trust in the flesh, I've got more. [5]Circumcised? On the eighth day. Race? Israelite. Tribe? Benjamin. Descent? Hebrew through and through. Torah-observance? A Pharisee. [6]Zealous? I persecuted the church! Official status under the law? Blameless.

Gaining the Messiah

[7]Does that sound as though my account was well in credit? Well, maybe; but whatever I had written in on the profit side, I calculated it instead as a loss – because of the Messiah. [8]Yes, I know that's weird, but there's more: I calculate everything as a loss, because knowing King Jesus as my Lord is worth far more than everything else put together! In fact, because of the Messiah I've suffered the loss of everything, and I now calculate it as trash, so that my profit may be the Messiah, [9]and that I may be discovered in him, not having my own covenant status defined by Torah, but the status which comes through the Messiah's faithfulness: the covenant status from God which is given to faith. [10]This means knowing him, knowing the power of his resurrection, and knowing the partnership of his sufferings. It means sharing the form and pattern of his death, [11]so that somehow I may arrive at the final resurrection from the dead.

Chasing on to the finish

[12]I'm not implying that I've already received 'resurrection', or that I've already become complete and mature! No; I'm hurrying on, eager to overtake it, because King Jesus has overtaken me. [13]My dear family, I don't reckon that I have yet overtaken it. But this is my one aim: to forget everything that's behind, and to strain every nerve to go after what's ahead. [14]I mean to chase on towards the finishing post, where the prize waiting for me is the upward call of God in King Jesus.

[15]Those of us who are mature should think like this! If you think differently about it, God will reveal this to you as well. [16]Only let's be sure to keep in line with the position we have reached.

Citizens of heaven

[17]So, my dear family, I want you, all together, to watch what I do and copy me. You've got us as a pattern of behaviour; pay careful attention to people who follow it.

[18]You see, there are several people who behave as enemies of the cross of the Messiah. I told you about them often enough, and now I'm weeping as I say it again. [19]They are on the road to destruction; their stomach is their god, and they find glory in their own shame. All they ever think about is what's on the earth.

[20]We are citizens of heaven, you see, and we're eagerly waiting for the saviour, the Lord, King Jesus, who is going to come from there. [21]Our present body is a shabby old thing, but he's going to transform it so that it's just like his glorious body. And he's going to do this by the power which makes him able to bring everything into line under his authority.

4 Well then, my dear family – I miss you so much, you're my joy and crown! – this is how you must stand firm in the Lord, my beloved people.

Celebrate in the Lord!

[2]I have a special appeal which goes jointly to Euodia and Syntyche: please, please, come to a common mind in the Lord. [3](And here's a request for you too, my loyal comrade: please help these women. They have struggled hard in the gospel alongside me, as have Clement and my other fellow-workers, whose names are in the book of life.)

[4]Celebrate joyfully in the Lord, all the time. I'll say it again: celebrate! [5]Let everybody know how gentle and gracious you are. The Lord is near.

[6]Don't worry about anything. Rather, in every area of life let God know what you want, as you pray and make requests, and give thanks as well. [7]And God's peace, which is greater than we can ever understand, will keep guard over your hearts and minds in King Jesus.

[8]For the rest, my dear family, these are the things you should think through: whatever is true, whatever is holy, whatever is upright, whatever is pure, whatever is attractive, whatever has a good reputation; anything virtuous, anything praiseworthy. [9]And these are the things you should do: what you learned, received, heard and saw in and through me. And the God of peace will be with you.

The hidden secret

[10]I've been having a great celebration in the Lord because your concern for me has once again burst into flower. (You were of course concerned for me before, but you didn't have an opportunity to show it.)

[11]I'm not talking about lacking anything. I've learnt to be content with what I have. [12]I know how to do without, and I know how to cope with plenty. In every possible situation I've learned the hidden secret of being full and hungry, of having plenty and going without, and it's this: [13]I have strength for everything in the one who gives me power.

Closing thanks and greetings

[14]But you did the right thing by entering into partnership with me in my suffering. [15]Indeed, as you people in Philippi know well, when the gospel was getting under way and I was moving on from Macedonia, there wasn't a single other church, except yourselves, that entered into a two-way partnership with me, giving and receiving. [16]Yes: when I was in Thessalonica you sent help to me, not just once but twice.

[17]I stress that it isn't the gift I'm interested in. My concern is that you should have a healthy profit balance showing up on your account. [18]For myself, I've received full payment, and I'm well stocked up. In fact, I'm full to overflowing, now that I have received from Epaphroditus what you sent. It's like a sacrifice with a beautiful smell, a worthy offering, giving pleasure to God. [19]What's more, my God will meet all your needs, too, out of his store of glorious riches in King Jesus. [20]Glory be to our God and father for ever and ever, Amen!

[21]Give my greetings to all God's people in King Jesus. The family with me here send their greetings. [22]All God's people send you greetings, especially those from Caesar's household.

[23]The grace of the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, be with your spirit.

Colossians

Colossians is about Wisdom: wisdom incarnate, wisdom in practice. Wisdom as God's gift to the world in Jesus the Messiah.

The church in Colossae appears to be young. Paul has only just received news of it (1.3–8). So he, in prison in Ephesus, is praying that God will fill them 'with the knowledge of what he wants in all wisdom and spiritual understanding' (1.9), and in particular that they will learn to live lives characterized by constant thanksgiving (1.12 and frequently thereafter). This thanksgiving is to be shaped by 'wisdom' itself, that is, by the Messiah himself, the 'place where you'll find all the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge' (2.3). To express this, Paul writes or quotes the astonishing poem of 1.15–20, celebrating the Messiah as the one through whom all things were created and through whom now all things are reconciled. John began his gospel with his own obvious echo of Genesis 1.1: 'In the beginning'. Colossians focuses on the same verse re-expressed in poetry at once both simple and highly complex.

The point, through all this, is that Jesus himself is the true 'Image'. Again as in John, he is the truly human one. Simultaneously, however, Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God. Like the image in a temple, Jesus displays the God being worshipped. Temple-imagery, in fact, occurs regularly in Colossians: 'in him . . . all the full measure of divinity has taken up bodily residence' (2.9). With his death and resurrection 'all creation under heaven' has heard the good news (1.23); Paul means that with these events a kind of shock wave went through the whole created order. A new world had been born, and Paul intends that the new little church in Colossae will realize what it means to belong to it.

This is all the more important because Paul has been aware, ever since the crisis in Galatia, that rival missionaries are likely to arrive, telling people that they need to follow the Jewish ancestral traditions. Such people will urge confused ex-pagan Messiah-followers to take on complex lists of dietary or liturgical regulations. But this is to be resisted. What matters is Jesus, not human tradition; he is the true Temple; in him you have already been circumcised; the law and all its regulations have nothing now to say to you (2.8, 9,11, 13–19).

Instead, Paul holds out the bracing picture of a genuine human existence discovered through dying and rising with the Messiah (2.20—3.17). You have already died and been raised, he says; you are part of God's new creation, and the new version of humanity which you have put on 'is being renewed in the image of the creator, bringing you into possession of new knowledge' (3.10). This means not only kindness and forbearance, but forgiveness and above all (once more) thanksgiving (3.12–17). For the rest, he offers a shorter version of the 'household code' in Ephesians and quite lengthy closing greetings, including a word about Onesimus, whose story we discover in the letter to Philemon.

Paul has not yet visited the church in Colossae, but he hopes to be released soon and to be able to come to see them. But they are already joined together in the strong bond of mutual affection and prayer. Love, he says, 'ties everything together and makes it complete' (3.14). This letter is part of the way in which Paul is putting that into practice.

Thanksgiving for the gospel's work

1 Paul, an apostle of King Jesus by God's purpose and Timothy my brother; [2]to God's holy people in Colossae, the king's faithful family; grace to you and peace, from God our father.

[3]We always thank God, the father of our Lord, King Jesus, when we pray for you, [4]because we've heard of your faith in King Jesus and the love you have for all God's holy people, [5]because of the hope which is kept safe for you in the heavenly places. You heard about this before in the word of truth, the gospel [6]which has arrived on your doorstep – just as, in fact, it's producing fruit and growing in all the world, as it has been among you, from the day you heard it and came to know the grace of God in truth. [7]That's how you learnt it from Epaphras our beloved fellow slave. He's a loyal and faithful servant of the king on your behalf. [8]He it was who gave us the news about your love in the spirit.

Prayer for wisdom and gratitude

[9]For this reason, from the day we heard it, we haven't stopped praying for you. We're asking God to fill you with the knowledge of what he wants in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. [10]This will mean that you'll be able to conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the Lord, and so give him real delight, as you bear fruit in every good work and grow up in the knowledge of God. [11]I pray that you'll be given all possible strength, according to the power of his glory, so that you'll have complete patience and become truly steadfast and joyful.

[12]And I pray that you will learn to give thanks to the father, who has made you fit to share the inheritance of God's holy ones in the light. [13]He has delivered us from the power of darkness, and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved son. [14]He is the one in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

In praise of Jesus Christ

[15]He is the image of God, the invisible one,
the firstborn of all creation.
[16]For in him all things were created,
in the heavens and here on the earth.
Things we can see and things we cannot,
– thrones and lordships and rulers and powers –
all things were created both through him and for him.

[17]And he is ahead, prior to all else
and in him all things hold together;
[18]and he himself is supreme, the head
over the body, the church.

He is the start of it all,
firstborn from realms of the dead;
so in all things he might be the chief.
[19]For in him all the Fullness was glad to dwell
[20]and through him to reconcile all to himself,
making peace through the blood of his cross,
through him – yes, things on the earth,
and also the things in the heavens.

Reconciled and firm in faith

[21]So what about you? Well, there was a time when you were excluded! You were enemies in your thinking, and in wicked behaviour. [22]But now he has reconciled you in the body of his flesh, through death, in order to bring you into his presence holy, blameless and without any accusation.

[23]This assumes, of course, that you keep firmly on in the faith – by which I mean, solid on your foundations, and not shifting from the hope of the gospel which you heard. This gospel, after all, has been announced in all creation under heaven! And this is the gospel of which I, Paul, became a servant.

The king, living within you

[24]Right now I'm having a celebration – a celebration of my sufferings, which are for your benefit! And I'm steadily completing, in my own flesh, what is presently lacking in the king's afflictions on behalf of his body, which is the church. [25]I became the church's servant, according to the terms laid down by God when he gave me my commission on your behalf, the commission to fulfil God's word.

[26]This word declares the mystery that was kept secret from past ages and generations, but now has been revealed to God's holy people. [27]God's intention was to make known to them just what rich glory this mystery contains, out there among the nations. And this is the key: the king, living within you as the hope of glory!

[28]He is the one we are proclaiming. We are instructing everybody and teaching everybody in every kind of wisdom, so that we can present everybody grown up, complete, in the king. [29]That's what I am working for, struggling with all his energy which is powerfully at work within me.

God's hidden treasure – King Jesus!

2 You see, I'd like you to know just what a struggle I am having on behalf of yourselves, and the family in Laodicea, and all the people who don't know me by sight. [2]I want their hearts to be encouraged as they're brought together in love. I want them to experience all the wealth of definite understanding, and to come to the knowledge of God's mystery – the Messiah, the king! [3]He is the place where you'll find all the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

[4]I'm saying this so that nobody will deceive you with plausible words. [5]Though I'm away from you in person, you see, I am present with you in the spirit, and I'm celebrating as I keep an eye on your good order, and the solidity of your faith in the king.

[6]So, then, just as you received King Jesus the Lord, you must continue your journey in him. [7]You must put down healthy roots in him, being built up brick by brick in him, and established strongly in the faith, just as you were taught, with overflowing thankfulness.

Beware of deceivers

[8]Watch out that nobody uses philosophy and hollow trickery to take you captive! These are in line with human tradition, and with the 'elements of the world' – not the king. [9]In him, you see, all the full measure of divinity has taken up bodily residence. [10]What's more, you are fulfilled in him, since he's the head of all rule and authority.

[11]In him, indeed, you were circumcised with a special, new type of circumcision. It isn't something that human hands can do. It is the king's version of circumcision, and it happens when you put off the 'body of flesh': [12]when you're buried with him in baptism, and indeed also raised with him, through faith in the power of the God who raised him from the dead.

The law and the cross

[13]In the same way, though you were dead in legal offences, and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with Jesus, forgiving us all our offences. [14]He blotted out the handwriting that was against us, opposing us with its legal demands. He took it right out of the way, by nailing it to the cross. [15]He stripped the rulers and authorities of their armour, and displayed them contemptuously to public view, celebrating his triumph over them in him.

[16]So don't let anyone pass judgment on you in a question of food or drink, or in the matter of festivals, new moons or sabbaths.

[17]These things are a shadow cast by the coming reality – and the body that casts the shadow belongs to the king! [18]Don't let anyone rule you out of order by trying to force you into a kind of fake humility, or into worshipping angels. Such people will go on and on about visions they've had; they get puffed up without good reason by merely human thinking, [19]and they don't keep hold of the Head. It's from him that the whole body grows with the growth God gives it, as it's nourished and held together by its various ligaments and joints.

Dying and rising with Christ

[20]If you died with the king, coming out from the rule of the 'worldly elements', what's the point of laying down laws as though your life was still merely worldly? [21]'Don't handle! Don't taste! Don't touch!' [22]Rules like that all have to do with things that disappear as you use them. They are the sort of regulations and teachings that mere humans invent. [23]They may give an appearance of wisdom, since they promote a do-it-yourself religion, a kind of humility, and severe treatment of the body. But they are of no use when it comes to dealing with physical self-indulgence.

3 So if you were raised to life with the king, search for the things that are above, where the king is seated at God's right hand! [2]Think about the things that are above, not the things that belong on the earth. [3]Don't you see: you died, and your life has been hidden with the king, in God! [4]When the king is revealed (and he is your life, remember), then you too will be revealed with him in glory.

Old clothes, new clothes

[5]So, then, you must kill off the parts of you that belong on the earth: illicit sexual behaviour, uncleanness, passion, evil desire and greed (which is a form of idolatry). [6]It's because of these things that God's wrath comes on the children of disobedience. [7]You too used to behave like that, once, when your life consisted of that sort of thing.

[8]But now you must put away the lot of them: anger, rage, wickedness, blasphemy, dirty talk coming out of your mouth. [9]Don't tell lies to each other! You have stripped off the old human nature, complete with its patterns of behaviour, [10]and you have put on the new one – which is being renewed in the image of the creator, bringing you into possession of new knowledge. [11]In this new humanity there is no question of 'Greek and Jew', or 'circumcised and uncircumcised', of 'barbarian, Scythian', or 'slave and free'. The king is everything and in everything!

Love, peace and thanksgiving

[12]These are the clothes you must put on, then, since God has chosen you, made you holy, and lavished his love upon you. You must be tender-hearted, kind, humble, meek, and ready to put up with anything. [13]You must bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against someone else, you must forgive each other. Just as the master forgave you, you must do the same. [14]On top of all this you must put on love, which ties everything together and makes it complete. [15]Let the king's peace be the deciding factor in your hearts; that's what you were called to, within the one body. And be thankful.

[16]Let the king's word dwell richly among you, as you teach and exhort one another in all wisdom, singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to God with grateful hearts. [17]And whatever you do, in word or action, do everything in the name of the master, Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the father.

The Christian household

[18]Now a word for wives: you should be subject to your husbands. This is appropriate in the Lord. [19]And for husbands: you should treat your wives with love, and not be bitter with them. [20]And for children: obey your parents in everything; this pleases the Lord. [21]And for fathers: don't provoke your children to anger, otherwise they might lose heart.

[22]A word, too, for slaves: obey your earthly masters in everything. Don't do it simply out of show, to curry favour with human beings, but wholeheartedly, because you fear the master. [23]Whatever you do, give it your very best, as if you were working for the master and not for human beings. [24]After all, you know that you're going to receive the true inheritance from the master as your reward! It is the master, the king, that you are serving. [25]Anyone who does wrong will be paid back for wrongdoing, and there will be no favourites.

4 And a word for masters: do what is just and fair for your slaves. Remember that you too have a Master – in heaven.

The fellowship of prayer

[2]Devote yourselves to prayer; keep alert in it, with thanksgiving. [3]While you're about it, pray for us, too, that God will open in front of us a door for the word, so that we may speak of the mystery of the king – which is why I'm here in chains. [4]Pray that I may speak clearly about it. That's what I am duty-bound to do.

[5]Behave wisely towards outsiders; buy up every opportunity. [6]When you speak, make sure it's always full of grace, and well flavoured with salt! That way you'll know how to give each person an appropriate answer.

[7]Our dear brother Tychicus will tell you all my news. He is a faithful servant, indeed a fellow slave in the Lord. [8]This is why I'm sending him to you – to let you know how things are with us, and to encourage your hearts. [9]I'm also sending Onesimus, who is a dear and faithful brother. He is one of your own number. They will tell you everything that's going on here.

Greetings from others

[10]Aristarchus (who's in jail with me here) sends you greetings. So does Mark, Barnabas's nephew. You've received instructions about him; if he comes to you, do make him welcome. [11]Jesus Justus sends greetings as well. These three are the only fellow Jews I have among my colleagues working for God's kingdom, and they have been an encouragement to me.

[12]Epaphras, one of your own folk and also one of King Jesus' slaves, sends you greetings. He's always struggling in prayer on your behalf, praying that you will stand firm and mature, and have your minds fully settled on everything that God wants you to do. [13]I can bear him witness that he's gone to a lot of trouble on your behalf, and also on behalf of the family in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. [14]Luke, the beloved doctor, sends greetings; so too does Demas.

[15]Pass my greetings on to the family in Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. [16]When this letter has been read to you, make sure it's read in Laodicea as well; and you, too, should read the letter that will come on to you from Laodicea. [17]And say to Archippus: 'Take care to complete the service that you have received in the Lord.'

[18]I'm signing off in my own hand: PAUL.

Remember the chains I'm wearing.

Grace be with you.

1 Thessalonians

Paul's first trip to northern Greece, in Acts 16 and 17, had been exciting but troubling. Unjustly beaten and imprisoned in Philippi, he went on quickly to Thessalonica; but it wasn't long before he had to leave there in a hurry as well, heading south with a short stop in Beroea before arriving in Athens. But, having not stayed long in Thessalonica, he agonized as to whether the small group of believers he had left behind would be holding on to their new faith, or whether the trouble stirred up by the new movement would have caused them to conclude it was all a mistake and to go back to their old ways of life. So Paul sent Timothy to see how things were. To his relief and joy, Timothy returned with good news. The Thessalonian Christians were standing firm, and eager to see Paul again (3.1–10). So Paul writes this first letter in thankful relief.

The first two chapters rehearse Paul's memory of his visit to Thessalonica: his preaching, the welcome he was given, the faith, hope and love that sprang up, and his own pastoral practice among them ('like a nurse taking care of her own children', 2.7). In particular, he recalls the persecution he suffered, as well as the hostility the church members themselves encountered from their fellow citizens, angry no doubt at a new movement which no longer worshipped the local gods, including the new 'deities' of Caesar and Rome (1.9; cf Acts 17.7). The fact that the believers faced this hostility without flinching gives Paul great joy. Like a gardener planting a tree, and waiting to see if it will withstand the wind and weather, he rejoices at the signs of life which mean the roots have gone deep.

Four quick points conclude the letter. First, the new-creation code of sexual morality (faithfulness in marriage, abstinence outside) is vital (4.1–8). Second, the mutual care and financial support (known by the word *agapē*, love) which they were already practising must continue and grow: the community must live as a single family. Third, they are not to be alarmed if some of their number die before the Lord's return; when that happens, those who have died will be raised and those still alive will be transformed. This passage (4.13–18) has caused considerable difficulty through the misinterpretation of its vivid biblical imagery. The point Paul is making is substantially the same as in Philippians 3.19–21 or 1 Corinthians 15.51–52. Fourth, they are to learn how to live as daytime people in a world still asleep to the new gospel realities (5.1–11). In particular, they are to recognize that the offer of 'peace and security' – a propaganda slogan of imperial Rome – is a self-serving, dangerous lie. Instead, they are to put on the armour of the gospel and continue to celebrate.

The Gospel comes to Thessalonica

1 Paul, Silvanus and Timothy, to the assembly of Thessalonians in God the father and the Lord Jesus, the Messiah. Grace to you and peace.

[2]We always give thanks to God for all of you, as we make mention of you in our prayers. [3]We constantly remember the accomplishment of your faith, the hard work of your love, and the patience of your hope in our Lord Jesus the Messiah, in the presence of God our father.

[4]Dear family, beloved by God, we know that God has chosen you, [5]because our gospel didn't come to you in word only, but in power, and in the holy spirit, and in great assurance. You know what sort of people we became for your sake, when we were among you.

The Thessalonians' faith

[6]And you learned how to copy us – and the Lord! When you received the word, you had a lot to suffer, but you also had the holy spirit's joy. [7]As a result, you became a model for all the believers in both Macedonia and Achaea. [8]For the word of the Lord has resonated out from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaea; your faith in God has gone out to people everywhere. This means that we haven't had to say anything. [9]They themselves tell the story of the kind of welcome we had from you, and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, [10]and to wait for his son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead – Jesus, who delivers us from the coming fury.

Paul's ministry in Thessalonica

2 For you yourselves know, my dear family, that our visit to you didn't turn out to be empty. [2]On the contrary. We had already undergone awful things and been shamefully treated in Philippi, as you know; but we were open and exuberant in our God in declaring to you the gospel of God, despite a good deal of opposition.

[3]When we make our appeal, you see, we are not deceiving people. We don't have any impure motives; we aren't playing some kind of trick. [4]Rather, we speak as people whom God has validated to be entrusted with the gospel; not with a view to pleasing people, but in order to please God, who validates our hearts.

[5]For we never used flattering words, as you know. Nor were we saying things insincerely, as a cover-up for greed, as God is our witness. [6]We weren't looking for recognition from anybody, either you or anyone else – [7]though we could have imposed on you, as the Messiah's emissaries. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse taking care of her own children. [8]We were so devoted to you that we gladly intended to share with you not only the gospel of God but our own lives, because you became so dear to us.

Paul's fatherly concern

[9]My dear family, you will recall our hard toil, our labour. We worked night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you while we announced to you the gospel of God. [10]You are witnesses, and so is God, of our holy, upright and blameless behaviour towards

you believers. [11]You know how, like a father to his own children, [12]we encouraged each of you, and strengthened you, and made it clear to you that you should behave in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

The persecuted church

[13]So, therefore, we thank God constantly that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it, not as the word of a mere human being but – as it really is! – the word of God which is at work in you believers. [14]For, my dear family, you came to copy God's assemblies in Judaea in the Messiah, Jesus. You suffered the same things from your own people as they did from those of the Judaeans [15]who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and who expelled us. They displease God; they oppose all people; [16]they forbid us to speak to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. This has had the effect, all along, of completing the full total of their sins. But the fury has come upon them for good.

Paul's joy and crown

[17]As for us, my dear family, we were snatched away from you for a short time, in person though not in heart. We longed eagerly, with a great desire, to see you face to face. [18]That's why we wanted to come to you – I, Paul, again and again – but the satan got in our way.

[19]Don't you see? When our Lord Jesus is present once more, what is our hope, our joy, the crown of our boasting before him? It's you! [20]Yes: you are our glory and our joy.

The sending of Timothy

3 So, when it got to the point that we couldn't bear it any longer, Silvanus and I decided to remain in Athens by ourselves, [2]and we sent Timothy – our brother, and God's fellow-worker in the gospel of the Messiah – so that he could strengthen you and bring comfort to your faith, [3]so that you wouldn't be pulled off course by these sufferings. You yourselves know, don't you, that this is what we are bound to face. [4]For when we were with you, we told you ahead of time that we would undergo suffering; that's how it has turned out, and you know about it. [5]That's why, when I too couldn't bear it any longer, I sent Timothy, so that I could find out about your faithfulness, in case somehow the tempter had put you to the test and our work would be in ruins.

Timothy's report

[6]But now Timothy has returned to us from you. He has brought us the good news of your faith – and your love; he has told us that you always have good memories of us, and that you are longing to see us, just as we are to see you. [7]So, my dear family, we are comforted about you, in all our difficulties and troubles, because of your faithfulness. [8]Now, you see, we are really alive, if you are standing firmly in the Lord. [9]For what thanks can we give back to God about you, for all the joy which we celebrate because of you in the presence of our God, [10]praying with even more fervour than you can imagine, night and day, that we may see you face to face and may put into proper order anything that is lacking in your faith?

Paul's words of blessing

[11]Now may God himself, our father, and our Lord Jesus, steer us on our way to you. [12]And may the Lord make your love for one another, and for everybody, abound and overflow, just as ours does for you. [13]That way, your hearts will be strengthened and kept blameless in holiness before God our father when our Lord Jesus is present again with all his holy ones. Amen.

Instructions on holy living

4 What remains, my dear family, is for us to ask you, and indeed to urge you in the Lord Jesus, that you should continue more and more to behave in the manner that you received from us as the appropriate way of behaving and of pleasing God. [2]You know, of course, what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. [3]This is God's will, you see: he wants you to be holy, to keep well away from fornication. [4]Each of you should know how to control your own body in holiness and honour, [5]not in the madness of lust like Gentiles who don't know God. [6]Nobody should break this rule, or cheat a fellow Christian in this area; the Lord is the avenger in all such matters, just as we told you before and testified most solemnly. [7]For God did not call us to a dirty life, but in holiness. [8]Anyone who rejects this, then, is not rejecting a human command, but the God who gives his holy spirit to you.

A life of love

[9]Now, about charitable concern for the whole family: I don't really need to write to you, because you yourselves have been taught by God to show loving care for one another. [10]Indeed, you are doing this for all the Christian family in the whole of Macedonia. But we urge you, my dear family, to make this an even more prominent part of your lives. [11]You should make it your ambition to live peacefully, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, just as we commanded you, [12]so that you may behave in a way which outsiders will respect, and so that none of you may be in financial difficulties.

The Lord's coming

[13]Now concerning those who have fallen asleep: we don't want you to remain in ignorance about them, my dear family. We don't
want you to have the kind of grief that other people do, people who don't have any hope. [14]For, you see, if we believe that Jesus
died and rose, that's the way God will also, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep.
[15]Let me explain (this is the word of the Lord I'm speaking to you!). We who are alive, who remain until the Lord is present,
will not find ourselves ahead of those who fell asleep. [16]The Lord himself will come down from heaven with a shouted order, with
the voice of an archangel and the sound of God's trumpet. The Messiah's dead will rise first; [17]then we who are alive, who are
left, will be snatched up with them among the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And in this way we shall always be with the
Lord. [18]So comfort each other with these words.

Children of light

5 Now when it comes to specific times and dates, my dear family, you don't need to have anyone write to you. [2]You
yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a midnight robber. [3]When people say, 'Peace and
security!', then swift ruin will arrive at their doorstep, like the pains that come over a woman in labour, and they won't have a
chance of escape.
[4]But as for you, my dear family – you are not in darkness. That day won't surprise you like a robber. [5]You are all children of
light, children of the day! We don't belong to the night, or to darkness. [6]So, then, let's not go to sleep, like the others, but let's
keep awake and stay sober.
[7]People who sleep, you see, sleep at night. People who get drunk get drunk at night. [8]But we daytime people should be self-
controlled, clothing ourselves with the breastplate of faith and love, and with the helmet of the hope of salvation; [9]because God
has not placed us on the road to fury, but to gaining salvation, through our Lord Jesus the Messiah. [10]He died for us, so that
whether we stay awake or go to sleep we should live together with him. [11]So strengthen one another, and build each other up, just
as you are doing.

Final exhortations

[12]This, my dear family, is the request we make of you. Take note of those who work among you and exercise leadership over you
in the Lord, those who give you instruction. [13]Give them the highest possible rank of love because of their work. Live at peace
among yourselves.
[14]And, my dear family, we beg you to warn those who step out of line. Console the downcast; help the weak, be warm-hearted
and patient towards everybody. [15]Make sure nobody pays anyone back evil for evil. Instead, always find the way to do good to
one another, and to everybody.
[16]Always celebrate,
[17]never stop praying;
[18]in everything be thankful
(this is God's will for you in the Messiah Jesus);
[19]don't quench the spirit,
[20]don't look down on prophecies,
[21]test everything,
if something is good, hold it fast;
[22]if something looks evil, keep well away.

Final blessings and charge

[23]Now may the God of peace himself make you completely holy. May your complete spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at
the coming of our Lord Jesus the Messiah. [24]The one who calls you is faithful; he will do it.
[25]My dear family, pray for us.
[26]Greet the whole family with a holy kiss. [27]I charge you by the Lord to have this letter read to the whole family.
[28]The grace of our Lord Jesus the Messiah be with you.

2 Thessalonians

The second letter to Thessalonica has sometimes had its authenticity questioned, partly because the (to us) strange imagery about the Last Judgment and the events surrounding it seems so different from the Paul of the other letters. But these things were common coin in the Jewish world of Paul's day, and here as elsewhere he seems to be rethinking them in the light of the gospel.

In particular, he is aware that having explained to the Thessalonians about the coming Day of Judgment – in his original preaching and then a little in the first letter – this has not quietened speculation, but has rather increased it. Some are worried that perhaps 'the day of the Lord' might have come and gone and they might have missed it (2.2). This tells us already that 'the day of the Lord' was not thought of, as many in our own times have supposed, in terms of 'the end of the space-time universe', as though the 'heaven' of Christian imagination were so radically separate from 'earth' that if 'heaven' were to establish its kingdom this could only be by the complete abolition of 'earth'. Paul has a very different view; and at the centre of that view he sees the turbulent events of first-century Roman political life, in which in recent memory the emperor Caligula had wanted to set up a giant statue of himself in the Temple in Jerusalem. That crisis had passed (because Caligula was assassinated in the nick of time), but Paul sees it as a warning of what may yet happen. Sooner or later (he expects it to be sooner) the dark energy of latent evil, already dealt a death-blow by the cross but still awaiting final abolition, will draw itself up to its height, and then Jesus will deal with it once and for all. How much of this lurid tale Paul saw as symbolic, and how much he saw as literal, is hard to say. It points on to the similar, and more drawn-out, exposition of the defeat of evil in the book of Revelation.

Greetings and thanksgiving

1 Paul, Silvanus and Timothy, to the assembly of Thessalonians in God our father and the Lord Jesus, the Messiah: [2]grace to you and peace from God our father and the Lord Jesus, the Messiah.

[3]We owe God a constant debt of gratitude concerning you, my dear family. It is only right and proper. Your faith is growing marvellously, and the love which every single one of you has for each other is multiplying. [4]As a result, we ourselves can tell all the churches of God how proud we are of you – of your patience and loyalty in all your troubles, and in all the sufferings you are going through.

[5]All this is a clear sign of the just judgment of God, to make you thoroughly worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering – [6]since it is just, on God's part, to pay back with suffering those who inflict suffering on you, [7]and to give you, with us, respite from your sufferings.

The coming of Jesus

This will come about when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his powerful angels, [8]in a flaming fire, meting out punishment to those who don't know God and those who don't obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. [9]They will pay the penalty of eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his power, [10]when he comes to be glorified in all his holy ones, and to be marvelled at by all who believe in him, because our testimony to you was met with faith, on that day.

[11]To that end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his call, and may complete every plan he has to do you good, and every work of faith in power, [12]so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and of the Lord Jesus, the Messiah.

The lawless one

2 Now concerning the royal presence of our Lord Jesus the Messiah, and our gathering together around him, this is our request, my dear family. [2]Please don't be suddenly blown off course in your thinking, or be unsettled, either through spiritual influence, or through a word, or through a letter supposedly from us, telling you that the day of the Lord has already arrived.

[3]Don't let anyone deceive you in any way. You see, it can't happen unless first the rebellion takes place, and the man of lawlessness, the son of destruction, is revealed. [4]He is the one who sets himself against every so-called god or cult object, and usurps their role, so that he installs himself in God's temple, and makes himself out to be a god.

[5]Don't you remember that I told you this while I was with you? [6]And now you know what is restraining him so that he will be revealed at his proper time. [7]For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work, but the restrainer is in place – until he is taken away; [8]and then the lawless one will be revealed. The Lord Jesus will destroy him with the breath of his mouth, and will wipe him out with the unveiling of his presence.

[9]The presence of the lawless one will be accompanied by the activity of the satan, with full power, with signs, and spurious wonders, [10]with every kind of wicked deceit over those on the way to ruin, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. [11]For that reason God sends upon them a strong delusion, leading them to believe the lie, [12]so that judgment may come upon all who did not believe the truth but took pleasure in wickedness.

Exhortation to steadfastness

[13]But we always owe God a debt of gratitude for you, my family beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the first fruits of his work of salvation, through sanctification by the spirit and belief of the truth. [14]To this he called you through our gospel, so that you might obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus the Messiah.

[15]So then, my dear family, stand firm, and hold on tight to the traditions which you were taught, whether through what we said
or through our letter. [16]And may our Lord Jesus the Messiah himself, and God our father who loved us and gave us eternal
comfort and good hope by grace, [17]comfort your hearts and strengthen you in every good work and word.

Requests for prayer

3 Finally, my dear family, pray for us, that the word of the Lord will go forward quickly and be glorified, as it has among you;
[2]and that we may be rescued from evil and wicked people. Not all, you see, have faith! [3]But the Lord is faithful, and he will
strengthen you and guard you from the evil one.
[4]We are confident in the Lord about you, that you are doing, and will continue to do, what we instructed you. [5]May the Lord
direct your hearts towards the love of God and the patience of the Messiah.

The dangers of idleness

[6]Here is a command we have for you, my dear family, in the name of our Lord Jesus the Messiah. Keep away from any member
of the family who is stepping out of line, and not behaving according to the tradition that you received from us.
[7]You yourselves know, after all, how you should copy us. We didn't step out of line, [8]nor did we eat anyone's food without
paying for it. We worked night and day, with labour and struggle, so as not to place a burden on any of you. [9]It wasn't that we
don't have the right; it was so that we could give you an example, for you to copy us. [10]And, indeed, when we were with you, we
gave you this command: those who won't work shouldn't eat!
[11]You see, we hear that there are some among you who are stepping out of line, behaving in an unruly fashion, not being busy
with real work, but just busybodies. [12]To people like that we give this commandment and exhortation in the Lord Jesus the
Messiah: do your own work in peace, and eat your own bread. [13]As for you, my dear family, don't get tired of doing what is right!

Final remarks

[14]If anyone doesn't obey our word in this letter, take note of them. Don't have any dealings with such a person, so that they may
be ashamed. [15]Don't consider a person like this an enemy: rebuke them as a member of the family. [16]Now may the Lord of peace
give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all.
[17]I, Paul, am sending you this greeting in my own hand. This is the sign in each letter of mine; this is how I write. [18]The grace
of our Lord Jesus the Messiah be with you all.

1 Timothy

The two letters to Timothy, and the letter to Titus (often referred to as the Pastoral Epistles), present us with a different kind of challenge. The style, particularly of 1 Timothy and Titus, is quite different; not different as the first and second letters to Corinth are different, but different in tone, in the use of key phrases, in the overall structure of sentences. Computers have been brought in to assess the stylistic differences but the results are uncertain (partly because the small size of the sample makes it difficult to judge). Most scholars find it difficult to see Paul as the author. A further problem is that the small personal notes, about the movements and location of Paul's associates, cannot be made to fit with Acts 13—28. It is possible, despite what Paul said about having finished work in the eastern Mediterranean, that he did in fact make another trip there after a trial in Rome. If so, then perhaps the details might be made to fit.

The two letters to Timothy are themselves very different in both style and character. The first letter moves from topic to topic (not entirely unlike 1 Corinthians). Timothy has been left behind in Ephesus as a teacher, and must give himself to that work, urging mutual love, resisting false or deluded teachings, stressing the constant duty of prayer, and in particular taking care over the selection of persons to hold leadership and teaching roles within the church.

The letter draws to a rhetorical conclusion by looking ahead with joy to the 'royal appearing' of Jesus; the language echoes things that were said about the Roman emperor (6.11–16). But the actual conclusion is yet more practical teaching: if there are rich Jesus-followers, they are not to idolize their riches but to use them for the common good. Then one more flicker of a warning: there is something called 'knowledge' (Gk. *gnōsis*) which is gaining ground in the community. It must be resisted. Paul (or whoever wrote this letter) could hardly have guessed how large a problem this was to be a hundred years later, as some of the greatest teachers of the day fought hard against the gospel-sapping theories of 'gnosticism'.

True teaching about the truth

1 Paul, an apostle of King Jesus according to the command of God our saviour and King Jesus our hope, [2]to Timothy, my true child in faith: grace, mercy and peace from God the father and King Jesus our Lord.

[3]This is my charge to you, just as it was when I went to Macedonia: stay in Ephesus, so that you can tell the relevant people not to teach anything different, [4]or to cling on to myths and endless genealogies. That sort of thing breeds disputes rather than the instruction in faith that comes from God. [5]The goal of such instruction is love – the love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience and sincere faith. [6]Some people have wandered off from these things and turned aside to foolish talk. [7]They want to be teachers of the law; but they don't understand either what they're talking about or the things about which they pronounce so confidently.

The purpose of the law

[8]We know, after all, that the law is good – if someone uses it lawfully! [9]We recognize that the law is not laid down for people who are in the right, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the godless and sinners, the unholy and worldly, for people who kill their father or mother, for murderers, [10]fornicators, practising homosexuals, slave traders, liars, perjurers, and those who practise any other behaviour contrary to healthy teaching, [11]in accordance with the gospel of the glory of God the blessed one that was entrusted to me.

Paul as an example of God's saving grace

[12]I thank King Jesus our Lord, who gave me strength. He regarded me as trustworthy by appointing me to his service – [13]even though I used to say blasphemous things against him, and persecuted his people violently! But I received mercy, because in my unbelief I didn't know what I was doing. [14]And the grace of our Lord was more than enough for me, with the faith and love that are in King Jesus. [15]Here is a word you can trust, which deserves total approval: 'King Jesus came into the world to save sinners' – and I'm the worst of them! [16]But this was why I received mercy: so that in me, precisely as the worst, King Jesus could demonstrate the full scale of his patience, and make me a pattern for those who were going to believe in him and so attain the life of the age to come. [17]To the King of the ages, the one and only God, immortal and invisible, be honour and glory to the ages of ages, Amen!

The battle of faith

[18]I am giving you this command, Timothy my child, in accordance with the prophecies which were made about you before, so that, as they said, you may fight the glorious battle, [19]holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected conscience, and their faith has been shipwrecked. [20]I include Hymenaeus and Alexander in that category. Indeed, I have handed them over to the satan, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme.

The first rule: prayer for the world

2 So, then, this is my very first command: God's people should make petitions, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings on behalf of all people – [2]on behalf of kings, and all who hold high office, so that we may lead a tranquil and peaceful life, in all godliness and holiness. [3]This is good; it is acceptable with God our saviour, [4]who wants all people to be saved and to come to

know the truth. [5]For, you see,

There is one God,
and also one mediator between God and humans,
King Jesus, himself a human being.
[6]He gave himself as a ransom for all,
and this was testified when the time was right.

[7]This is why I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I'm speaking the truth, I'm not lying!), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

Women must be allowed to be learners

[8]So this is what I want: the men should pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, with no anger or disputing. [9]In the same way the women, too, should clothe themselves decently, being modest and sensible about it. They should not go in for elaborate hairstyles, or gold, or pearls, or expensive clothes. [10]Instead, as is appropriate for women who profess to be godly, they should adorn themselves with good works. [11]They must study undisturbed, in full submission to God. [12]I'm not saying that women should teach men, or try to dictate to them; rather, that they should be left undisturbed. [13]Adam was created first, you see, and then Eve; [14]and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived, and fell into trespass. [15]She will, however, be kept safe through the process of childbirth, if she continues in faith, love and holiness with prudence.

The character of a bishop

3 Here is a trustworthy saying: if someone is eager for the work of overseeing God's people, the task they seek is a fine one. [2]The bishop must be beyond reproach. He must not have more than one wife. He must be temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, a good teacher. [3]He must not be a heavy drinker, or violent, but must be gentle, not quarrelsome, and not in love with money. [4]He must be good at managing his own household, with his children being subject to him with all godliness. ([5]After all, if a man doesn't know how to run his own household, how can he take care of God's church?) [6]He must not be a recent convert, in case he gets puffed up and falls into the devil's condemnation. [7]In addition, he must have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he may not incur reproach and fall into the devil's snare.

The character of deacons

[8]In the same way, deacons must be serious-minded, not the sort of people who say one thing today and another tomorrow, not heavy drinkers, not eager for shameful gain. [9]They must hold on to the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. [10]They must first be tested; then, when they have been found without reproach, they may serve as deacons. [11]The womenfolk, too, should be serious-minded, not slanderers, but temperate and faithful in all things. [12]Deacons should have only one wife, and should be well in charge of their children and their own households. [13]Those who serve well as deacons, you see, gain a good platform for themselves to speak out boldly in the faith which is in King Jesus.

The mystery of godliness

[14]I'm writing this to you in the hope that I'll be able to come to you in the near future. [15]But, if I'm delayed, this will help you to know how people should behave in God's household, which is the assembly of the living God, the pillar and firm foundation of the truth. [16]Indeed, the mystery of godliness is certainly great:

He was revealed in the flesh,
and vindicated in the spirit;
he appeared to angels,
and was announced to Gentiles;
he was believed in the world,
and taken up in glory.

Beware of false teaching!

4 Now the spirit specifically declares that in the last times some people will abandon the faith, and will cling on to deceitful spirits and demonic teachings [2]perpetrated by hypocritical false teachers whose consciences are branded with a hot iron. [3]They will forbid marriage, and teach people to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by people who believe and know the truth. [4]Every creation of God, you see, is good; nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, [5]for then it is made holy by God's word and prayer.

Get into training!

[6]Set these instructions before the family. If you do this, you will be a good servant of King Jesus; you will be nourished by the words of faith and the good teaching which you have been following. [7]Keep well away from worthless myths, the sort of things

some old women mumble on about.

Go into training in godliness! [8]Physical exercise, you see, has a limited usefulness, but godliness is useful in every way. It carries the promise of life both now and in the future. [9]That saying is trustworthy; it deserves to be accepted totally! [10]This is what we are working and struggling for, you see, because we have set our hope on the living God, who is the saviour of all people – more especially, of believers.

Pay attention to yourself and your teaching

[11]You must urge and teach these things. [12]Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but be an example to the believers in what you say, how you behave, in love, faith and holiness. [13]Until I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation and to teaching. [14]Don't neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy when the elders laid hands on you. [15]Work hard at these things; give yourself to them, so that everyone may see your progress. [16]Pay attention to yourself and your teaching, and keep steadily on with them. If you do that, you see, you will save yourself, and those who hear you as well.

Human families and God's family

5 Don't rebuke a senior man in the church, but exhort him as you might do with your father – or, in the case of younger ones, with your brothers. [2]Treat the older women as mothers, and the younger ones as sisters, with all purity.

[3]Pay respect to widows who really are widows. [4]If a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to respect their own family and to make some repayment to those who brought them up. This, you see, pleases God. [5]A real widow is one who, left by herself, has set her hope on God, and continues in prayer and supplication night and day; [6]but a self-indulgent woman is dead even while she's alive. [7]Give these commands so that they may be beyond blame. [8]If anyone doesn't take care of their own relatives, especially their own household, they have denied the faith; they are worse than unbelievers.

Widows

[9]Let a woman be registered as a widow if she is at least sixty years old, the wife of one husband, [10]with a reputation for good works, having brought up children, shown hospitality, washed the feet of God's people, helped those who were suffering, and been steadfast in doing good wherever she can. [11]Refuse to register younger widows. When their desires become strong against the King, you see, they will want to marry, [12]and they will receive condemnation because they have abandoned their earlier faith. [13]In addition, they learn the habit of idleness, going around from one house to another, not only doing nothing but gossiping and meddling, saying things they shouldn't.

[14]So this is my wish: the younger ones should marry, have children, run their households and give the enemy no opportunity to slander us ([15]some, you see, have already gone off after the satan!). [16]If any believing woman has relatives who are widowed, let her help them, so that the church won't be burdened. That way, it can help widows who really are widows.

Elders

[17]Elders who are good leaders ought to be paid double, particularly those who work hard in speaking and teaching. [18]The Bible says, you see, 'Don't muzzle an ox when it's threshing', and 'the worker deserves his pay'.

[19]Don't accept an accusation against an elder, unless it is supported 'by two or three witnesses'. [20]When people persist in sin, rebuke them openly, so that the rest may be afraid.

[21]Before God, King Jesus and the chosen angels, I give you solemn warning to keep these commands without discrimination. Never act out of favouritism. [22]Don't be too quick to lay hands on anyone; don't share in other people's sins. Keep yourself pure.

[23]You should stop confining yourself to drinking water. Use wine (in moderation!). That will be good for your digestion, and for the physical problems you often have.

[24]Some people's sins are obvious, and walk ahead of them into the courtroom. Other people's follow them there. [25]In the same way, good works are obvious; but, even when they aren't, they can't stay hidden for ever.

Slaves, masters and sound teaching

6 All who live as slaves, 'under the yoke' so to speak, should consider their own masters as worthy of all respect, so that people may not say wicked things against the name of God and the teaching. [2]Those who have masters who are also believers should not look down on them because they are brothers, but rather give them service, since those who receive the benefit of their work are beloved fellow believers.

Teach these things, and exhort people to do them. [3]Some people teach other things, and don't hold firmly to the healthy words of our Lord King Jesus, and the teaching which goes with piety; [4]people like that are conceited and have no understanding. They have a diseased craving for disputes and arguments about words. That just leads to envy, jealousy, evil speaking, wicked suspicions [5]and irritating arguments among people with depraved minds who have lost their grip on the truth and imagine that godliness is a means of gain.

Godliness and contentment

[6]If it's gain you want, though, there is plenty to be had in godliness – if it's combined with contentment. [7]We brought nothing into

the world, after all, and we certainly can't take anything out. [8]If we have food and clothing, we should be satisfied with it. [9]People who want to be rich, by contrast, fall into temptation and a trap, into many foolish and dangerous lusts which drown people in devastation and destruction. [10]The love of money, you see, is the root of all evil. Some people have been so eager to get rich that they have wandered away from the faith and have impaled themselves painfully in several ways.

The king's royal appearing

[11]But you, man of God – you must run away from all this. Instead, chase after justice, godliness, faith, love, patience and gentleness. [12]Fight the noble fight of the faith, get a firm grasp on the life of the coming age, the life you were called to when you made the noble public profession before many witnesses. [13]I give you this charge before God, who gives life to all things, and King Jesus, who made the noble profession before Pontius Pilate: [14]be undefiled and blameless as you keep the commandment, until the royal appearing of our Lord King Jesus, [15]which the blessed and only Sovereign One, the King of kings and Lord of lords, will reveal at its proper time. [16]He is the only one who possesses immortality; he lives in unapproachable light; no human being has seen him, or can see him. To him be eternal honour and power, Amen!

What to do with money

[17]What about people who are rich in this present world? Tell them not to think of themselves too highly, and to set their hopes, not on something so uncertain as riches, but on the God who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. [18]They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous and eager to share. [19]That way, they will treasure up for themselves a good foundation for the future, and thereby come to possess the life which really is life.

[20]Well then, Timothy: keep guard over what has been entrusted to you. Turn away from the pointless and empty talk and contradictions of what is wrongly called 'knowledge'. [21]Some have claimed to be experts in it, but have missed the target when it comes to the faith.

Grace be with you all.

2 Timothy

The second letter to Timothy is written from prison, and it seems as though the writer knows his time is near. He reflects on his past work; he celebrates the central truths of the gospel, reflecting that though he is in chains nothing can tie up God's word (2.8–10). Bad times will come, and false teachers too; folk will listen eagerly to people who tell them what they already want to hear. But the example and teaching of the truth must be maintained. Paul – if it is he – sounds tired at the end, urging Timothy to come to him soon, and certainly before winter (4.9, 21). There is a hint of a sequence of trials (4.16–18); so far Paul has escaped being thrown to the lions (4.17; though that may be a metaphor), but this may not last much longer (4.6). It is a deeply personal letter, somewhat rambling but full of passion and faith, and deep affection for the younger man. If it is hard to fit its details into any Pauline itinerary that we know of, it is hard to imagine someone other than Paul writing in his name in so personal a fashion.

Rekindle the gift!

1 Paul, an apostle of King Jesus by God's will, according to the promise of life in King Jesus; [2]to Timothy, my dear child.
Grace, mercy and peace from God the father and King Jesus our Lord.
[3]I serve God with a clear conscience, as my forebears did, and I am grateful to him that I remember you all the time, as I pray for you night and day. [4]I remember how you cried when I left, and I'm longing to see you and be filled with joy. [5]I have in my mind a clear picture of your sincere faith – the faith which first came to live in Lois your grandmother and Eunice your mother, and which, I am confident, lives in you as well.
[6]That's why I now want to remind you that God gave you a gift when I laid my hands on you, and that you must bring it back into a blazing fire! [7]After all, the spirit given to us by God isn't a fearful spirit; it's a spirit of power, love and prudence.

Don't be ashamed!

[8]So don't be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me as his prisoner. Rather, suffer for the gospel along with us, in accordance with God's power. [9]God saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace. He gave us this grace in King Jesus before all time and ages, [10]but has now made it visible through the appearing of our saviour King Jesus, who abolished death and, through the gospel, shone a bright light on life and immortality.
[11]I was made a herald, apostle and teacher for this gospel; [12]that's why I suffer these things. But I am not ashamed, because I know the one I have trusted, and I'm convinced that he has the power to keep safe until that day what I have entrusted to him.
[13]Keep a firm hold on the pattern of healthy teaching which you heard from me, in the faith and love which are in King Jesus. [14]You have had something very important entrusted to you, too; make sure you look after it, through the holy spirit who dwells in us.

Foes and friends

[15]You will know that everyone in Asia has turned away from me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes. [16]May the Lord give mercy to the household of Onesiphorus; he has often refreshed me. He wasn't ashamed of my chains, [17]but when he was in Rome he eagerly hunted for me and found me. [18]May the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day. And you know very well all the things he did for me in Ephesus.

Conditions of service

2 So, then, my child: you must be strong in the grace which is in King Jesus. [2]You heard the teaching I gave in public; pass it on to faithful people who will be capable of instructing others as well. [3]Take your share of suffering as one of King Jesus' good soldiers. [4]No one who serves in the army gets embroiled in civilian activities, since they want to please the officer who enlisted them. [5]If you take part in athletic events, you don't win the crown unless you compete according to the rules. [6]The farmer who does the work deserves the first share of the crops. [7]Think about what I say; the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

God's word is not tied up

[8]Remember Jesus the King, risen from the dead, from the seed of David, according to my gospel – [9]for which I suffer like a criminal, even being chained up! But God's word is not tied up. [10]That's why I put up with everything for the sake of God's chosen ones, so that they too may obtain, with glory that lasts for ever, the salvation which is in King Jesus. [11]You can rely on this saying:

If we die with him, we shall live with him;
[12]if we endure patiently, we shall reign with him;
if we deny him, he will deny us;
[13]if we are faithless, he remains faithful,
for he cannot deny his own self.

Foolish words and the word of truth

[14]Remind them about these things; and warn them, in God's presence, not to quarrel about words. This doesn't do any good;
instead, it threatens to ruin people who listen to it. [15]Do your very best to present yourself before God as one who has passed the
test – a workman who has no need to be ashamed, who can carve out a straight path for the word of truth. [16]Avoid pointless and
empty chatter. It will push people further and further towards ungodliness, [17]and their talk will spread like a cancer. I'm thinking
in particular of Hymenaeus and Philetus; [18]they have turned aside from the truth by saying that the resurrection has already
happened. They are upsetting some people's faith. [19]But God's firm foundation stands, and it has this as its seal: 'The Lord knows
those who belong to him', and 'Everyone who uses the name of the Lord must leave wickedness behind.'

Vessels for God's use

[20]In a great house there are vessels not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and pottery. Some of them are given special
honour in the way they're used; others are for menial purposes. [21]So if people purify themselves from dishonourable things, they
will become vessels for honour, made holy, pleasing to the master of the house, fit for every good work.
[22]Run away from the passions of youth. Instead, chase after justice, faith, love and peace; you'll be in the company of all who
call on the Lord from a pure heart. [23]Avoid silly and unprofitable disputes, because you know that they produce fights; [24]and the
Lord's servant mustn't be a fighter, but must be gentle to all people, able to teach, able to bear evil without resentment, [25]able to
correct opponents with a meek spirit. It may be that God will give them repentance so that they can arrive at a knowledge of the
truth, [26]and, in coming to their senses, escape the devil's snare, after having been held captive by him and made to do his will.

Opponents of the truth

3 You need to know this: bad times are coming in the last days. [2]People will be in love with themselves, you see, and with
money too. They will be boastful, arrogant, abusive, haters of parents, ungrateful, unholy, [3]unfeeling, implacable, accusing,
dissolute, savage, haters of the good, [4]traitors, reckless, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, [5]holding on to a
pattern of godliness but denying its power. Avoid people like that! [6]This group, you see, includes those who worm their way into
people's houses and ensnare foolish women who are overwhelmed with their sins and are pulled and pushed by all kinds of
desires, [7]always learning but never able to arrive at the truth. [8]Just as Jannes and Jambres stood up against Moses, so people like
this oppose the truth. In their minds they are corrupt; in their faith they are of no account. [9]They won't get very far, though,
because their foolishness will become obvious to everyone, as it was with those two.

Continue in the scriptures!

[10]So what about you? You have followed my teaching faithfully, and also my way of life, my aims and goals, my faith,
longsuffering, love and patience, [11]my persecutions, my sufferings, the things I went through in Antioch, in Iconium, in Lystra,
the persecutions I endured – and the Lord rescued me from all of them. [12]Yes, everyone who wants to live a godly life in King
Jesus will be persecuted, [13]while evil people and impostors will go on to even worse things, deceiving others and being
themselves deceived. [14]But you, on the other hand, must stand firm in the things you learned and believed. You know who it was
you received them from, [15]and how from childhood you have known the holy writings which have the power to make you wise
for salvation through faith in King Jesus. [16]All scripture is breathed by God, and it is useful for teaching, for rebuke, for
improvement, for training in righteousness, [17]so that people who belong to God may be complete, fitted out and ready for every
good work.

Judgment is coming – so get on with your work

4 This is my solemn charge to you, in the presence of God and King Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and by his
appearance and his kingdom: [2]announce the word; keep going whether the time is right or wrong; rebuke, warn and
encourage with all patience and explanation. [3]The time is coming, you see, when people won't tolerate healthy teaching. Their
ears will start to itch, and they will collect for themselves teachers who will tell them what they want to hear. [4]They will turn away
from listening to the truth and will go after myths instead. [5]But as for you, keep your balance in everything! Put up with suffering;
do the work of an evangelist; complete the particular task assigned to you.

Waiting for the crown

[6]For I am already being poured out as a drink-offering; my departure time has arrived. [7]I have fought the good fight; I have
completed the course; I have kept the faith. [8]What do I still have to look for? The crown of righteousness! The Lord, the righteous
judge, will give it to me as my reward on that day – and not only to me, but also to all who have loved his appearing.

Come to me soon

[9]Make every effort to come to me soon. [10]Demas, you see, has left me and gone to Thessalonica; he's in love with this present
world! Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. [11]Luke is the only one with me. Get Mark and bring him with you;

he's very helpful in looking after me. [12]I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. [13]I left a cloak at Carpus' house in Troas; please bring it with you when you come – and also the scrolls, and especially the books.

[14]Alexander the coppersmith did me a lot of damage. The Lord will pay him back according to what he's done! [15]Watch out for him yourself. He stood out strongly against our message.

[16]The first time my case came to court nobody showed up to support me; they all left me alone. May it not be reckoned against them! [17]But the Lord stood there beside me and gave me strength to enable me to complete my work as his royal herald, and to make sure all the Gentiles heard the proclamation; and I was snatched clear of the lion's mouth. [18]The Lord will snatch me clear from every wicked deed and will save me for his heavenly kingdom. Glory to him for the ages of ages, Amen!

[19]Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.

[20]Erastus stayed in Corinth. I left Trophimus behind in Miletus, where he was sick.

[21]Do your best to come before winter.

Eubulus sends his greetings; so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the family.

[22]The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you all.

Titus

The short letter to Titus assumes that Paul has left him in Crete; again, this doesn't fit with the itineraries we know from Acts, so if the letter is genuine we would have to assume a substantial further period of work in the central Mediterranean region. As in 1 Timothy, one of the important things will be to appoint church leaders, particularly people who will be able to address the problems of the local culture. Church members must be reminded again and again that part of the point of the whole Christian movement is to be a family that engages in good, creative work in the wider community; this is what is meant by 'good works' (2.7, 14; 3.1, 8, 14). What matters – what will create the best impact for the gospel – is if this otherwise strange and apparently subversive 'family' is seen to be making their street, their village, their town, a better place. Disputes and divisions are inevitable, but so far as possible these are to be avoided; they will eat up energy and do nobody any good.

God's revealed plan

1 From Paul, a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus the king, in accordance with the faith of God's chosen people, and the knowledge of the truth that goes with godliness, [2]in the hope of the life of the coming age. God, who never lies, promised this before the ages began, [3]and has now, at the right time, unveiled his word through the proclamation entrusted to me, according to the command of our divine saviour.

[4]To Titus, my true child, according to the faith which we share.

Grace and peace from God the father and King Jesus our saviour.

Appointing elders

[5]This is why I left you in Crete: you are to set straight all the remaining matters, and appoint elders for every town, as I charged you to do. [6]Elders must be blameless, the husband of only one wife. Their children must be believers, and must not be open to the accusation of loose living, or being rebellious. [7]This is because an overseer, as one of God's household managers, must be blameless. He must not be stubborn, or hotheaded, or a heavy drinker, or a bully, or eager for shameful gain. [8]He must be hospitable, a lover of goodness, sensible, just, holy and self-controlled. [9]He must hold firmly to the reliable word which goes with the teaching, so that he may have the power both to exhort people with healthy instruction and to give a proper rebuttal to those who oppose it.

The problems in Crete

[10]There are many, you see, who refuse to come into line – people who speak foolishness and deceive others. This is true in particular of the circumcision party. [11]It's important that they should be silenced, because they are overturning whole households by teaching things that shouldn't be taught – and trying to make a shameful living out of it! [12]One of their own, a native prophet, said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil animals, idle guzzlers.' [13]This testimony is true! That's why you must rebuke them sternly, so that they may become healthy in the faith, [14]paying no attention to Jewish myths and the commandments of people who reject the truth. [15]Everything is pure to people who are pure. But if people are defiled or faithless, nothing is pure for them; even their mind and conscience are defiled. [16]They declare that they know God, but they deny him by what they do. They are detestable and disobedient, and useless for any good work.

Commands to households

2 So what must you do? Just this: you must instruct people how to conduct themselves in accordance with healthy teaching.

[2]The older men are to be sober, dignified, sensible, and healthy in faith, love and patience. [3]In the same way, older women are to be reverent in their behaviour, not slanderers or enslaved to heavy drinking, able to teach what is good. [4]That way, they can give sensible instructions to the younger women on how to love their husbands and their children, [5]and how to be sensible, holy, good at looking after the household, and submissive to their own husbands, so that people won't have bad things to say about the word of God. [6]You must urge the younger men, in the same way, to be sensible [7]in all things.

Make sure you present yourself as a pattern of good works. Your teaching must be consistent and serious, [8]in healthy speech that is beyond reproach. That way, our opponents will be ashamed, since they won't have anything bad to say about us.

[9]Slaves must be submissive in everything to their masters. They must do what is wanted and not answer back [10]or help themselves to their masters' property. They are to show good faith in everything, so that in every way they may be a good advertisement for the teaching of God our saviour.

Grace, hope and holiness

[11]God's saving grace, you see, appeared for all people. [12]It teaches us that we should turn our backs on ungodliness and the passions of the world, and should live sober, just and devout lives in the present age, [13]while we wait eagerly for the blessed hope and royal appearing of the glory of our great God and saviour, Jesus the King. [14]He gave himself for us so that he could ransom us from all lawless actions and purify for himself a people as his very own who would be eager for good works.

[15]This is what you must say. Exhort people and rebuke them. Use full authority. Don't let anyone look down on you.

God's kindness and generosity – and ours

3 Remind them to submit to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work. [2]They are not to speak evil of anyone, nor to be quarrelsome, but to be kindly. They must be completely gentle with everyone.

[3]We ourselves, you see, used at one time to be foolish, disobedient, deceived, and enslaved to various kinds of passions and pleasures. We spent our time in wickedness and jealousy. We were despicable in ourselves, and we hated each other. [4]But when the kindness and generous love of God our saviour appeared, [5]he saved us, not by works that we did in righteousness, but in accordance with his own mercy, through the washing of the new birth and the renewal of the holy spirit, [6]which was poured out richly upon us through Jesus, our king and saviour, [7]so that we might be justified by his grace and be made his heirs, in accordance with the hope of the life of the age to come. [8]The saying is sure.

Watch out for disputes and divisions

I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have put their faith in God may take care to be energetic in good works. Such things are good and profitable for people. [9]But stay well clear of foolish disputes, genealogies, quarrels and squabbles about the law; they serve no purpose, and are worthless. [10]If someone is causing divisions, give them a first warning, then a second, and then avoid them. [11]You know that a person like that is twisted, sinful and self-condemned.

[12]When I send Artemas to you, or maybe Tychicus, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis. That's where I've decided to spend the winter. [13]Give a really good send-off to Zenas the lawyer and Apollos; make sure they don't go short of anything. [14]All our people must learn to busy themselves with good works, so that they may meet any urgent needs that arise, and not be unfruitful.

[15]All the people with me send you their greetings. Greet those who love us in faith. Grace be with you all.

Philemon

Paul's shortest letter is none the less profound. He writes to Philemon, a householder in Colossae. Like all householders in the ancient world, Philemon had slaves, and one of them, Onesimus, had run away. That might itself warrant the death penalty, and anyone harbouring a runaway would likewise risk criminal charges. But Onesimus had come to Paul, and under his guidance he had become a Christian. What was Paul to do?

We might prefer it if Paul had grandstanded, declaring that one should simply free all slaves at once. Instead he will put a time-bomb beside the institution (and yes, we may regret that it took so long to explode), but in the meantime he will do what he does best: reconciliation. That will be hard. Paul does hint, late in the letter, that Philemon might free Onesimus; but Onesimus must first go back to be reconciled, and Philemon must welcome him. They are brothers in the Messiah; nothing less will do.

All is summed up in the prayer of verse 6. Paul is praying that the partnership he and Philemon enjoy, the 'fellowship' in their shared faith, will have its powerful effect in bringing to realization, to a practical result, the good things that are at work in us to lead us into the King, the Messiah. Paul's prayer is that this 'work', going on secretly within each man, will lead them to reconciled unity. The fact that we still have this little gem of a letter seems to imply that the appeal was successful.

Greetings

[1]Paul, a prisoner of King Jesus, and Timothy our brother: to our beloved Philemon, our colleague and partner, [2]to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our comrade-in-arms, and to God's people who meet in their house. [3]May grace and peace be upon you, from God our father and King Jesus the Lord.

[4]I always thank my God when your name comes up in my prayers, [5]because I've heard of your love and faithful loyalty towards the Lord Jesus and to all God's people. [6]My prayer is this: that the partnership which goes with your faith may have its powerful effect, in realizing every good thing that is at work in us to lead us into the King. [7]You see, my dear brother, your love gives me so much joy and comfort! You have refreshed the hearts of God's people.

Paul's appeal

[8]Because of all this I could be very bold in the King, and order you to do the right thing. [9]But, because of love, I'd much rather appeal to you – yes, it's me, Paul, speaking, an old man as I am and now a prisoner of King Jesus! [10]I am appealing to you about my child, the one I have fathered here in prison: Onesimus, 'Mr Useful'. [11]There was a time when he was use*less* to you; but now he's very useful, to you and to me.

[12]I'm sending him to you for your decision – yes, sending the man himself; and this means sending my own heart. [13]I would have liked to keep him here with me, so that he could have been your representative in serving me in the chains of the gospel. [14]But I didn't want to do anything without you knowing about it. That way, when you did the splendid thing that the situation requires, it wouldn't be under compulsion, but of your own free will.

Paul's perspective

[15]Look at it like this. Maybe this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you could have him back for ever – [16]no longer as a slave, but much more than a slave, as a beloved brother, beloved especially to me, but how much more to you, both as part of your household and in the Lord. [17]So, anyway, if you reckon me a partner in your work, receive him as though he was me. [18]And if he's wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, put that down on my account. [19]This is me, Paul, writing with my own hand: I'll pay you back (and far be it from me to remind you that you owe me your own very self!). [20]Yes, my brother, I want some benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my heart in the King.

[21]As I write this I'm confident that you'll do what I say. In fact, I know you'll do more than I say. [22]But, at the same time, get a guest room ready for me. I'm hoping, you see, that through your prayers I will be granted to you.

[23]Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in King Jesus, sends you greetings. [24]So do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my colleagues here.

[25]The grace of the Lord, King Jesus, be with your spirit.

Hebrews

The letter to the Hebrews is the most sustained 'new covenant' argument, taking passage after passage from Israel's scriptures and explaining that these texts pointed forwards to a coming fulfilment through which Israel's sacrificial system would become redundant. This message seems to be addressed to people for whom the Jewish world seemed safer, more familiar, than the strange new world of the Jesus-movement; the writer is explaining that such safety is an illusion, since through the sacrifice of Jesus God has joined heaven and earth together in the new way for which the old world, and the 'old covenant', had been longing. The letter refers to the wilderness Tabernacle rather than the Jerusalem Temple as such, so opinion has been divided as to whether it was written before or after the destruction of the latter in AD 70.

The writer (who remains anonymous) weaves his sophisticated discourse around four texts in particular. Psalm 95, he points out, was written when the Israelites were already enjoying 'rest' in the promised land, but it points on to another, further 'rest' still remaining. Psalm 110 speaks of a coming king who is also a priest, not in the line of Aaron but 'according to the order of Melchizedek', the ancient priest to whom Abraham himself paid tithes. Jeremiah 31 promised a 'new covenant' which would take the place of the original Mosaic covenant, and would accomplish what the Mosaic regulations could not, namely, forgiveness of sins. Psalm 40, read as a prophecy of the Messiah, declared that God did not ultimately want 'sacrifices and offerings' but rather the free self-offering which Jesus has now performed. Chapter 11 turns this complex argument into a single narrative, telling the story of Israel as the journey of faith, leading to Jesus himself (12.1–2) and to the promise of the new creation (12.28).

Hebrews is remarkable above all for its portrait of Jesus. Like John and Colossians, the book draws on the Jewish traditions of creation and 'wisdom' to insist that Jesus is the one through whom God created the worlds (1.2). He is massively superior to the angels (1.4–14), not least because he is the ultimate, genuine human being, seen in Genesis and in Psalm 8, to whom all things are now subject (2.5–9). The full humanness of Jesus is in fact a major theme here, both in the echo of Jesus' agony in Gethsemane (5.7) and in his resurrection and ascension through which, as the true High Priest, he 'always lives to make intercession' for his people (7.25). In his death he has defeated the devil himself (2.14), since he offered the perfect sacrifice (7.27; 9.23–28), not simply in being killed (that was only ever the prelude to the real sacrificial moment) but in the presentation of his lifeblood in the heavenly sanctuary as the cleansing agent, enabling heaven and earth to come together and sinners to be forgiven.

The letter repeatedly applies all this to people tempted to slide back into the more socially acceptable world of continuing Jewish piety. No, he says: you must press on (6.1–12; 10.19–39).

God's one and only son

1 In many ways and by many means God spoke in ancient times to our ancestors in the prophets; [2]but at the end of these days
he spoke to us in a son.

He appointed this son to be heir of all things;
through him, in addition, he created the worlds.
[3]He is the shining reflection of God's own glory,
the precise expression of his own very being;
he sustains all things through his powerful word.
He accomplished the cleansing needed for sins,
and sat down at the right of the Majesty Supreme.
[4]See how much greater he is than the angels:
the name he was granted is finer than theirs.

[5]For to which angel did God ever say, 'You are my son, today I became your father'? Or, again, 'I will be his father, and he will be my son'?

The Messiah is superior to angels

[6]Again, when God brings the firstborn son into the world, he says,

Let all God's angels worship him.

[7]In relation to the angels, this is what it says:

God makes his angels spirits, and his servants flames of fire.

[8]In relation to the son, however, it says,

Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever;
the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of your kingdom;
[9]you loved justice and hated lawlessness,
therefore God, your God, anointed you with the oil of gladness,
as superior to your comrades.

[10]And, again:

You established the earth, O Lord, from the beginning;
and the heavens are the works of your hands;
[11]they will be destroyed, but you will remain;
all of them will grow old like clothing,
[12]you will roll them up like a cloak,
and they will be changed like clothing.
But you are the same, and your years will never give out.

[13]But to which of the angels did God ever say,

Sit at my right hand,
until I make your enemies a stool for your feet?

[14]Must we not say, then, that the angels are all servant spirits, sent to act on behalf of those who are to inherit salvation?

Don't neglect God's salvation!

2 So, then, we must pay all the closer attention to what we heard, in case we drift away from it. [2]You see, if the word which was spoken through angels was reliable, with appropriate and just punishment every time anyone broke it or disobeyed it, [3]how shall we escape if we ignore a rescue as great as this? It started by being declared through the Lord, and it was confirmed to us by those who heard him; [4]and God bore witness as well, along with them, in signs and wonders and many different types of powerful deeds, and by the holy spirit, distributed in accordance with his will.

Jesus as the truly human being

[5]You see, God didn't place the world to come (which is what I'm writing about) under the control of angels. [6]Someone has spoken of it somewhere in these terms:

What are humans, that you should remember them?
What is the son of man, that you should take thought for him?
[7]You made him a little lower than the angels,
you crowned him with glory and honour,
[8]and you placed everything under his feet.

When it speaks of everything being subjected to him, it leaves nothing that is not subjected to him. As things are at present, we don't see everything subjected to him. [9]What we do see is the one who was, for a little while, made lower than the angels – that is, Jesus – crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, so that by God's grace he might taste death on behalf of everyone.

The Messiah and his brothers and sisters

[10]This is how it works out. Everything exists for the sake of God and because of him; and it was appropriate that, in bringing many children to glory, he should make perfect, through suffering, the one who leads the way to salvation. [11]For the one who makes others holy, and the ones who are made holy, all belong to a single family.
This is why he isn't ashamed to call them his brothers and sisters, [12]when he says,

I will announce your name to my brothers and sisters;
I will sing your praise in the middle of the assembly,

[13]and again,

I will place my trust in him,

and again,

Look, here I am, with the children God has given me.

[14]Since the children share in blood and flesh, he too shared in them, in just the same way, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, [15]and set free the people who all their lives long were under the power of slavery because of the fear of death. [16]It's obvious, you see, that he isn't taking special thought for angels; he's taking special thought for Abraham's family. [17]That's why he had to be like his brothers and sisters in every way, so that he might become a merciful and trustworthy high priest in God's presence, to make atonement for the sins of the people. [18]He himself has suffered, you see, through being put to the test, and that's why he is able to help those who are being tested right now.

Jesus and Moses

Well then, my brothers and sisters: you are God's holy ones, and you share the call from heaven. So think carefully about Jesus,

3 the apostle and high priest of our confession of faith. [2]He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house. [3]He deserves much more glory than Moses, you see, just as the one who builds a house deserves more glory than the house. [4]For every house is built by someone, but the one who builds all things is God. [5]And 'Moses was faithful, as a servant, in all his house', thereby bearing witness to the things that were yet to be spoken of; [6]but the Messiah is over God's house as a son. What is that house? It's us – those of us who hold on tightly to the free delight and confidence of our hope.

Today's the time to listen!

[7]So listen to what the holy spirit says:

Today, if you hear his voice,
[8]don't harden hearts, as in the great bitterness,
like the day in the desert when they faced the test,
[9]when your fathers put me to the test, and challenged me,
and saw my works [10]for forty years.
And so I was angry with that generation,
and said, 'They are always straying in their hearts,
they do not know my ways.' [11]As I swore
in my anger, 'They'll never enter my rest.'

[12]Take care, my dear family, that none of you should possess an evil and unbelieving heart, leading you to withdraw from the living God. [13]But encourage one another every day, as long as it's called 'Today', so that none of you may become hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Hold on tight!

[14]We share the life of the Messiah, you see, only if we keep a firm, tight grip on our original confidence, right through to the end. [15]That's what it means when it says, 'Today, if you hear his voice, don't make your hearts hard, as in the great bitterness.'
[16]Who was it, after all, who heard and then became bitter? It was all those who went out of Egypt under Moses, wasn't it? [17]And who was it that God was angry with for forty years? It was those who sinned, wasn't it – those whose bodies fell in the desert? [18]And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest? Wasn't it the people who didn't believe? [19]So we can see that it was their unbelief that prevented them from entering.

Getting through to the sabbath rest

4 So we are bound to worry that some of you might seem to have missed out on God's promise of entering his rest, the promise which is still open before us. [2]For we certainly had the good news announced to us, just as they did; but the word which they heard didn't do them any good, because they were not united in faith with those who heard it. [3]For it is we who believe who enter into the rest; as it has been said,

As I swore in my anger,
they will never enter my rest

– even though God's works had been complete since the foundation of the world. [4]For it says this somewhere about the seventh day,
And God rested on the seventh day from all his works,
[5]and again, in the present passage,

They will never enter my rest.

[6]Therefore, since some failed to enter into it, and those who received the good news earlier on didn't enter because of unbelief, [7]he once again appoints a day, 'Today', saying through David – after such a long interval of time! – in the words already quoted,

Today, if you hear his voice,
don't harden your hearts.

[8]If Joshua had given them rest, you see, he wouldn't be speaking about another subsequent 'rest'. [9]Thus we conclude: there is still a future sabbath 'rest' for God's people. [10]Anyone who enters that 'rest' will take a rest from their works, as God did from his.

Danger! God's word at work

[11]So, then, let's make every effort to enter that 'rest', so that nobody should trip and fall through the same pattern of unbelief. [12]God's word is alive, you see! It's powerful, and it's sharper than any double-edged sword. It can pierce right in between soul and spirit, or joints and marrow; it can go straight to the point of what the human heart is thinking, or intends to do. [13]No creature remains hidden before God. All are naked, laid bare before the eyes of the one to whom we must present an account.

The sympathetic high priest

[14]Well, then, since we have a great high priest who has gone right through the heavens, Jesus, God's son, let us hold on firmly to
our confession of faith. [15]For we don't have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been
tempted in every way just as we are, yet without sin. [16]Let us then come boldly to the throne of grace, so that we may receive
mercy, and may find grace to help us at the moment when we need it.

5 Every high priest, you see, is chosen from among human beings, and is placed before God on their behalf, so that he can
offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. [2]He is able to sympathize with people who don't know very much, or who wander off in
different directions, since he too has his own share of weakness. [3]That's why he has to offer sacrifices in relation to his own sins
as well as those of the people.

The son becomes the priest

[4]Nobody takes the office of priesthood on himself; you have to be called by God, just as Aaron was. [5]In the same way, the
Messiah didn't exalt himself so that he might become a high priest. It came about through the one who said to him,

> You are my son; today I have become your father.

[6]As he says in another passage,

> You are a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchizedek.

[7]During the time of Jesus' earthly life, he offered up prayers and supplications, with loud shouts and tears, to the one who was
able to save him from death. He was heard because of his devotion. [8]Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what
he suffered. [9]When he had been made complete and perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him,
[10]since he has been designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Are you ready for solid food?

[11]We have plenty to say about all this; but it may be hard to make it clear, because your capacity to take things in has become
sluggish. [12]Yes: by now you really should have become teachers, but you need someone to teach *you* the basic elementary
beginnings of God's oracles. You need milk, not solid food! [13]Everyone who drinks milk, you see, is unskilled in the word of
God's justice; such people are just babies. [14]Mature people need solid food – and by 'mature' I mean people whose faculties have
been trained by practice, to distinguish good from evil.

No way back

6 So let's leave the basic level of teaching about the Messiah, and go on towards maturity! (Let's not repeat the performance of
laying a foundation of repentance from dead works and faith towards God, [2]teaching about baptisms, laying on of hands, the
resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.) [3]We shall do this, if God allows us to.

[4]For once people have been enlightened – when they've tasted the heavenly gift and have had a share in the holy spirit, [5]and
have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the coming age – [6]it's impossible to restore them again to repentance if they
fall away, since they are crucifying God's son all over again, on their own account, and holding him up to contempt. [7]You see,
when rain falls frequently on the earth, and the land drinks it up and produces a crop useful to the people for whom it's being
cultivated, it shares in God's blessing. [8]But if it produces thorns and thistles, it's useless, and not far off from being cursed. What
happens in the end is that it will be burned up.

Keep up the good work

[9]Even though we speak in this way, my dear people, we are confident that there are better things to be said about you, things that
point to salvation. [10]God is not unjust, after all – and he'd have to be if he forgot your work, and the love you showed for his
name, and all the service you have rendered and are still rendering to his holy people. [11]I want to encourage each one of you to
show the same energetic enthusiasm for the task of bringing your hope to its full, assured goal. [12]You mustn't become lazy. There
are people who are inheriting the promises through faith and patience, and you should copy them!

God's unchangeable promise

[13]When God was making his promise to Abraham, you see, he had nobody else greater than himself by whom he could swear, and
so he swore by himself, [14]with the words, 'I will most surely bless you, and multiply you very greatly.' [15]And so in this way
Abraham, after much patience, obtained the promise. [16]People regularly swear by someone greater than themselves, and in all
their disputes the oath confirms the matter and brings it to closure. [17]So when God wanted to show all the more clearly to the heirs
of the promise just how unchangeable his will was, he guaranteed it with an oath, [18]so that through two unchangeable things, in
which it is impossible that God should tell a lie, those of us who have come for refuge should have solid encouragement to take
hold of the hope which lies before us. [19]We have this hope like an anchor, secure, solid, and penetrating into the inner place

behind the curtain, [20]where Jesus has gone in ahead of us and on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Melchizedek, the great priest-king

7 For this Melchizedek, 'king of Salem, priest of the most high God, met Abraham as he was coming back after defeating the kings, and blessed him; [2]and Abraham portioned out to him a tenth of everything.'

To begin with, if you translate Melchizedek's name, it means 'king of righteousness'; then he is also 'king of Salem', which means 'king of peace'. [3]No mention is made of his father or mother or genealogy, nor of the beginning or end of his earthly life. He is described in a similar way to the son of God; and he continues as a priest for ever.

[4]Look and see what an exalted status he has. Abraham the patriarch gave him a tenth of the spoils! [5]Those of Levi's sons who receive the priesthood have a command to take tithes from the people according to the law – from, that is, their own brothers and sisters, although they, too, are physical descendants of Abraham. [6]But this man, who doesn't share their genealogy at all, received tithes from Abraham, and blessed the man who possessed the promises. [7]It is beyond all question that the lesser is blessed by the greater. [8]In the former case, mortal humans receive tithes; in the latter case, the one who received them was one of whom scripture declares that he is alive. [9]And, if I can put it like this, even Levi paid tithes through Abraham – Levi, the one who receives tithes! [10]He was still in his ancestor's loins, you see, when Melchizedek met him.

A new order of priesthood

[11]So, you see, if it had been possible to arrive at complete perfection through the Levitical priesthood (for the people received the law by that means), what further need would there have been to speak of another priesthood being established 'according to the order of Melchizedek', rather than 'according to the order of Aaron'? [12]Change the priesthood, after all, and you're bound to change the law – [13]especially when you consider that the one of whom these things are spoken comes from another tribe altogether, one from which nobody is recruited to serve at the altar. [14]It's obvious, isn't it, that our Lord was descended from Judah, and Moses never made any connection between that tribe and the priesthood.

[15]This is even clearer when another priest arises 'according to the order of Melchizedek', [16]who attains this rank not because of a law concerning physical descent but through the power of a life that cannot be destroyed. [17]What scripture says about him, after all, is, 'You are a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchizedek.' [18]What is happening here is that the previous commandment is being set aside. It was, after all, weak and useless; [19]the law brought nothing to perfection, did it? Instead, what appears is a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

The permanent priesthood of Jesus

[20]This is all the more so when you consider that an oath was sworn. The Levitical priests, you see, become priests without an oath, [21]but the Messiah attains his priesthood with an oath, through what was said to him:

> The Lord has sworn and will not repent; you are a priest for ever.

[22]Jesus has thus, additionally, become the guarantee of a better covenant.

[23]There needed to be a large number of Levitical priests, since they stop holding office at death. [24]But since he continues as a priest for ever, his priesthood is permanent. [25]That's why he is able to save those who come to God through him, completely and for ever – since he always lives to make intercession for them.

[26]It was appropriate that we should have a high priest like this. He is holy, without blame or stain, separated from sinners, and elevated high above the heavens. [27]He doesn't need (like the ordinary high priests do) to offer sacrifices every day, first for his own sins and then for those of the people. He did this once for all, you see, when he offered himself. [28]For the law appoints ordinary, weak, mortal men as high priests; but the word of the oath, which comes after the law, appoints the son, who has been made perfect for ever.

Better ministry, better covenant

8 The point of all this now appears. We have just such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the heavenly Majesty, [2]as a minister of the holy things and of the true Tabernacle, the one set up by God rather than by humans.

[3]Every high priest, you see, is appointed in order to offer gifts and sacrifices, which is why this one, too, must have something to offer. [4]If he were on earth, he wouldn't even be a priest, since there already are priests who make offerings in accordance with the law. [5]They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly realities, in line with what Moses was told, when he was getting ready to construct the Tabernacle: 'take care that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain'. [6]Now, you see, Jesus has obtained a vastly superior ministry. In the same way, he is the mediator of a better covenant, which is established on better promises.

The promise of a new covenant

[7]If the first covenant had been faultless, you see, there wouldn't have been any reason to look for a second one. [8]God finds fault with them when he says:

See, says the Lord, the days are coming,
when I will complete, with the house of Israel,
with Judah's house, also, a covenant that's new:
[9]not like the one which I made with their ancestors
on the day when I reached out and took them by the hand
to lead them away from the land of Egypt.
They didn't remain, after all, in my covenant,
and (says the Lord) I ceased to care for them.
[10]This is the covenant I will establish,
after those days with the house of Israel:
my laws will I place in their minds, says the Lord,
and write on their hearts; thus I shall be God
for all of them; they'll be my people indeed.
[11]No more will they need to teach their own neighbours,
or their brothers and sisters, to know me, the Lord;
for from least unto greatest, each one shall know me,
[12]For I shall be merciful to their injustices
and as for their sins, I'll forget them for ever.

[13]Thus, when it speaks of a new covenant, it puts the first one out of date. And something that is out of date, and growing old, is about to disappear.

The old Tabernacle points forward to the new

9 The first Tabernacle had, of course, its own regulations for worship, and it contained the earthly sanctuary. [2]A double tent was constructed. In the outer one was the lampstand, the table and the 'bread of the presence'. This is called 'the holy place'. [3]After the second curtain came the inner tent, called 'the holy of holies'. [4]This contained the golden altar, and the ark of the covenant, which was covered completely in gold. In the ark were the golden urn containing the manna, Aaron's rod that budded and the tablets of the covenant. [5]Above it were the cherubim of glory, which overshadowed the mercy seat. There is much we could say about all this, but now is not the time.

[6]With all these things in place, the priests continually go into the first Tabernacle in the ordinary course of their duties. [7]But only the high priest goes into the second Tabernacle, once every year, and he always takes blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people. [8]The holy spirit indicates by this that, as long as the original Tabernacle is still standing, the way is not yet open into the sanctuary.

[9]This is a picture, so to speak, of the present age. During this period, gifts and sacrifices are offered which have no power to perfect the conscience of those who come to worship. [10]They only deal with foods and drinks and various kinds of washings. These are regulations for the ordering of bodily life until the appointed time, the moment when everything will be put into proper order.

The sacrifice of the Messiah

[11]But when the Messiah arrived as high priest of the good things that were coming, he entered through the greater and much superior Tabernacle, not made with hands (that is, not of the present creation), [12]and not with the blood of goats and calves but with his own blood. He entered, once and for all, into the holy place, accomplishing a redemption that lasts for ever.

[13]If the blood of bulls and goats, you see, and the sprinkled ashes of a heifer, make people holy (in the sense of purifying their bodies) when they had been unclean, [14]how much more will the blood of the Messiah, who offered himself to God through the eternal spirit as a spotless sacrifice, cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God!

The purpose of the blood

[15]For this reason, Jesus is the mediator of the new covenant. The purpose was that those who are called should receive the promised inheritance of the age to come, since a death has occurred which provides redemption from transgressions committed under the first covenant.

[16]Where there is a covenant, you see, it is vital to establish the death of the one who made it. [17]A will laid down in covenant only takes effect after death; it has no validity during the lifetime of the one who made it. [18]That's why even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood. [19]For when every commandment had been read out to the people by Moses, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled the book itself and all the people, [20]saying, 'This is the blood of the covenant which God has made with you.' [21]Then, in the same way, he sprinkled the Tabernacle, and all the vessels used in worship, with blood. [22]In fact, more or less everything is purified with blood according to the law; there's no pardon without bloodshed!

The Messiah's work in the heavenly sanctuary

[23]That's why it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly objects to be purified in this way, while the heavenly things themselves require better sacrifices than these. [24]For the Messiah did not enter into a sanctuary made by human hands, the copy

and pattern of the heavenly one, but into the heavenly one itself, where he now appears in God's presence on our behalf.
[25]Nor did he intend to offer himself over and over again, in the same way as the high priest goes into the sanctuary year after year with blood that isn't his own. [26]Had that been the case, he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. Instead, he has appeared once, at the close of the ages, to put away sin by the sacrifice of his own self.
[27]Furthermore, just as it is laid down that humans have to die once, and after that comes judgment, [28]so the Messiah, having been offered once and for all to take away the sins of many, will appear a second time. This will no longer have anything to do with sin. It will be in order to save those who are eagerly awaiting him.

The stopping of the sacrifices

10 The law, you see, possesses a shadow of the good things that are coming, not the actual form of the things themselves. Thus it is unable to make worshippers perfect through the annual round of the same sacrifices which are continually being offered.
[2]If the worshippers really had been purified once and for all, they would no longer have sin on their consciences – so they would have stopped offering sacrifices, wouldn't they? [3]But, as it is, the sacrifices serve as a regular annual reminder of sins, [4]since it's impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take sins away.
[5]That's why, when the Messiah comes into the world, this is what he says:

You didn't want sacrifices and offerings;
instead, you've given me a body.
[6]You didn't like burnt offerings and sin-offerings;
[7]then I said, 'Look! Here I am!
This is what it says about me in the scroll, the book:
I've come, O God, to do your will.'

[8]When he says, earlier, 'you didn't want, and you didn't like, sacrifices, offerings, burnt offerings and sin-offerings' (all of which are offered in accordance with the law), [9]then he says, 'Look! I've come to do your will!' He takes away the first so that he can establish the second. [10]And it's by that 'will' that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus the Messiah, once for all.

The finished achievement of the Messiah

[11]Thus it comes about that every priest stands daily at his duty, offering over and over the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. [12]But Jesus offered a single sacrifice on behalf of sins, for all time, and then 'sat down at the right hand of God'. [13]From that moment on he is waiting 'until his enemies are made a stool for his feet'. [14]By a single sacrifice, you see, he has made perfect for ever those who are sanctified.
[15]The holy spirit bears witness to this too. For, after it is said,

[16]This is the covenant I will establish with them
after those days, says the Lord;
I will give them my laws in their hearts, and will write them
upon their minds,

then he adds:

[17]And I shan't ever remember
their sins and all their lawlessness.

[18]Where these are put away, there is no longer a sacrifice for sin.

So – come to worship!

[19]So then, my brothers and sisters, we have boldness to go into the sanctuary through the blood of Jesus. [20]He has inaugurated a brand new, living path through the curtain (that is, his earthly body). [21]We have a high priest who is over God's house. [22]Let us therefore come to worship, with a true heart, in complete assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.
[23]Let us hold on tightly to our confession of hope, without being diverted; the one who announced the message to us is trustworthy! [24]Let us, as well, stir up one another's minds to energetic effort in love and good works. [25]We mustn't do what some people have got into the habit of doing, neglecting to meet together. Instead, we must encourage one another, and all the more as you can see the great day coming closer.

Warning of judgment

[26]For if we sin deliberately and knowingly after having received the knowledge of the truth, there is no further sacrifice for sin. [27]Instead, there is a fearful prospect of judgment, and a hungry fire which will consume the opponents. [28]If someone sets aside the law of Moses, they are to be 'put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses', with no pity. [29]How much worse

punishment, do you think, will be appropriate for people who trample the son of God underfoot, and profane the blood of the covenant by which they were sanctified, and scorn the spirit of grace? [30]We know the one who said, 'Vengeance belongs to me; I will pay everyone back', and again, 'The Lord will judge his people.' [31]It's a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Suffering in hope

[32]But remember the earlier times! When you were first enlightened, you went through great struggles and suffering. [33]Sometimes you were exposed to public reproach and physical abuse. Sometimes you stood alongside people who were being treated in that way. [34]You even shared the sufferings of those who were imprisoned. When people looted your property, you actually welcomed it joyfully, because you knew that you had a better possession, a lasting one.
[35]So don't throw away your confidence. It carries a great reward. [36]What you need is patience, you see; then, when you've done what God wants, you will receive the promise.

[37]For in just a little while from now,
the Coming One will come, and won't delay;
[38]but my righteous one will live by faith;
and if he hesitates, my soul will not delight in him.
[39]We are not among the hesitators, who are destroyed! We are people of faith, and our lives will be kept safe.

What faith really means

11 What then is faith? It is what gives assurance to our hopes; it is what gives us conviction about things we can't see. [2]It is what the men and women of old were famous for. [3]It is by faith that we understand that the worlds were formed by God's word; in other words, that the visible world was not made from visible things.
[4]It was by faith that Abel offered a better sacrifice to God than Cain. That earned him the testimony that he was in the right, since God himself bore witness in relation to his gifts. Through faith, he still speaks, even though he's dead. [5]It was by faith that Enoch was taken up so that he wouldn't see death; nobody could find him, because God took him up. Before he was taken up, you see, it had been said of him that 'he had pleased God'. [6]And without faith it's impossible to please God; for those who come to worship God must believe that he really does exist, and that he rewards those who seek him.

Faith and the future: Noah, Abraham, Sarah

[7]It was by faith that Noah, who had been warned by God about things that were not yet seen, took the warning seriously and built an ark to save his household. He thus put the rest of the world in the wrong, and became heir to the righteous standing which accords with faith.
[8]It was by faith that Abraham, when God called him, obeyed and went out to a place where he was to receive an inheritance. Off he went, not knowing where he was going. [9]It was by faith that he stayed in the promised land as a stranger, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, who were joint heirs of the same promise. [10]He was looking ahead, you see, to the city which has foundations, the city of which God is the designer and builder.
[11]It was by faith that Sarah herself, who was barren, received the ability to conceive a child even when long past the right age, since she considered that God, who had promised, was trustworthy. [12]Thus it came about that from one man, and him more or less dead, there was born a family as many as the stars of heaven in number, as uncountable as the sand on the seashore.

Faith that looks beyond death

[13]All these people died in faith. They hadn't received the promise, but they had seen it from far off, and had greeted it, and had recognized that they were strangers and wanderers in the land. [14]People who say that sort of thing, you see, make it clear that they are looking for a homeland. [15]Had they been thinking of the place from which they had set out, they would have had plenty of opportunity to go back to it. [16]But as it was they were longing for a better place, a heavenly one. That's why God is not ashamed to be called 'their God', since he has prepared a city for them.
[17]It was by faith that Abraham, when he was put to the test, offered up Isaac; yes, Abraham, who had received the promise, was in the very act of offering up his only son, [18]the one about whom it had been said that 'In Isaac shall your family be named'. [19]He reckoned that God was capable of raising him even from the dead; and, in one sense, he did indeed receive him back from there.
[20]It was by faith in the things that were to come that Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau. [21]It was by faith that, when Jacob was dying, he blessed the two sons of Joseph, and 'worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff'. [22]It was by faith that, when Joseph was coming to the end, he spoke about the exodus of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his own bones.

Faith and the future: Moses and the exodus

[23]It was by faith that, when Moses was born, he was hidden for three months by his parents. They saw that the child was beautiful, and they weren't afraid of the king's orders. [24]It was by faith that Moses, when he grew up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, [25]preferring to suffer hardship along with God's people than to enjoy the short-term pleasures of sin. [26]He reckoned that reproach suffered for the Messiah was worth more than all the treasures of Egypt; he was looking ahead to the

reward.
[27]It was by faith that he left Egypt, without fear of Pharaoh's anger; he kept the invisible one constantly before his eyes. [28]It was by faith that he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn wouldn't touch them. [29]It was by faith that they crossed the Red Sea as though they were on dry ground, while the Egyptians, when they tried to do the same, were drowned. [30]It was by faith that the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. [31]It was by faith that the prostitute Rahab was not destroyed along with those who didn't believe; she had welcomed the spies in peace.

Faith and the future: the great crowd

[32]What more can I say, then? I've run out of time to tell you about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets. [33]It was through faith that they overcame kingdoms, put justice into practice, received promises, shut the mouths of lions, [34]quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were strong where they had been weak, became powerful in battle, and sent foreign armies packing. [35]Women received their dead by resurrection; others were tortured, not accepting release, so that they might receive a better resurrection. [36]Others again experienced painful derision and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment; [37]they were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were put to the sword, they went about in sheepskins or goat-hides, they were destitute, they were persecuted, they were ill-treated – [38]the world didn't deserve them! – and they wandered in deserts and mountains, in caves and holes in the ground.
[39]All these people gained a reputation for their faith; but they didn't receive the promise. [40]God was providing something better for us, so that they wouldn't reach perfection without our doing so as well.

Looking to Jesus

12 What about us, then? We have such a great cloud of witnesses all around us! What we must do is this: we must put aside each heavy weight, and the sin which gets in the way so easily. We must run the race that lies in front of us, and we must run it patiently. [2]We must look ahead, to Jesus. He is the one who carved out the path for faith, and he's the one who brought it to completion.
He knew that there was joy spread out and waiting for him. That's why he endured the cross, making light of its shame, and has now taken his seat at the right hand of God's throne. [3]He put up with enormous opposition from sinners. Weigh up in your minds just how severe it was; then you won't find yourselves getting weary and worn out.

Christian suffering is God's discipline

[4]You have been struggling against sin, but your resistance hasn't yet cost you any blood. [5]And perhaps you have forgotten the word of exhortation which speaks to you as God's children:

> My child, don't make light of the Lord's rebuke,
> or grow weary when he takes issue with you;
> [6]for the Lord disciplines those whom he loves,
> and chastises every child he welcomes.

[7]You must be patient with discipline. God is dealing with you as his sons and daughters. What child is there that the parent doesn't discipline? [8]If you are left without discipline (we've all had our fair share of it!), you are illegitimate, and not true children. [9]After all, we had earthly parents who disciplined us, and we respected them; shouldn't we much rather submit ourselves to the father of spirits, and live? [10]Our earthly parents disciplined us for a little while, as they judged best; but when he disciplines us it's for our advantage. It is so that we may share his holiness. [11]No discipline seems to bring joy at the time, but only sorrow. Later, though, it produces fruit, the peaceful fruit of righteousness, for those who are trained by it.

Watch out for dangers!

[12]So stop letting your hands go slack, and get some energy into your sagging knees! [13]Make straight paths for your feet. If you're lame, make sure you get healed instead of being put out of joint. [14]Follow after peace with everyone, and the holiness which is necessary before you can see the Lord. [15]Take good care that nobody lacks God's grace; don't let any 'root of bitterness spring up to cause trouble', defiling many people. [16]No one must be immoral or worldly-minded, like Esau: he sold his birthright for a single meal! [17]You know, don't you, that later on, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected. There was no way he could change either his mind or Isaac's, even though he wept bitterly in trying to do so.

From Mount Sinai to Mount Zion

[18]You haven't come, after all, to something that can be touched – a blazing fire, darkness, gloom and whirlwind, [19]the sound of a trumpet and a voice speaking words which the hearers begged not to have to listen to any more. [20](They couldn't bear the command that 'if even a beast touches the mountain, it must be stoned'.) [21]The sight was so terrifying that even Moses said, 'I'm trembling with fear.'
[22]No: you have come to Mount Zion – to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to where thousands and thousands of angels are gathered for a festival; [23]to the assembly of the firstborn, whose names are written in

heaven. You have come to God the judge of all, to the spirits of righteous people who have been made perfect, [24]and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood which has better words to say than the blood of Abel.

The kingdom that cannot be shaken

[25]Take care that you don't refuse the one who is speaking. For if people didn't escape when they rejected the one who gave them earthly warnings, how much more if we turn away from the one who speaks from heaven! [26]At that point, his voice shook the earth; but now he has issued a promise in the following words: 'One more time I will shake not only the earth but heaven as well.' [27]The phrase 'one more time' shows that the things that are to be shaken (that is, the created things) will be taken away, so that the things that cannot be shaken will remain.

[28]Well, then: we are to receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken! This calls for gratitude! That's how to offer God true and acceptable worship, reverently and with fear. [29]Our God, you see, is a devouring fire.

The practical life of God's people

13 Let the family continue to care for one another. [2]Don't forget to be hospitable; by that means, some people have entertained angels without realizing it. [3]Remember people in prison, as though you were in prison with them. When you think of people who are having a difficult time, remember that you too live in a frail body.

[4]Let marriage be honoured by everyone; let the marriage bed remain undefiled. God will judge those who misbehave sexually or commit adultery.

[5]Keep your life free from love of money; be content with what you have. He himself has said, after all, 'I will never, ever, leave you or forsake you.' [6]That's why we can be cheerfully confident, and say, 'The Lord is helping me; I'm not going to be afraid; what can anyone do to me?'

[7]Remember your leaders, who spoke God's word to you. Look carefully at how their lives came to complete fruition, and imitate their faith. [8]Jesus the Messiah is the same, yesterday, today and for ever.

Outside the old city, seeking the new

[9]Don't let yourselves be carried off by strange teachings of whatever sort. The heart needs to be strengthened by grace, you see, not by rules about what to eat, which don't do any good to those who observe them.

[10]We have an altar from which those who minister in the Tabernacle are not allowed to eat. [11]For the bodies of the animals whose blood is taken into the sanctuary by the high priest as a sin-offering are burned outside the camp. [12]That's why Jesus too suffered outside the gate, so that he might make the people holy with his own blood. [13]So, then, let's go out to him, outside the camp, bearing his shame. [14]Here, you see, we have no city that lasts; we are looking for the one that is still to come.

[15]Our part, then, is this: to bring, through him, a continual sacrifice of praise to God – that is, mouths that confess his name, and do so fruitfully. [16]Don't neglect to do good, and to let 'fellowship' mean what it says. God really enjoys sacrifices of that kind!

The God of peace be with you

[17]Obey your leaders; submit to them. They are keeping watch over your lives, you see, as people who will have to give account. Make sure they can do this with joy, not with a groan as a burden. That would be of no value to you.

[18]Pray for us! Our conscience is clear; we are quite sure of it. We wish to act appropriately in everything. [19]I beg you especially to do this, so that I may quickly be restored to you.

[20]May the God of peace, who led up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the eternal covenant, [21]make you complete in every good work so that you may do his will. May he perform, in you, whatever will be pleasing in his sight, through Jesus the Messiah. Glory be to him for ever and ever, Amen!

[22]I beg you, my dear family, bear with this word of exhortation; I've written to you quite briefly, after all. [23]You should know that our brother Timothy has been released. If he comes soon, I will see you and him at the same time.

[24]Greet all your leaders, and all God's people. Those from Italy send you greetings. [25]Grace be with you all.

James

‘James’ is the modern form of ‘Jacob’, and hence a popular Jewish name. The author may well be the brother of Jesus, the undisputed leader of the Jerusalem church until his death (at the hands of hardline activists) in AD 62. It urges a new standard of life on the followers of Jesus: ‘the royal law’ (2.8), ‘the law of freedom’ (1.25; 2.12), which consists of love in action, keeping the tongue under control, and looking ahead to a coming judgment in which the rich oppressors will be overthrown and the poor vindicated (1.9–11; 2.1–13; 5.1–6). James echoes Jesus’ teaching at various points, particularly some elements of the Sermon on the Mount, and functions as the New Testament’s rough equivalent of the book of Proverbs: short, pithy sayings which confront the hearer with a strikingly new way of life, urging a genuine ‘wisdom’ (1.5–8) which will enable the believer to see to the heart of reality and so live accordingly.

James is particularly concerned with putting into practice the truths to which the community gives outward assent. They are to be ‘people who do the word, not merely people who hear it and deceive themselves’ (1.22). This has to show up in their practice of welcoming all and sundry to worship, not discriminating in favour of the rich (2.1–7). The central statement of ‘doing the word’, though, comes in James’s emphatic holding together of ‘faith’ and ‘works’ (2.14–26), which some have seen as a riposte to Paul’s doctrine of ‘justification by faith’. Closer inspection shows that what James means by ‘faith’ is not the rich personal ‘faith’ at the heart of Paul’s teaching, but simply a bare intellectual assent to monotheism (‘God is one’) – a ‘faith’, as he points out, shared by the demons. And what he means by ‘works’ is not, as in Paul, the performance of the Jewish law, designed to bolster Jewish privilege, but the acts of love, particularly to those in need, which demonstrate a living faith in the loving God. Such ‘works’ are the very opposite of outward show. They display the inner reality.

That inner reality is to be displayed as well through wise, disciplined speech (3.1–12). As Jesus had warned, the mouth reveals the state of the heart. This warning opens up a wider challenge: do you want to be a friend of the world or a friend of God? You cannot be both (4.1–10), and to recognize this is a call to fresh submission and humble penitence. James ends with a call to patience and prayer: ‘make your hearts strong, because the appearing of the Lord is near at hand’ (5.8). The patience of Job, and the prayer of Elijah, root this appeal in scripture (5.11, 17). The severe practicality of this letter is a reminder, in almost every verse, that following Jesus is all about God’s will coming true in the details of earthly life, not merely in a detached spirituality or a distant heaven.

The challenge of faith

1 James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus the Messiah, to the twelve dispersed tribes: greeting.

[2]My dear family, when you find yourselves tumbling into various trials and tribulations, learn to look at it with complete joy, [3]because you know that, when your faith is put to the test, what comes out is patience. [4]What’s more, you must let patience have its complete effect, so that you may be complete and whole, not falling short in anything.

[5]If any one of you falls short in wisdom, they should ask God for it, and it will be given them. God, after all, gives generously and ungrudgingly to all people. [6]But they should ask in faith, with no doubts. A person who doubts is like a wave of the sea which the wind blows and tosses about. [7]Someone like that should not suppose they will receive anything from the Lord, [8]since they are double-minded and unstable in everything they do.

The snares of the world and the gift of God

[9]Brothers and sisters who find themselves impoverished should celebrate the fact that they have risen to this height – [10]and those who are rich that they are brought down low, since the rich will disappear like a wild flower. [11]You see, the rich will be like the grass: when the sun rises with its scorching heat, it withers the grass so that its flower droops and all its fine appearance comes to nothing. That’s what it will be like when the rich wither away in the midst of their busy lives.

[12]God’s blessing on the man who endures testing! When he has passed the test, he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. [13]Nobody being tested should say, ‘It’s God that’s testing me’, for God cannot be tested by evil, and he himself tests nobody. [14]Rather, each person is tested when they are dragged off and enticed by their own desires. [15]Then desire, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin; and when sin reaches maturity it gives birth to death.

[16]Don’t be deceived, my dear family. [17]Every good gift, every perfect gift, comes down from above, from the father of lights. His steady light doesn’t vary. It doesn’t change and produce shadows. [18]He became our father by the word of truth; that was his firm decision, and the result is that we are a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

The word that goes to work

[19]So, my dear brothers and sisters, get this straight. Every person should be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. [20]Human anger, you see, doesn’t produce God’s justice! [21]So put away everything that is sordid, all that overflowing malice, and humbly receive the word which has been planted within you and which has the power to rescue your lives.

[22]But be people who do the word, not merely people who hear it and deceive themselves. [23]Someone who hears the word but doesn’t do it, you see, is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror. [24]He notices himself, but then he goes away and quickly forgets what he looked like. [25]But the person who looks into the perfect law of freedom, and goes on with it, not being a hearer who forgets but a doer who does the deed – such a person is blessed in their doing.

[26]If anyone supposes that they are devout, and does not control their tongue, but rather deceives their heart – such a person’s devotion is futile. [27]As far as God the father is concerned, pure, unsullied devotion works like this: you should visit orphans and

widows in their sorrow, and prevent the world leaving its dirty smudge on you.

No favourites!

2 My brothers and sisters, as you practise the faith of our Lord Jesus, the anointed King of glory, you must do so without
favouritism. [2]What I mean is this: if someone comes into your assembly wearing gold rings, all dressed up, and a poor
person comes in wearing shabby clothes, [3]you cast your eyes over the person wearing fine clothes and say, 'Please! Have a seat up
here!' but then you turn to the poor person and say, 'Stand there!' or, 'Get down there by my footstool!' [4]When you do this, are
you not discriminating among yourselves? Are you not turning into judges with evil thoughts? [5]Listen, my dear brothers and
sisters. Isn't it the case that God has chosen the poor (as the world sees it) to be rich in faith, and to inherit the kingdom which he
has promised to those who love him? [6]But you have dishonoured the poor man. After all, who are the rich? The rich are the ones
who lord it over you and drag you into court, aren't they? [7]The rich are the ones who blaspheme the wonderful name which has
been pronounced over you, aren't they?
[8]Supposing, however, you keep the royal law, as it is written, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'; if you do this, you
will do well. [9]But if you show favouritism, you are committing sin, and you will be convicted by the law as a lawbreaker.
[10]Anyone who keeps the whole law, you see, but fails in one point, has become guilty of all of it. [11]For the one who said, 'Do not
commit adultery', also said, 'Do not murder.' So if you do not commit adultery, but do murder, you have become a lawbreaker.
[12]Speak and act in such a way as people who are going to be judged by the law of freedom. [13]Judgment is without mercy, you see,
for those who have shown no mercy. But mercy triumphs over judgment.

Faith and works

[14]What use is it, my dear family, if someone says they have faith when they don't have works? Can faith save such a person?
[15]Supposing a brother or sister is without clothing, and is short even of daily food, [16]and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; be
warm, be full!' – but doesn't give them what their bodies need – what use is that? [17]In the same way, faith, all by itself and
without works, is dead.
[18]But supposing someone says, 'Well: you have faith, and I have works.' All right: show me your faith – but without doing any
works; and then I will show you *my* faith, and I'll do it by my works! [19]You believe that 'God is one'? Well and good! The
demons believe that, too, and they tremble! [20]Do you want to know, you stupid person, that faith without works is lifeless?
[21]Wasn't Abraham our father justified by his works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? [22]You can see from this that
faith was cooperating along with the works, and the faith reached its fulfilment through the works. [23]That is how the scripture was
fulfilled which says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness', and he was called 'God's friend'.
[24]So you see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. [25]In the same way, wasn't Rahab the prostitute justified by
works when she gave shelter to the spies and sent them off by another road? [26]Just as the body without the spirit is dead, you see,
so faith without works is dead.

Taming the tongue

3 Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters; you know that we will be judged more severely. [2]All of
us make many mistakes, after all. If anyone makes no mistakes in what they say, such a person is a fully complete human
being, capable of keeping firm control over the whole body as well. [3]We put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us,
and then we can direct their whole bodies. [4]Consider, too, the case of large ships; it takes strong winds to blow them along, but
one small rudder will turn them whichever way the helmsman desires and decides. [5]In the same way, the tongue is a little member
but boasts great things. See how small a fire it takes to set a large forest ablaze! [6]And the tongue *is* a fire. The tongue is a world of
injustice, with its place established right there among our members. It defiles the whole body; it sets the wheel of nature ablaze,
and is itself set ablaze by hell. [7]Every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, you see, can be tamed, and has been
tamed, by humans. [8]But no single human is able to tame the tongue. It is an irrepressible evil, full of deadly poison. [9]By it we
bless the Lord and father; and by it we curse humans who are made in God's likeness! [10]Blessing and curses come out of the same
mouth! My dear family, it isn't right that it should be like that. [11]Does a spring put out both sweet and bitter water from the same
source? [12]Dear friends, can a fig tree bear olives, or a vine bear figs? Nor can salt water yield fresh.

True and false wisdom

[13]Who is wise and discerning among you? Such a person should, by their upright behaviour, display their works in the humility of
wisdom. [14]But if you have bitter jealousy and contention in your hearts, don't boast, and tell lies against the truth. [15]This isn't the
wisdom that comes from above. It is earthly, merely human, coming from the world of demons. [16]For where there is jealousy and
contention, there you will get unruly behaviour and every kind of evil practice. [17]But the wisdom that comes from above is first
holy, then peaceful, gentle, compliant, filled with mercy and good fruits, unbiased, sincere. [18]And the fruit of righteousness is
sown in peace by those who make peace.

Humility and faith

Where do wars come from? Why do people among you fight? It all comes from within, doesn't it – from your desires for pleasure

which make war in your members. [2]You want something and you haven't got it, so you murder someone. You long to possess
4 something, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war. The reason you don't have it is because you don't ask for it! [3]And when you do ask, you don't get it, because you ask wrongly, intending to spend it on your pleasures. [4]Adulterers! Don't you know that to be friends with the world means being enemies with God? So anyone who wants to be friends with the world is setting themselves up as God's enemy. [5]Or do you suppose that when the Bible says, 'He yearns jealously over the spirit he has made to dwell in us', it doesn't mean what it says?

[6]But God gives more grace; so it says, 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.' [7]Submit to God, then; resist the devil and he will run away from you. [8]Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Make your hands clean, you sinners; and make your hearts pure, you double-minded lot. [9]Make yourselves wretched; mourn and weep. Let your laughter turn to mourning, and your joy to sorrow. [10]Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

Living by trust in God

[11]Do not speak evil against one another, my dear family. Anyone who speaks evil against another family member, or passes judgment against them, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge! [12]There is one lawgiver, one judge who can rescue or destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbour?

[13]Now look here, you people who say, 'Today, or tomorrow, we will go to such-and-such a town and spend a year there, and trade, and make some money.' [14]You have no idea what the next day will bring. What is your life? You are a mist which appears for a little while and then disappears again. [15]Instead, you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live, and we shall do this, or that.' [16]But, as it is, you boast in your pride. All such boasting is evil. [17]So then, if anyone knows the right thing to do, but doesn't do it, it becomes sin for them.

Warnings to the rich

5 Now look here, you rich! Weep and wail for the horrible things that are going to happen to you! [2]Your riches have rotted, and your clothes have become moth-eaten, [3]your gold and your silver have rusted, and their rust will bear witness against you and will eat up your flesh like fire. You have stored up riches in the last days! [4]Look: you cheated the workers who mowed your fields by keeping back their wages, and those wages are crying out! The cries of the farm workers have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. [5]You have lived off the fat of the land, in the lap of luxury. You have fattened your own hearts on a day of slaughter. [6]You have condemned the Righteous One and killed him, and he doesn't resist you.

Patience and trust

[7]So be patient, my brothers and sisters, for the appearing of the Lord. You know how the farmer waits for the valuable crop to come up from the ground. He is patient over it, waiting for it to receive the early rain and then the late rain. [8]In the same way, you must be patient, and make your hearts strong, because the appearing of the Lord is near at hand. [9]Don't grumble against one another, my brothers and sisters, so that you may not be judged. Look – the judge is standing at the gates! [10]Consider the prophets, my brothers and sisters, who spoke in the name of the Lord. Take them as an example of longsuffering and patience. [11]When people endure, we call them 'blessed by God'. Well, you have heard of the endurance of Job; and you saw the Lord's ultimate purpose. The Lord is deeply compassionate and kindly.

[12]Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear. Don't swear by heaven; don't swear by earth; don't use any other oaths. Let your 'Yes' be 'Yes' and your 'No' be 'No'. That way, you will not fall under judgment.

Praying in faith

[13]Are any among you suffering? Let them pray. Are any cheerful? Let them sing psalms. [14]Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church, and they should pray over the sick person, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. [15]Faithful prayer will rescue the sick person, and the Lord will raise them up. If they have committed any sin, it will be forgiven them. [16]So confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.

When a righteous person prays, that prayer carries great power. [17]Elijah was a man with passions like ours, and he prayed and prayed that it might not rain – and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. [18]Then he prayed again, the sky gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

[19]My dear family, if someone in your company has wandered from the truth, and someone turns them back, [20]know this: the one who turns back a sinner from wandering off into error will rescue that person's life from death, and cover a multitude of sins.

1 Peter

Opinion divides on the authorship of 1 Peter and 2 Peter, with many supposing that Peter himself is the author of the first letter while most cast doubt on the second.

First Peter, with many echoes of Paul, and rich exposition of scripture, addresses situations of persecution. The early Christians may have supposed that after Jesus' death and resurrection they would not themselves have to suffer, but Peter explains that the opposite is the truth: the victory won through Jesus' own suffering will now be implemented through the suffering of Jesus' people. This is coupled with the intense and glorious joy of belonging to the Jesus whom they love, and for whose final revelation they long (1.7–9). Peter introduces the later scriptural expositions by explaining that the ancient prophets had looked ahead, aware that God's purposes would be fulfilled in quite new events yet to come (1.10–12). This new age has now been inaugurated through the Messiah, the true Passover lamb, and through the powerful 'word' of the gospel which, unlike anything on offer in the rest of creation, will last for ever (1.18–25).

This leads to a classic statement of the church's identity, mixing biblically rooted metaphors: newborn babies in God's new world (2.1–3), a 'spiritual house' made of 'living stones', a 'holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices' (2.4–5), built on Jesus himself, the 'precious cornerstone' promised in Isaiah (2.5–6). The community called into existence around the Messiah thus inherits the promises of Exodus 19 ('a royal priesthood') and Hosea 1 ('once you were "no people"; now you are "God's people"', 2.9–10). The result is that the church must learn to navigate the challenges of being a new kind of community, expecting to be vilified by those who don't understand what is going on but none the less living honourably and with restraint, following the example of Jesus himself in patiently enduring the suffering that will come. Social and civic behaviour must give no extra cause for blame; the Christian refusal to worship the local gods, and to go along with the concomitant behaviour, would bring blame enough (4.1–6). They are to live as citizens of the new creation, patiently awaiting the moment when the Messiah's glory will be revealed (4.13).

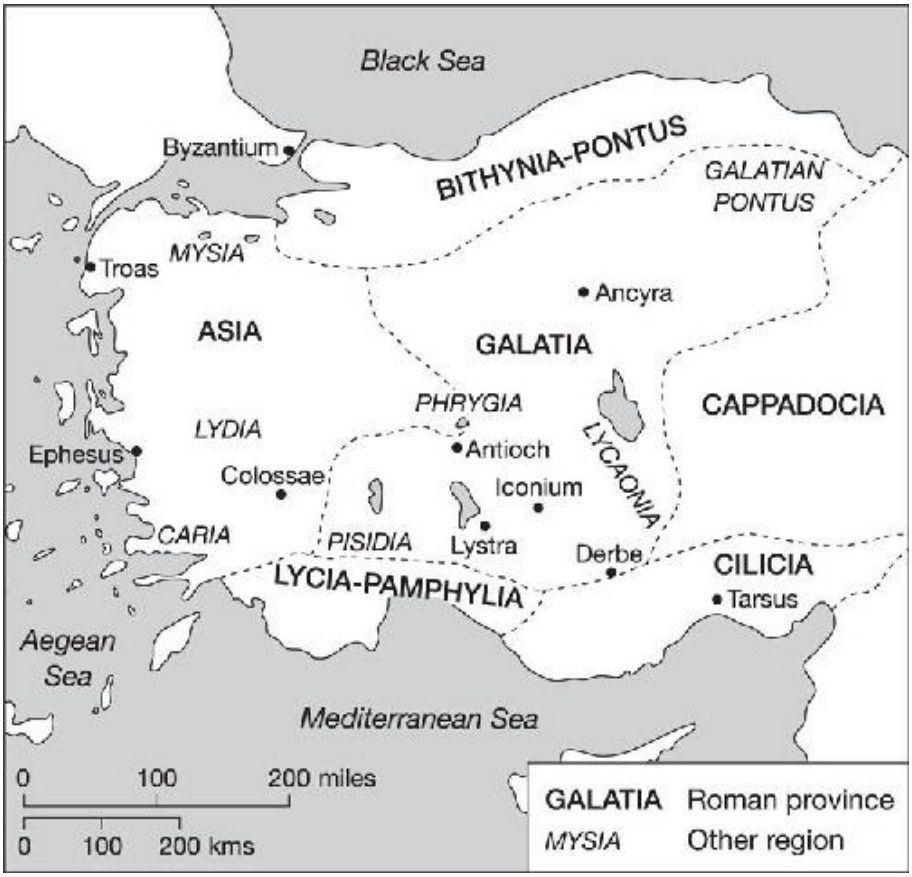
The letter ends with an exhortation to leaders in the church. Here again the example of Jesus himself, the 'chief shepherd' (5.4), is paramount. All will need the combination of promise and warning in 5.7–9: we can throw all our cares upon God, who cares about us, but at the same time we must be aware that the devil 'is stalking around like a roaring lion', and must be resisted, trusting that God will 'establish and strengthen you' (5.10). The letter offers a sharp, vivid, scripturally rooted picture of what it means to live in the tension between the new world that has been launched with Jesus' death and resurrection and the old world that will fail to understand this new movement and will react with hostility. This challenge is as urgently necessary in today's world as it was in Peter's day.

Genuine faith and sure hope

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus the Messiah, to God's chosen ones who live as foreigners among the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia,
Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, [2]who have been set aside in advance by God the father, through the sanctification of the
spirit, for obedience and for sprinkling with the blood of Jesus the Messiah. May grace and peace be poured out lavishly on you!

[3]May God be blessed, God the father of our Lord Jesus the Messiah! His mercy is abundant, and so he has become our father in
a second birth into a living hope through the resurrection from the dead of Jesus the Messiah. [4]This has brought us into an
incorruptible inheritance, which nothing can stain or diminish. At the moment it is kept safe for you in the heavens, [5]while you are
being kept safe by God's power, through faith, for a rescue that is all ready and waiting to be revealed in the final time.

[6]That is why you celebrate! Yes, it may well be necessary that, for a while, you may have to suffer trials and tests of all sorts.
[7]But this is so that the true value of your faith may be discovered. It is worth more than gold, which is tested by fire even though it
can be destroyed. The result will be praise, glory and honour when Jesus the Messiah is revealed. [8]You love him, even though
you've never seen him. And even though you don't see him, you believe in him, and celebrate with a glorified joy that goes
beyond anything words can say, [9]since you are receiving the proper goal of your faith, namely, the rescue of your lives.



1 Peter 1.1

Ransomed by grace

[10]The prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be given to you searched and enquired about this rescue. [11]They asked what sort of time it would be, the time that the Messiah's spirit within them was indicating when speaking of the Messiah's sufferings and subsequent glory. [12]It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, when they were ministering these things – things which have now been announced to you by the holy spirit who was sent from heaven, through those who preached the good news to you. The angels long to gaze on these things!

[13]So fasten your belts – the belts of your minds! Keep yourselves under control. Set your hope completely on the grace that will be given you when Jesus the Messiah is revealed. [14]As children of obedience, don't be squashed into the shape of the passions you used to indulge when you were still in ignorance. [15]Rather, just as the one who called you is holy, so be holy yourselves, in every aspect of behaviour. [16]It is written, you see, 'Be holy, for I am holy.' [17]If you call on God as 'father' – the God, that is, who judges everyone impartially according to their work – behave with holy fear throughout the time in which you are resident here.

[18]You know, after all, that you were ransomed from the futile practices inherited from your ancestors, and that this ransom came not through perishable things like gold or silver, [19]but through the precious blood of the Messiah, like a lamb without spot or blemish. [20]He was destined for this from before the foundation of the world, and appeared at the end of the times for your sake, [21]for you (that is) who through him believe in the God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Newborn babies

[22]Once your lives have been purified by obeying the truth, resulting in a sincere love for all your fellow believers, love one another eagerly, from a pure heart. [23]You have been born again, not from seed which decays but from seed which does not – through the living and abiding word of God. [24]Because, you see –

All flesh is like grass
and all its glory is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, and the flower falls
[25]but the word of the Lord lasts for ever.

That is the word that was announced to you.

2 So put away all evil, all deceitful, hateful malice, and all ill-speaking. [2]As newborn babies, long for the spiritual milk, the real stuff, not watered down. That is what will make you grow up to salvation – [3]if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

The living stone

4Come to him, to that living stone. Humans rejected him, but God chose him and values him very highly! 5Like living stones yourselves, you are being built up into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices that will be well pleasing to God through Jesus the Messiah.
6That's why it stands in scripture:

Look! I'm setting up in Zion
a chosen, precious cornerstone;
believe in him! You'll not be ashamed.

7He is indeed precious for you believers. But when people don't believe, 'the stone which the builders rejected has become the head cornerstone', 8and 'a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence'. They stumble as they disobey the word, which indeed was their destiny. 9But you are a 'chosen race; a royal priesthood'; a holy nation; a people for God's possession. Your purpose is to announce the virtuous deeds of the one who called you out of darkness into his amazing light. 10Once you were 'no people'; now you are 'God's people'. Once you had not received mercy; now you have received mercy.

Living in a pagan world

11My beloved ones, I beg you – strangers and resident aliens as you are – to hold back from the fleshly desires that wage war against your true lives. 12Keep up good conduct among the pagans, so that when they speak against you as evildoers they will observe your good deeds and praise God on the day of his royal arrival.
13Be subject to every human institution, for the sake of the Lord: whether to the emperor as supreme, 14or to governors as sent by him to punish evildoers and praise those who do good. 15This, you see, is God's will. He wants you to behave well and so to silence foolish and ignorant people. 16Live as free people (though don't use your freedom as a veil to hide evil!), but as slaves of God. 17Do honour to all people; love the family; reverence God; honour the emperor.

Suffering as the Messiah did

18Let slaves obey their masters with all respect, not only the good and kind ones but also the unkind ones. 19It is to your credit, you see, if because of a godly conscience you put up with unjust and painful suffering. 20After all, what credit is it if you do something wrong, are beaten for it, and take it patiently? But if you do what is right, suffer for it, and bear it patiently, this is to your credit before God.
21This, after all, is what came with the terms of your call, because

the Messiah, too, suffered on your behalf,
leaving behind a pattern for you
so that you should follow the way he walked.
22He committed no sin,
nor was there any deceit in his mouth.
23When he was insulted, he didn't insult in return,
when he suffered, he didn't threaten,
but he gave himself up to the one who judges justly.
24He himself bore our sins
in his body on the cross,
so that we might be free from sins
and live for righteousness.
It is by his wound that you are healed.
25For you were going astray like sheep,
but now you have returned to the shepherd
and guardian of your true lives.

Marriage and its challenges

3 In the same way, let me say a word to the women. You should be subject to your husbands, so that if there should be some who disobey the word, they may be won, without a word, through the behaviour of their wives, 2as they notice you conducting yourselves with reverence and purity. 3The beauty you should strive for ought not to be the external sort – elaborate hairdressing, gold trinkets, fine clothes! 4Rather, true beauty is the secret beauty of the heart, of a sincere, gentle and quiet spirit. That is very precious to God. 5That is how the holy women of old, who hoped in God, used to make themselves beautiful in submission to their husbands. 6Take Sarah, for instance, who obeyed Abraham and called him 'Master'. You are her children if you do good and have no fear of intimidation.
7You men, in the same way, think out how to live with your wives. Yes, they are physically weaker than you, but they deserve full respect. They are heirs of the grace of life, just the same as you. That way nothing will obstruct your prayers.

The new way of life

[8]The aim of this is for you all to be like-minded, sympathetic and loving to one another, tender-hearted and humble. [9]Don't repay evil for evil, or slander for slander, but rather say a blessing. This is what you were called to, so that you may inherit a blessing.

[10]For the one who wants to love life and see good days
should guard the tongue from evil, and the lips from speaking deceit;
[11]should turn away from evil and do good;
should seek peace, and follow after it.
[12]For the Lord's eyes are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer,
but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.

[13]Who is there, then, to harm you if you are eager to do what is right? [14]But if you do suffer because of your righteous behaviour, God's blessing is upon you! 'Don't fear what they fear; don't be disturbed.' [15]Sanctify the Messiah as Lord in your hearts, and always be ready to make a reply to anyone who asks you to explain the hope that is in you. [16]Do it, though, with gentleness and respect. Hold on to a good conscience, so that when people revile your good behaviour in the Messiah they may be ashamed.

Suffering for doing right

[17]It's better to suffer for good conduct (if God so wills it) than for bad. [18]For the Messiah, too, suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, so that he might bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the spirit. [19]In the spirit, too, he went and made the proclamation to the spirits in prison [20]who had earlier on been disobedient during the days of Noah, when God waited in patience. Noah built the ark, in which a few people, eight in fact, were rescued through water. [21]That functions as a signpost for you, pointing to baptism, which now rescues you – not by washing away fleshly pollution, but by the appeal to God of a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus the Messiah. [22]He has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand, with angels, authorities and powers subject to him.

Transformed living

4 So, then, just as the Messiah suffered in the flesh, you too must equip yourselves with the same mental armour. Someone who suffers in the flesh has ceased from sin, [2]so as to live the rest of their mortal life no longer according to human desires but according to God's will. [3]Pagan ways of life have had quite enough of your time already, and you should put all that behind you for good – all that uncleanness, passion, drunkenness, excessive feasting, drinking-parties and lawless idolatry. [4]People are shocked that you don't now join in with the same wild and reckless behaviour, and so they call down curses on you. [5]But they will have to account for it before the one who is ready to judge the living and the dead. [6]That is why, you see, the gospel was preached even to the dead, so that, being judged in human fashion, in the flesh, they might live in God's fashion, in the spirit.

[7]The end of all things is upon us. You must keep sober, then, and self-disciplined for your prayers. [8]Above all, keep absolutely firm in your love for one another, because 'love covers a multitude of sins'. [9]Be hospitable to one another without complaining. [10]Just as each of you has received a gift, so you should use it for ministry one to another, as good stewards of God's many-sided grace. [11]If anyone speaks, they should do so as speaking God's oracles. If anyone ministers, they should do it as in the strength which God grants, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus the Messiah, to whom be glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.

Sharing the Messiah's sufferings

[12]Beloved, don't be surprised at the fiery ordeal which is coming upon you to test you, as though this were some strange thing that was happening to you. [13]Rather, celebrate! You are sharing the sufferings of the Messiah. Then, when his glory is revealed, you will celebrate with real, exuberant joy. [14]If you are abused because of the name of the Messiah, you are blessed by God, because the spirit of glory and of God is resting upon you. [15]None of you, of course, should suffer as a murderer or thief or evildoer, or even as a busybody. [16]But if you suffer as a Christian, don't be ashamed; rather, give God the glory for that name! [17]The time has come, you see, for judgment to begin at God's own household. And if it begins with us, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel? [18]And if the righteous person is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear? [19]So also those who suffer according to God's will should entrust their whole lives to the faithful creator by doing what is good.

Humble shepherds

5 So, then, I appeal to the elders among you, as a fellow-elder and a witness of the sufferings of the Messiah, and as one who will share in the glory that is to be revealed. [2]Do the proper work of a shepherd as you look after God's flock which has been entrusted to you, not under compulsion, but gladly, as in God's presence, not for shameful profit but eagerly. [3]You should not lord it over those for whom you are responsible, but rather be an example to the flock. [4]And when the chief shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that won't wither away. [5]In the same way, too, the younger men should submit to the elders. But let all of you clothe yourselves with humility towards one another. You see, 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the lowly.' [6]Humble yourselves, then, under God's powerful hand, so that he may lift you up at the right time. [7]Throw all your care upon him, because he cares about you.

Standing firm by God's power

[8]Stay in control of yourselves; stay awake. Your enemy, the devil, is stalking around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to
devour. [9]Resist him, staying resolute in your faith, and knowing that other family members in the rest of the world are facing
identical sufferings. [10]Then, after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who called you in the Messiah Jesus to the
glory of his new age, will himself put you in good order, and will establish and strengthen you and set you on firm foundations.
[11]To him be the power for ever. Amen.

[12]I have written this briefly, and am sending it to you with Silvanus, whom I regard as a faithful brother. My main point is to
urge and bear witness to you that this grace, in which you stand, is the true grace of God. [13]Your chosen sister in Babylon sends
you greetings; so does my son Mark. [14]Greet one another with a holy kiss.

Peace to you all in the Messiah.

2 Peter

The second Petrine letter picks up the strong hope evident in the first letter, rooting it in the gospel events themselves, warning against false prophets who would lead people astray, and assuring the faithful that what seems to us like 'delay' is irrelevant in the purposes of God. The letter offers the fullest exposition in early Christian writings of the idea of sustained character development: faith must be supplemented with virtue, virtue with knowledge, knowledge with self-control, self-control with patience, patience with piety, piety with family affection, and family affection with love (1.5–7). Facing a dangerous world but holding on to the gospel hope, this is how the young church will make it clear who they truly are.

Second Peter also offers the only reference outside the gospels to the transfiguration (Mark 9.2–8; here at 1.16–21). The author links this extraordinary moment to the scriptural promises: the Bible on the one hand, and the divine revelation in Jesus on the other, are the anchors of faith. These will be needed, because false prophets will emerge in the church, just as they did in ancient Israel; and the letter gives a detailed warning against such people.

The false teachers will richly earn the condemnation they will incur (2.1–3), just as did the wicked angels and humans in ancient times (2.4–9). They will go from bad to worse; the central and detailed denunciation (2.10–22) indicates that some of these people at least have professed Christian faith but have now turned back to the corruptions of the present age, and are eager to drag others back with them, promising them 'freedom' while in fact being enslaved to corruption (2.19). It would be interesting to reflect on why warnings like this sound so unfashionable in the churches of our own time.

The warnings are the more necessary because the final day, when God will make new heavens and new earth, will surely come, even though some scoffers suggest that its present delay indicates otherwise (3.1–10). God's timetable is not the same as ours, and with his judgment 'the earth and all the works on it will be disclosed' (3.10): the veils of deceit will be stripped off and all will at last appear in their true colours. This sets the framework for the final appeal: God is being patient, and so must we, standing firm and growing in grace (3.11–18).

Confirm your call!

1 Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus the Messiah, to those who have obtained a share of faith equal to ours in the
righteousness of our God and saviour Jesus the Messiah: [2]may grace and peace be multiplied to you, in the knowledge of
God and of Jesus our Lord.

[3]God has bestowed upon us, through his divine power, everything that we need for life and godliness, through the knowledge of
him who called us by his own glory and virtue. [4]The result is that he has given us, through these things, his precious and
wonderful promises; and the purpose of all this is so that you may run away from the corruption of lust that is in the world, and
may become partakers of the divine nature. [5]So, because of this, you should strain every nerve to supplement your faith with
virtue, and your virtue with knowledge, [6]and your knowledge with self-control, and your self-control with patience, and your
patience with piety, [7]and your piety with family affection, and your family affection with love. [8]If you have these things in
plentiful supply, you see, you will not be wasting your time, or failing to bear fruit, in relation to your knowledge of our Lord
Jesus the Messiah. [9]Someone who doesn't have these things, in fact, is so short-sighted as to be actually blind, and has forgotten
what it means to be cleansed from earlier sins. [10]So, my dear family, you must make the effort all the more to confirm that God
has called you and chosen you. If you do this, you will never trip up. [11]That is how you will have, richly laid out before you, an
entrance into the kingdom of God's coming age, the kingdom of our Lord and saviour Jesus the Messiah.

Prophecy made sure

[12]So I intend to go on and on reminding you about all this – even though you know it, and have been firmly established in the
truth which has come to you. [13]But it seems right to me, as long as I am living in this present tent, to stir you up with a reminder,
[14]since I know that I shall shortly be putting off this tent, as our Lord Jesus the Messiah showed me. [15]So I shall also be making
every effort to ensure that, once I am gone, you may be able to call these things to mind at any time.

[16]When we made known to you the power and appearing of our Lord Jesus the Messiah, you see, we were not following
cleverly devised myths. Rather, we were eyewitnesses of his grandeur. [17]For when he received honour and glory from God the
father, a voice spoke to him from the Wonderful Glory, 'This is my son, my beloved one, in whom I am well pleased.' [18]We heard
this voice, spoken from heaven, when we were with him on the holy mountain. [19]And we have the prophetic word made more
certain. You will do well to hold on to this, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star shines in
your hearts. [20]You must know this first of all, that no scriptural prophecy is a matter of one's own interpretation. [21]No prophecy,
you see, ever came by human will. Rather, people were moved by the holy spirit, and spoke from God.

False prophets

2 There were, however, false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among yourselves, who will sneak
in with their destructive false teachings, even denying the master who paid the price for them. They will earn swift
destruction for themselves, [2]and many will follow after their disgusting practices. The way of truth will be blasphemed because of
them, [3]and in their greed they will exploit you with fake prophecies. Their condemnation has not been idle for a long time now,
and their destruction has not fallen asleep.

[4]God didn't spare the angels who sinned, you see, but he threw them into the pit, into dark caverns, handing them over to be

guarded until the time of judgment. [5]Similarly, he didn't spare the ancient world, but brought a flood on the world of the ungodly and rescued Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others. [6]Similarly, he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, reducing them to ashes and ruin, thus setting up an example of what would happen to the ungodly. [7]He snatched righteous Lot out of the disaster, a man who had been deeply troubled by their shameful and unprincipled behaviour. [8]That righteous man, you see, living in their midst, could see and hear day after day lawless deeds which tortured his righteous soul. [9]The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from testing, and also how to keep the unrighteous ready for the day of judgment and punishment, [10a] especially those who follow after the pollution of fleshly lust and despise authority.

From bad to worse

[10b] Such people are arrogant and self-willed! They are not afraid to blaspheme the glorious ones, [11]whereas the angels, stronger and more powerful though they are, do not bring a charge of blasphemy against them before the Lord.

[12]These people are like unreasoning beasts, by nature born to be caught and destroyed. They curse at things of which they have no knowledge; they are destroyed by their own self-destructive tendencies. [13]They commit injustice, and receive injustice as their reward. They count it pleasure to hold wild revels in the daytime. If they join you for a meal, they pollute and stain the whole thing as they wallow in their disgusting pleasures. [14]Their eyes are full of adultery; they can't get enough of sin; when they find unsteady souls, they lead them astray; their hearts have been trained in greed; they are children of the curse. [15]They have left the straight path and have wandered off in pursuit of Balaam son of Bosor, who loved the reward of unrighteousness, [16]and was rebuked for his disobedience when a normally speechless donkey spoke in a human voice to stop the prophet's madness in its tracks.

[17]These people are springs without water. They are patches of fog driven along by a storm. The depth of darkness has been reserved for them! [18]They utter bombastic words of folly as they entice, with licentious fleshly desires, those who have only just escaped from the company of people who behave improperly. [19]They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves to corruption. (A person who is defeated by something, you see, is enslaved to it.) [20]For if they have fled the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and saviour Jesus the Messiah, but again become entangled in them and are defeated, they have ended up in a worse state than they were before. [21]It would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than, having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment which had been given to them. [22]There is a true proverb which now applies to them: the dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow gets washed only to wallow once more in the mud.

The day of the Lord

3 My dear family, this is now the second time I am writing you a letter. Your motives are pure, and what I'm trying to do in reminding you is to stir them into action, [2]so that you'll remember the words spoken earlier by the holy prophets, and by the command of the Lord and saviour which you received from your apostles. [3]But you must first know this. Deceivers will come in the last days, with deceitful ways, behaving according to their own desires. [4]This is what they will say: 'Where is the promise of his royal arrival? Ever since the previous generation died, everything has continued just as it has from the beginning of creation.' [5]They willingly overlook this one thing, you see: the ancient heavens and earth were formed out of water and through water, by God's word – [6]and it was by flooding the world of that time with water that it was destroyed. [7]The heavens and earth that we now have are being preserved for fire by the same word, being kept for the day of judgment and the destruction of the wicked. [8]So, beloved, don't forget this one thing, that a single day with the Lord is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like a single day. [9]The Lord is not delaying his promise, in the way that some reckon delay, but he is very patient towards you. He does not want anyone to be destroyed. Rather, he wants everyone to arrive at repentance.

[10]But the Lord's day will come like a thief. On that day the heavens will pass away with a great rushing sound, the elements will be dissolved in fire, and the earth and all the works on it will be disclosed.

God's patience

[11]Since everything is going to dissolve in this way, what sort of people should you be? You should live lives that are holy and godly, [12]as you look for God's day to appear, and indeed hurry it on its way – the day because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the elements will melt with heat. [13]But we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth, in which justice will be at home. That is what he has promised.

[14]So, my dear family, as you wait for these things, be eager to be found without spot or blemish before him, in peace. [15]And when our Lord waits patiently to act, see that for what it is – salvation! Our beloved brother Paul has written to you about all this, according to the wisdom that has been given him, [16]speaking about these things as he does in all his letters. There are some things in them which are difficult to understand. Untaught and unstable people twist his words to their own destruction, as they do with the other scriptures.

[17]But as for you, my dear family, be on your guard, since you have been warned in advance. That way you won't be led astray through the error of lawless people and fall away from your own solid grounding. [18]Instead, grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and saviour Jesus the Messiah. To him be glory both now and in the day when God's new age dawns. Amen.

1 John

The three short letters of John are possibly but not certainly by the same writer as the gospel of that name. The first one moves in widening circles around the main theme of the love of God, revealed in Jesus and his death and needing to be worked out in and through the life of the community. Those who belong to Jesus have a new identity which will be fully revealed when Jesus appears, committing them in the present to the life of purity as well as love (3.1–3).

The letter opens with a passage that reminds us of the start of the gospel (the Word of life which was from the beginning), but which moves at once to the sharp challenge of discipleship. To claim that we belong to God while 'walking in the darkness' is to tell lies. But there is no need to pretend, since we have all sinned, and the good news is that the blood of Jesus will cleanse those who confess their sins and 'walk in the light' (1.5—2.2). This language of sacrifice makes sense within the biblical world of thought where 'heaven' and 'earth', designed to come together, require that everything to do with death – and sin, rooted in idolatry, is the ultimate cause of death – must be made clean if it is to come within God's presence. And, in scripture, the cleansing agent is the blood which symbolizes life. It may be easier for us today to work backwards from Jesus to an understanding of ancient biblical sacrifices: it is the life of Jesus, laid down in self-giving love for the world, that now holds heaven and earth together and enables even sinners like us to 'have fellowship' with God.

But that is only the beginning. Once we are assured of being God's people, the way we continue in this heaven-and-earth life is through the self-giving love which mirrors that of God himself (2.3–14). Many will try to deceive us, and sadly this will include some of our own number, and we will be able to recognize them because they will deny that Jesus is really Israel's Messiah (2.22). The sign of true belonging, however, is a resolute turning from sin (3.1–10), and again this means the positive challenge of self-sacrificial love modelled on that of Jesus himself (3.16).

One specific error is a further tell-tale sign of a deceitful or counterfeit faith: some will deny that Jesus the Messiah really came 'in the flesh'. This was a serious problem in parts of the early church, and John links this super-spirituality with the kind of superior attitude that thinks itself above the practical demands of love in the community (4.1–21). By contrast, the true God is known precisely in Jesus and his death; all else is, in the last analysis, a form of idolatry (5.21). The letter binds together a rich faith in Jesus with a robust call to the love which will make that faith known in the world.

The Word of Life

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have gazed at, and
our hands have handled – concerning the Word of Life! [2]That life was displayed, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and
we announce to you the life of God's coming age, which was with the father and was displayed to us. [3]That which we have seen
and heard, we announce to you too, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the father, and with
his son Jesus the Messiah. [4]We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

God's light and our darkness

[5]This is the message which we have heard from him, and announce to you: God is light, and there is no darkness at all in him. [6]If
we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the dark, we are telling lies, and not doing what is true. [7]But if we walk in
the light, just as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his son makes us pure and clean
from all sin. [8]If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. [9]If we confess our sins, he is faithful
and just, and will forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. [10]If we say that we have not sinned, we make him
out to be a liar, and his word is not in us.

2 My children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. If anyone does sin, we have one who pleads our cause
before the father – namely, the Righteous One, Jesus the Messiah! [2]He is the sacrifice which atones for our sins – and not
ours only, either, but those of the whole world.

God's new commandment

[3]This is how we are sure that we have known him, if we keep his commandments. [4]Anyone who says, 'I know him', but doesn't
keep his commandments, is a liar. People like that have no truth in them. [5]But if anyone keeps his word, God's love is truly made
complete in such a person. This is how we are sure that we are in him: [6]anyone who says, 'I abide in him', ought to behave in the
same way that he behaved.

[7]My beloved ones, I am not writing a new command to you, but an old command which you have had from the very beginning.
The old command is the word which you heard. [8]Again, however, I am writing a new command to you: it is true in him and in
you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. [9]Anyone who says, 'I am in the light', while hating
another family member, is still in darkness up to this very moment. [10]Anyone who loves another family member abides in the
light, and there is no cause of offence in such a person. [11]Anyone who hates another family member is in the darkness, and walks
about in the darkness. Such people have no idea where they are going, because the darkness has blinded their eyes.

[12]I am writing to you, children,
because your sins are forgiven through his name.
[13]I am writing to you, fathers,
because you have known the one who is from the beginning.

I am writing to you, young people,
because you have conquered the evil one.

[14]I have written to you, children,
because you have known the father.
I have written to you, fathers,
because you have known the one who is from the beginning.
I have written to you, young people,
because you are strong,
and the word of God abides in you,
and you have conquered the evil one.

People of the lie

[15]Do not love the world, or the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the father's love is not in them. [16]Everything in the world, you see – the greedy desire of the flesh, the greedy desire of the eyes, the pride of life – none of this is from the father. It is from the world. [17]The world is passing away, with all its greedy desires. But anyone who does God's will abides for ever.

[18]Children, it is the last hour. You have heard that 'Antimessiah' is coming – and now many Antimessiahs have appeared! That's how we know that it is the last hour. [19]They went out from among us, but they were not really of our number. If they had been of our number, you see, they would have remained with us. This happened so that it would be made crystal clear that none of them belonged to us. [20]You, however, have the anointing from the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. [21]I am not writing to you because you don't know the truth, but because you do know it, and you know that no liar is of the truth.

[22]Who is the liar? Is it not the one who denies that Jesus is the Messiah? Such a one is the Antimessiah – who denies the father and the son. [23]Nobody who denies the son has the father. One who acknowledges the son has the father too. [24]As for you: let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you too will abide in the son and in the father. [25]And this is the promise which he himself promised us: the life of the age to come.

[26]I am writing to you about the people who are deceiving you. [27]You have received the anointing from him; it abides in you, and you do not need to have anyone teach you. That anointing from him teaches you about everything; it is true, it isn't a lie. So, just as he taught you, abide in him.

[28]And now, children, abide in him, so that when he is revealed we may have boldness and may not be put to shame before him at his royal appearing. [29]If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been fathered by him.

Born of God

3 Look at the remarkable love the father has given us – that we should be called God's children! That indeed is what we are. That's why the world doesn't know us, because it didn't know him. [2]Beloved ones, we are now, already, God's children; it hasn't yet been revealed what we are going to be. We know that when he is revealed we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. [3]All who have this hope in him make themselves pure, just as he is pure.

[4]Everyone who goes on sinning is breaking the law; sin, in fact, is lawlessness. [5]And you know that he was revealed so that he might take away sins, and there is no sin in him. [6]Everyone who abides in him does not go on sinning. Everyone who goes on sinning has not seen him, or known him.

[7]Children, don't let anyone deceive you. The person who does righteousness is righteous, just as he is righteous. [8]The person who goes on sinning is from the devil, because the devil is a sinner from the very start. The son of God was revealed for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. [9]Everyone who is fathered by God does not go on sinning, because God's offspring remain in him; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been fathered by God. [10]That is how it is clear who are the children of God and who are the children of the devil: everyone who does not do what is right is not of God, particularly those who do not love their brother or sister.

The challenge of love

[11]This is the message which you heard right from the start, you see, that we should love one another. [12]We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one, and murdered his brother. Why did he murder him? Because his deeds were evil, while his brother's were right.

[13]Don't be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. [14]We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the family. Anyone who doesn't love abides in death. [15]Everyone who hates their brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has the life of the coming age abiding in them. [16]This is how we know love: he laid down his life for us. And we too ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. [17]Anyone who has the means of life in this world, and sees a brother or sister in need, and closes their heart against them – how can God's love be abiding in them? [18]Children, let us not love in word, or in speech, but in deed and in truth.

[19]Because of this, we know we are of the truth, and we will persuade our hearts of this fact before him, [20]because if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts. He knows everything. [21]Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God, [22]and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commands and give him pleasure when he sees

what we are doing. [23]And this is his command, that we should believe in the name of his son Jesus the Messiah, and should love one another, just as he gave us the commandment. [24]Anyone who keeps his commandments abides in him, and he in them. This is how we know that he abides in us, by his spirit that he has given us.

False prophets

4 Beloved, do not believe every spirit. Rather, test the spirits to see whether they are from God. Many false prophets, you see, have gone out into the world. [2]This is how we know God's spirit: every spirit that agrees that Jesus the Messiah has come in the flesh is from God, [3]and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This spirit is actually the spirit of the Antimessiah. You have heard that it was coming, and now it is already in the world.

[4]But you, children, are from God, and you have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. [5]They are from the world, and that is why they speak from the world, and why the world listens to them. [6]We are from God; people who know God listen to us, but people who are not from God do not listen to us. That is how we can tell the spirit of truth from the spirit of error.

God's love

[7]Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God, and all who love are fathered by God and know God. [8]The one who does not love has not known God, because God is love. [9]This is how God's love has appeared among us: God sent his only son into the world, so that we should live through him. [10]Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son to be the sacrifice that would atone for our sins. [11]Beloved, if that's how God loved us, we ought to love one another in the same way. [12]Nobody has ever seen God. If we love one another, God abides in us and his love is completed in us. [13]That is how we know that we abide in him, and he in us, because he has given us a portion of his spirit. [14]And we have seen and bear witness that the father sent the son to be the world's saviour. [15]Anyone who confesses that Jesus is God's son, God abides in them and they abide in God. [16]And we have known and have believed the love which God has for us.

God is love; those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. [17]This is what makes love complete for us, so that we may have boldness and confidence on the day of judgment, because just as he is, so are we within this world. [18]There is no fear in love; complete love drives out fear. Fear has to do with punishment, and anyone who is afraid has not been completed in love. [19]We love, because he first loved us. [20]If someone says, 'I love God', but hates their brother or sister, that person is a liar. Someone who doesn't love a brother or sister whom they have seen, how can they love God, whom they haven't seen? [21]This is the command we have from him: anyone who loves God should love their brother or sister too.

Faith wins the victory

5 Everyone who believes that the Messiah is Jesus has been fathered by God. Everyone who loves the parent loves the child as well. [2]That is how we know that we love the children of God, because we love God and do what he commands. [3]This is what loving God means: it means keeping his commandments. His commandments, what's more, are no trouble, [4]because everything that is fathered by God conquers the world. This is the victory that conquers the world: our faith.

[5]Who is the one who conquers the world? Surely the one who believes that Jesus is God's son! [6]It was he who came by means of water and blood, Jesus the Messiah, not by water only but by the water and the blood. The spirit is the one who bears witness, because the spirit is the truth. [7]There are three that bear witness, you see, [8]the spirit, the water and the blood, and these three agree together. [9]If we have received human witness, God's witness is greater. This is the witness of God, the testimony he has borne to his son. [10]All those who believe in the son of God have the witness in themselves, but anyone who does not believe in God has made a liar of him, because they have not believed in the witness which God bore concerning his son. [11]This is the witness: God has given us the life of the age to come, and this life is in his son. [12]Anyone who has the son has life. Anyone who does not have the son of God does not have life.

The true God

[13]I am writing these things to you so that you may know that you, who believe in the name of the son of God, do indeed have the life of the age to come. [14]This is the bold confidence we have before him: if we ask for something according to his will, he hears us. [15]And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we already possess the requests we have asked from him.

[16]If anyone sees a brother or sister committing a sin which is not deadly, they should ask, and God will give life to the people who are sinning in a way which is not deadly. There is such a thing as deadly sin; I do not say that one should pray about that. [17]All sin is unrighteousness, and there is a sin which is not deadly.

[18]We know that everyone fathered by God does not go on sinning. The one who was fathered by God keeps them, and the evil one does not touch them. [19]We know that we are from God, and the whole world is under the power of the evil one. [20]We know that the son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we should know the truth. And we are in the truth, in his son Jesus the Messiah.

This is the true God; this is the life of the age to come. [21]Children, guard yourselves against idols.

2 John

The short second letter continues the same theme as the first, warning against 'deceivers'. It will be easy for followers of Jesus to be drawn away from their primary task, which is to love one another. The letter provides a quick glimpse of an early church in which different teachers are moving to and fro from place to place, so that local communities need to know who is to be trusted. The gold standard remains the coming of Jesus the Messiah in the flesh: from early days in the church this extraordinary truth, celebrated in the dramatic opening of John's gospel ('the Word became flesh', John 1.14), was under attack. While some in our own day have struggled to see how a human being could also be divine, in the early church the same problem was often seen from the other side of the coin, as to how the one God might reveal himself in and as a human being. But only the full truth, however mind-blowing, will do. Anyone who abides in 'the teaching' – the true teaching of the father and the son – is part of the fellowship of 'truth and love' (verse 3).

The letter is addressed by 'the Elder' to a particular church, seen as 'the Chosen Lady'. The author is part of a sister church, whose members he refers to as 'the children of your Chosen Sister' (verses 1, 13). It is not clear whether this was simply an elegant metaphor, or whether it was a kind of disguise at a time when churches were facing persecution.

The sign of life

[1]From the Elder to the Chosen Lady and her children, whom I love in truth – as indeed, in addition to myself, do all those who know the truth, [2]because of the truth that abides in us and is with us for ever. [3]Grace, mercy and peace from God the father and from Jesus the Messiah, the son of the father, be with us in truth and love.

[4]I was delighted when I found some of your children walking in the truth, just as we received the commandment from the father. [5]And now, dear Lady, I ask you, not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we had from the very beginning, that we should love one another. [6]This is love: that we should behave in accordance with his commandments. And this is the commandment, just as you heard it from the very start, that we should behave in accordance with it.

Don't be deceived!

[7]Many deceivers, you see, have gone out into the world. These are people who do not admit that Jesus the Messiah has come in the flesh. Such a person is the Deceiver – the Antimessiah! [8]Watch out for yourselves, so that you won't lose what we have worked for, but may receive the full reward.

[9]Anyone who goes out on their own, and does not abide in the teaching of the Messiah, does not have God. One who abides in the teaching – such a one has the father and the son. [10]If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, don't receive them into the house; don't even give them a greeting. [11]Anyone who utters a greeting to such a person shares in their wicked deeds.

[12]I have many things to write to you, but I did not wish to write with pen and ink. I am hoping instead to come to you, and to speak face to face. That will complete our joy.

[13]The children of your Chosen Sister send you greetings.

3 John

The third Johannine letter is about hospitality. As the church spread, with groups of a dozen or two in a town or village, and with increasing hostility from the surrounding culture, it was vital that Jesus-followers travelling from place to place as teachers or on other business should be able to trust one another. This letter, to 'beloved Gaius', an otherwise unknown Christian, congratulates him on the hospitality that he has offered to 'family members', that is, fellow Christians, who have subsequently given glad testimony to the welcome they had received.

Unfortunately, however, not everyone is behaving in such a generous spirit. The writer warns against one Diotrephes, who is spreading false rumours about the Elder himself, and is refusing to welcome genuine fellow believers and expelling, from his community, other Jesus-followers who want to do so. The writer denounces him: he is simply trying to boost his own prestige (verses 9–10). At the same time, Demetrius is well attested (verse 12); perhaps he was the bearer of this letter.

The writer appeals to the common standard of behaviour; when things are tough, the basic things need repeating: 'don't imitate evil; imitate good!' (verse 11). This letter, like the others in this group, offers a small vignette on the challenges of living as a Jesus-follower in troubled times.

Hospitality for God's people

[1]The Elder to beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.

[2]Beloved, I pray that all is going well with you, and that you are every bit as healthy physically as you are spiritually. [3]I was absolutely delighted, you see, when some of the family arrived and bore witness to your truthfulness, since clearly you are walking in the truth. [4]Nothing gives me greater joy than this, to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

[5]Beloved, when you are doing all that you do for family members, even when they are strangers, you are doing a faithful work. [6]These people have borne witness to your love in the presence of the assembly, and you will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. [7]They went out for the sake of the Name, not accepting help from outsiders. [8]We ought to support people like that, so that we may become fellow-workers with the truth.

Authority and example

[9]I have written something to the assembly. But Diotrephes, who wants to be the most important person there, refuses to acknowledge us. [10]So, then, if I come, I will refer back to what he has done, and the slanderous words he has spoken against us. Not being satisfied with that, he doesn't welcome family members himself; and, when others want to do so, he forbids them and throws them out of the assembly.

[11]Beloved, don't imitate evil; imitate good! Someone who does good is from God; someone who does evil has not seen God. [12]Demetrius has been well attested by everybody, and by the truth itself. We join in this testimony, and you know that our testimony is true.

[13]I have much to write to you, but I don't want to do it with pen and ink. [14]I am hoping instead to see you very soon, so that we can talk face to face.

[15]Peace be with you. All the friends greet you. Greet all the friends by name.

Judah

The short letter of Judah (often spelt in a modern form, 'Jude') warns against false teachers. The letter overlaps to some extent with 2 Peter. The author is the 'brother of James' (1), and he urges the hearers to work hard to defend the faith as originally given (3).

This warning is necessary because the community has been infiltrated by people who are changing the original faith into something else. They are doing two things in particular. First, they are 'transforming God's grace into licentiousness' (verse 4). As Paul saw in Romans 6, this was always going to be a danger for any who had seen the law of Moses as a strict moral code and had then heard the gospel of Jesus as a way of saying that the law didn't matter any more. Suddenly the moral brake is taken off, and the result is behavioural chaos.

Second, they are 'denying the one and only master' (verse 4), Jesus himself. They are happy to acknowledge Jesus, perhaps, but only as one teacher among others – and the others will no doubt take different views on various topics.

These two obviously go together: anything you don't like in the Mosaic law can be got around by appealing to the gospel of Jesus, and anything you don't like in the teaching of Jesus can be got around by appealing to a different teacher. To understand just how dangerous such distortions are, the writer takes his readers back to the scriptures and to some of the ways in which the ancient stories had been developed in subsequent Jewish tradition.

One must, then, stand firm. It is vital to build yourself up in faith and prayer, and to 'keep yourselves in the love of God' (verse 21). But, more importantly still, it is God himself 'who is able to keep you standing upright, and to present you before his glory, undefiled and joyful' (verse 24). When all the warnings have been duly noted, one should always return to the basic Christian activity, which is the glad celebration and praise of the God who has saved us through Jesus the Messiah (verse 25). This short letter is as bracing in its challenge today as it was to its first hearers.

Contend for the faith

[1]Judah, slave of Jesus the Messiah, brother of James, to those who are called, the people whom God loves and whom Jesus, the Messiah, keeps safe! [2]May mercy, peace and love be multiplied to you.

[3]Beloved, I was doing my best to write to you about the rescue in which we share, but I found it necessary to write to you to urge you to struggle hard for the faith which was once and for all given to God's people. [4]Some people have sneaked in among you, it seems, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation – ungodly people, who are transforming God's grace into licentiousness, and denying the one and only master, our Lord Jesus the Messiah.

False teachers

[5]I do want to remind you, even though you know it all well, that when the Lord once and for all delivered his people out of the land of Egypt, he subsequently destroyed those who did not believe. [6]In the same way, when some of the angels did not keep to their rightful place of authority, but abandoned their own home, he kept them under conditions of darkness and in eternal chains to await the judgment of the great day. [7]In similar fashion, Sodom, Gomorrah and the cities round about, which had lived in gross immorality and lusted after unnatural flesh, are set before us as a pattern, undergoing the punishment of endless fire.

[8]However, these people are behaving in the same way! They are dreaming their way into defiling the flesh, rejecting authority and cursing the Glorious Ones. [9]Even Michael the archangel, when disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not presume to lay against him a charge of blasphemy, but simply said, 'The Lord rebuke you.' [10]These people, however, curse anything they don't know. They are like dumb animals; there are some things they understand instinctively – but it is these very things that destroy them. [11]A curse on them! They go off in the way of Cain; they give themselves over for money into Balaam's deceitful ways; they are destroyed in Korah's rebellion. [12]These are the ones who pollute your love-feasts; they share your table without fear while simply looking after their own needs. They are waterless clouds blown along by the winds. They are fruitless autumn trees, doubly dead and uprooted. [13]They are stormy waves out at sea, splashing up their own shameful ways. They are wandering stars, and the deepest everlasting darkness has been kept for them in particular.

[14]Enoch, the seventh in line from Adam, prophesied about these people. 'Look!' he said. 'The Lord comes with ten thousand of his holy ones, [15]to perform judgment against all, and to charge every human being with all the ungodly ways in which they have done ungodly things, and with every harsh word which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.' [16]These people are always grumbling and complaining, chasing off after their own desires. From their mouths come arrogant words, buttering people up for the sake of gain.

Rescued by God's power

[17]But you, my beloved ones, remember the words that were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus the Messiah. [18]'In the last time,' they said to you, 'there will be scornful people who follow their own ungodly desires. [19]These are the people who cause divisions. They are living on the merely human level; they do not have the spirit. [20]But you, beloved ones, build yourselves up in your most holy faith. Pray in the holy spirit. [21]Keep yourselves in the love of God, as you wait for our Lord Jesus the Messiah to show you the mercy which leads to the life of the age to come.

[22]With some people who are wavering, you must show mercy. [23]Some you must rescue, snatching them from the fire. To others you must show mercy, but with fear, hating even the clothes that have been defiled by the flesh.

[24]Now to the one who is able to keep you standing upright, and to present you before his glory, undefiled and joyful – [25]to the one and only God, our saviour through Jesus the Messiah our Lord, be glory, majesty, power and authority before all the ages, and now, and to all the ages to come. Amen.

The Revelation of John

The final book of the New Testament comes as a shock to some and a delight to others. It belongs in the genre we loosely call 'apocalyptic': that is, like the book of Daniel and several other books written in the second-Temple period, it offers a string of visions in which 'heaven' (God's realm) is visible to the seer on 'earth', unveiling the hidden realities which explain the meaning of perplexing this-worldly events. It is, in particular, a 'revelation of Jesus the Messiah' (1.1), the Lion of Judah who is also the Lamb, and of his victory over the powers of evil that would threaten the long-term purposes of the creator God whose throne he shares (5.1–5). The closing scene of the book, and of the Christian Bible, echoes Genesis 1 and 2 with its vision, not of 'saved souls' going up to 'heaven', but of the heavenly city coming to earth, so that God himself will dwell among humans. The 'new heavens and new earth' will be the ultimate cosmic Temple, and the new city will be like its inner sanctum. As in Ezekiel or Zechariah, the river of life will flow out from it, with the tree of life growing on its banks.

The author describes how his vision was granted him while he was in exile on the small Aegean island of Patmos. It was a blinding and glorious vision of Jesus himself (1.12–20), commissioning 'John' (the name was common then as now, and it is unlikely that this is the same 'John' as the author of the gospel or letters) to write to the 'seven churches' in the province of Asia (today's western Turkey): Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. These specific 'letters', with relevant local colour and specific warnings and challenges, form the foundation in chapters 2 and 3 for a kind of second introduction in chapters 4 and 5, where John sees the heavenly throne-room, with all creation worshipping the true God and celebrating the victory of the 'Lamb' over the dark powers that have held back the creator's intentions for the world. Now, humans who are rescued from their sin and its consequences are to take their place as 'a kingdom and priests to our God', and 'will reign on the earth' (1.6; 5.10; 20.6). This victory is to be implemented, in a sequence of overlapping visions, through the trouble and suffering that will follow, particularly at the hands of the 'monsters' – a reference, in chapter 13, to the emperor and his local officials – who will rage against the Lamb's followers but will be overthrown in the final outworking of his victory over 'Babylon', the oppressive imperial power and the demonic powers which sustain it. Then the true 'city of God', the 'new Jerusalem', will appear (chapters 21 and 22).

The book of Revelation has always naturally appealed to artists: here above all the reader needs the disciplined imagination as well as the praying heart and the reasoning mind. Like a great piece of music that will only yield its secrets to the mature and sensitive player, the New Testament is designed not just to offer information about God, Jesus, the world and ourselves but to urge us, by inviting us to penetrate its secrets, to become the kind of people for whom, and indeed through whom, it will at last all make sense.

Look! He is coming!

1 Revelation of Jesus the Messiah! God gave it to him to show his servants what must soon take place. He signified it by sending a message through his angel to his servant John, [2]who, by reporting all he saw, bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus the Messiah. [3]God's blessing on the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and on those who hear them and keep what is written in it. The time, you see, is near!

[4]John, to the seven churches in Asia: grace to you and peace from He Who Is and Who Was and Who Is To Come, and from the seven spirits that are before his throne, [5]and from Jesus the Messiah, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Glory to the one who loved us, and freed us from our sins by his blood, [6]and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and father – glory and power be to him for ever and ever. Amen.

[7]Look! He is coming with the clouds, and every eye shall see him; yes, even those who pierced him. All the tribes of the earth shall mourn because of him. Yes! Amen.

[8]'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, Who Is and Who Was and Who Is To Come, the Almighty.

Jesus revealed

[9]I, John, your brother and your partner in the suffering, the kingdom, and the patient endurance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. [10]I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet. [11]'Write down what you see in a book,' it said, 'and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.'

[12]So I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. As I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands, [13]and in the middle of the lampstands 'one like a son of man', wearing a full-length robe and with a golden belt across his chest. [14]His head and his hair were white, white like wool, white like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, [15]his feet were like exquisite brass, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters. [16]He was holding seven stars in his right hand, and a sharp two-edged sword was coming out of his mouth. The sight of him was like the sun when it shines with full power. [17]When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though I was dead.

He touched me with his right hand. 'Don't be afraid,' he said. 'I am the first and the last [18]and the living one. I was dead, and look! I am alive for ever and ever. I have the keys of death and Hades. [19]Now write what you see, both the things that already are, and also the things that are going to happen afterwards. [20]The secret meaning of the seven stars which you saw in my right hand, by the way, and the seven golden lampstands, is this. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches themselves.

The letter to Ephesus

2 ‘Write this to the angel of the church in Ephesus. “These are the words of the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks in among the seven golden lampstands. [2]I know what you have done, your hard labour and patience. I know that you cannot tolerate evil people, and that you have tested those who pass themselves off as apostles, but are not, and you have demonstrated them to be frauds. [3]You have patience, and you have put up with a great deal because of my name, and you haven’t grown weary. [4]I do, however, have one thing against you: you have abandoned the love you showed at the beginning. [5]So remember the place from which you have fallen. Repent, and do the works you did at the beginning. If not – if you don’t repent – I will come and remove your lampstand out of its place. [6]You do, though, have this in your favour: you hate what the Nicolaitans are doing, and I hate it too. [7]Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the spirit is saying to the churches. The tree of life stands in God’s paradise, and I will give to anyone who conquers the right to eat from it.”

The letter to Smyrna

[8]‘Write this to the angel of the church in Smyrna. “These are the words of the First and the Last, the one who was dead and came to life. [9]I know your suffering and poverty (but you are rich!). I know the blasphemy of those self-styled Jews. They are nothing of the kind. They are a satan-synagogue. [10]Don’t be afraid of what you are going to suffer. Look: the devil is going to throw some of you into prison, so that you may be put to the test. You will have ten days of affliction. Be faithful all the way to death, and I will give you the crown of life. [11]Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the spirit is saying to the churches. The second death will not harm the one who conquers.”

The seven churches of Asia

The letter to Pergamum

[12]‘Write this to the angel of the church in Pergamum. “These are the words of the one who has the sharp two-edged sword. [13]I know where you live – right there where the satan has his throne! You have clung on to my name, and have not denied my faith, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was killed in your midst, in the dwelling-place of the satan. [14]But I do have a few things against you: you have some people there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who instructed Balak to cause the children of Israel to stumble, making them eat idol-food and indulge in sexual immorality. [15]So, too, you have some among you who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. [16]So: repent! If you don’t, I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. [17]Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the spirit is saying to the churches. To anyone who conquers I will give secret manna, and a white stone, with a new name written on that stone which nobody knows except the one who receives it.”

The letter to Thyatira

[18]‘Write this to the angel of the church in Thyatira. “These are the words of the son of God, whose eyes are like flaming fire and whose feet are like exquisite brass. [19]I know what you have done: I know your love, your faith, your service and your patience. I know that your works have been more impressive recently than they were before. [20]But I have something against you: you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet and teaches my servants (in fact, deceives my servants!) to practise fornication and to eat idol-food. [21]I gave her time to repent, but she had no wish to repent of her immorality. [22]Look! I am going to throw her on a bed, and those who have committed fornication with her will have great distress, unless they repent of the works into which she has led them. [23]I will utterly slaughter her children, and all the churches will know that I am the one who searches minds and hearts. I will give to each of you what your deeds deserve. [24]For the rest of you in Thyatira, those who have not held this teaching, who haven’t discovered the so-called ‘satanic depths’: I’m not going to put any other pressure on you. [25]Just hold on tightly to what you have until I come. [26]To anyone who conquers, who keeps my works right through to the end, I will give authority over the nations, [27]to rule them with a rod of iron, as when clay pots get smashed! [28]That is the authority I myself received from my father. What’s more, I will give them the morning star. [29]Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the spirit says to the churches.”

The letter to Sardis

3 ‘Write this to the angel of the church in Sardis. “These are the words of the one who has the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars. I know what you have done. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. [2]Wake up! Strengthen the things that remain – the things that are about to die – because I haven’t found your works to be complete in the sight of my God. [3]So remember how you received the message, how you heard it and kept it – and repent! So if you don’t keep awake, I will come like a thief, and you won’t know what time I’m coming to you. [4]You do, however, have a few people in Sardis who haven’t allowed their clothes to become dirty and polluted. They will be clothed in white and will walk with me, as they deserve. [5]Anyone who conquers will be clothed like this in white robes, and I won’t blot their name out of the book of life. I will acknowledge their name in the presence of my father and in the presence of his angels. [6]Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the spirit is saying to the churches.”

The letter to Philadelphia

[7]‘Write this to the angel of the church in Philadelphia. “These are the words of the Holy One, the True One, the one who has the key of David, who opens and nobody shuts, who shuts and nobody opens. [8]I know your works. Look! I have given you an open door, right in front of you, and nobody can shut it, since you have a little power; you have kept my word, and you haven’t denied my name. [9]Look: this is what I will do to the satan-synagogue, who call themselves Jews but who are frauds, nothing of the kind. Take note: this is what I will grant you – that I will make them come and worship before your feet, and they will know that I have loved you. [10]You have kept my word about patience, and so I will keep you from the time of trial that is going to come upon the whole world, to test out all the inhabitants of the earth. [11]I am coming quickly! Hold on to what you have, so that nobody takes away your crown. [12]Anyone who conquers, I will make them a pillar in the temple of my God. They will never go out of it again. I will write on that person the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God, and my own new name. [13]Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the spirit is saying to the churches.”

The letter to Laodicea

[14]‘Write this to the angel of the church in Laodicea. “These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God’s creation. [15]I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either cold or hot! [16]So, because you are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I am going to vomit you out of my mouth. [17]You say, ‘I’m rich! I’ve done well! I don’t need anything!’ – but you don’t know that you are miserable, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. [18]This is my advice to you: buy from me gold refined in the fire – that’ll make you rich! – and white clothes to cover yourselves and prevent your shameful nakedness being seen; and also healing ointment to put on your eyes, so that you will be able to see. [19]When people are my friends, I tell them when they’re in the wrong, and I punish them for it; so stir up your spirits and repent! [20]Look! I’m standing here, knocking at the door. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to them and eat with them, and they with me. [21]This will be my gift to the one who conquers: I will sit them beside me on my throne, just as I conquered and sat with my father on his throne. [22]Let the one who has an ear listen to what the spirit is saying to the churches.”’

In the throne room

4 After this I looked – and there was a door in heaven, standing open! The voice like a trumpet, which I had heard speaking with me at the beginning, spoke again. ‘Come up here,’ it said, ‘and I will show you what must take place after these things.’ [2]At once I was in the spirit. There in heaven stood a throne, and someone was sitting on it. [3]The seated figure had the appearance of a jasper stone or a carnelian, and there was a rainbow around the throne, looking like an emerald. [4]Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and sitting on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white robes, and with golden crowns on their heads. [5]Flashes of lightning, rumblings and thunderclaps were coming from the throne, and in front of the throne seven lampstands, which are the seven spirits of God, were burning with fire. [6a]In front of the throne there was something like a sea of glass, like crystal.

Praise to the creator

[6b]In the middle of the throne, and all around the throne, were four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind. [7]The first creature was like a lion, the second creature was like an ox, the third creature had a human face, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle. [8]Each of the four creatures had six wings, and they were full of eyes all round and inside. Day and night they take no rest, as they say,

‘Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God Almighty,
Who Was and Who Is and Who Is to Come.’

[9]When the creatures give glory and honour and thanksgiving to the one who is sitting on the throne, the one who lives for ever and ever, [10]the twenty-four elders fall down in front of the one who is sitting on the throne, and worship the one who lives for ever and ever. They throw down their crowns in front of the throne, saying, [11]‘O Lord our God, you deserve to receive glory and honour and power, because you created all things; because of your will they existed and were created.’

The lion, the lamb

5 I saw that there was a scroll in the right hand of the one sitting on the throne. The scroll was written on the inside and the outside, and it was sealed with seven seals. [2]I saw a strong angel announcing in a loud voice, ‘Does anybody deserve to open the scroll, to undo its seals?’ [3]And nobody in heaven or on the earth or under the earth could open the scroll or look at it. [4]I burst into tears because it seemed that there was nobody who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside it. [5]One of the elders, however, spoke to me. ‘Don’t cry,’ he said. ‘Look! The lion from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has won the victory! He can open the scroll and its seven seals.’

[6]Then I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a lamb. It was standing there as though it had been slaughtered; it had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. [7]The lamb came up and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who was sitting on the throne.

Worthy is the lamb!

[8]When he took the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down in front of the lamb. They each had a harp, and they each had golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God’s holy people. [9]They sing a new song, which goes like this:

‘You are worthy to take the scroll;
you are worthy to open its seals;
for you were slaughtered and with your own blood
you purchased a people for God,
from every tribe and tongue,
from every people and nation
[10]and made them a kingdom and priests to our God
and they will reign on the earth.’

[11]As I watched, I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures and the elders. Their number was ten thousand times ten thousand, thousands upon thousands, [12]and they were saying in full voice,

‘The slaughtered lamb has now deserved

to take the riches and the power,
to take the wisdom, strength and honour,

to take the glory, and the blessing.’

[13]Then I heard every creature in heaven, on the earth, under the earth, and in the sea, and everything that is in them, saying,

‘To the One on the throne and the lamb

be blessing and honour and glory

and power for ever and ever!’

[14]‘Amen!’ cried the four living creatures. As for the elders, they fell down and worshipped.

Four horsemen

6 The next thing I saw was this. When the lamb had opened one of the seven seals, I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, ‘Come!’ [2]And, as I watched, there was a white horse. Its rider was holding a bow. He was given a

crown, and he went off winning victories, and to win more of them.
[3]When the lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, ‘Come!’ [4]And another horse went out, fiery red this time. Its rider was given permission to take peace away from the earth, so that people would kill one another. He was given a great sword.
[5]When the lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, ‘Come!’ As I watched, there was a black horse. Its rider held a pair of scales in his hand. [6]I heard something like a voice coming from the midst of the four living creatures. ‘A quart of wheat for a denarius!’ said the voice. ‘And three quarts of barley for a denarius! But don’t ruin the oil and the wine!’
[7]When the lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, ‘Come!’ [8]As I looked, there was a pale horse, and its rider’s name was Death. Hades followed along behind him. They were given authority over a quarter of the earth, to kill with the sword, and with famine, and with death, and by means of earth’s wild animals.

The day is coming!

[9]When the lamb opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been killed because of the word of God and because of the witness which they had borne. [10]They shouted at the tops of their voices. ‘Holy and true Master!’ they called. ‘How much longer are you going to put off giving judgment, and avenging our blood on the earth-dwellers?’ [11]Each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to rest for a little while yet, until the full number of those to be killed, as they had been, was reached – including both their fellow-servants and their kinsfolk.
[12]As I looked, he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake, the sun turned black like sackcloth, the whole moon became like blood, [13]and the stars were falling from heaven onto the earth as when a fig tree, shaken by a strong wind, drops its late fruit. [14]The heaven disappeared like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. [15]The kings of the earth, the leading courtiers, the generals, the rich, the power-brokers, and everyone, slave and free, all hid themselves among the caves and rocks of the mountains. [16]‘Fall upon us!’ they were saying to the mountains and the rocks. ‘Hide us from the face of the One who sits on the throne, and from the anger of the lamb! [17]The great day of their anger has come, and who can stand upright?’

Sealing God’s people

7 After this I saw four angels, standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to stop any wind from blowing on earth, or on the sea, or on any tree. [2]And I saw another angel coming up from the east, holding the seal of the living God. He shouted out in a loud voice to the four angels who had responsibility for harming the earth and the sea. [3]‘Don’t harm the earth just yet,’ he shouted, ‘or the sea, or the trees. Don’t do it until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.’
[4]I heard the number of the people who were sealed: it was a hundred and forty-four thousand who were sealed from all the tribes of the children of Israel. [5]Twelve thousand were sealed from the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand from the tribe of Reuben, twelve thousand from the tribe of Gad, [6]twelve thousand from the tribe of Asher, twelve thousand from the tribe of Naphtali, twelve thousand from the tribe of Manasseh, [7]twelve thousand from the tribe of Simeon, twelve thousand from the tribe of Levi, twelve thousand from the tribe of Issachar, [8]twelve thousand from the tribe of Zebulun, twelve thousand from the tribe of Joseph and twelve thousand from the tribe of Benjamin. That is the number that were sealed.

The great rescue

[9]After this I looked, and lo and behold a huge gathering which nobody could possibly count, from every nation and tribe and people and language. They were standing in front of the throne, and in front of the lamb. They were dressed in white robes, holding palm branches in their hands. [10]They were shouting out at the tops of their voices, ‘Salvation belongs to our God, to the one who sits on the throne, and to the lamb!’ [11]All the angels who were standing around the throne and the elders and the four creatures fell down on their faces before the throne and worshipped God. [12]‘Yes, Amen!’ they were saying. ‘Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanks and honour and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever! Amen!’
[13]One of the elders spoke to me. ‘Who are these people dressed all in white?’ he asked. ‘Where have they come from?’
[14]‘Sir,’ I replied, ‘you know!’
‘These are the ones’, he said, ‘who have come out of the great suffering. They have washed their clothes and made them white in the blood of the lamb. [15]That is why they are there in front of God’s throne, serving him day and night in his temple. The one who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. [16]They will never be hungry again, or thirsty again. The sun will not scorch them, nor will any fierce heat. [17]The lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, will be their shepherd. He will lead them to springs of running water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.’

The golden censer

8 When the lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven, lasting about half an hour. [2]I saw the seven angels who were standing in front of God; they were given seven trumpets. [3]Another angel came and stood before the altar. He was holding a golden censer, and he was given a large quantity of incense so that he could offer it, along with the prayers of all God’s holy people, on the golden altar in front of the throne. [4]The smoke of incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose up from the hand of the angel in front of God. [5]Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it on the earth. There were crashes of thunder, loud rumblings, lightning, and an earthquake.

The plagues begin

[6]Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets got ready to blow them. [7]The first angel blew his trumpet, and hail and fire, mixed with blood, were thrown down on the earth. A third of the earth was burnt up, a third of the trees were burnt up, and so was every blade of green grass. [8]Then the second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, flaming with fire, was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood, [9]a third of all living sea-creatures died, and a third of the ships were destroyed. [10]Then the third angel blew his trumpet, and a huge star, burning like a torch, fell from the sky, falling on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. [11]The name of the star is Poisonwood: a third of the waters turned to poison, and many people died because of the waters that had become bitter. [12]Then the fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of their light would be darkened, with a third of the day losing its light and a third of the night as well. [13]Then I looked, and I heard a lone eagle flying in mid-heaven, and calling out loudly. 'Woe, woe, woe to the earth-dwellers,' it called, 'because of the sound of the other trumpets that the last three angels are going to blow!'

Locust attack

9 Then the fifth angel blew his trumpet. I saw a star falling from heaven to earth, and it was given the key to the shaft which leads down to the Abyss. [2]The shaft of the Abyss was opened, and smoke came out of the pit like the smoke from a great furnace. The sun and the air became dark with the smoke from the pit. [3]Then, out of that smoke, there appeared locusts on the earth, and they were given authority like the authority of scorpions on the earth. [4]They were told not to harm the grass on the earth, nor any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. [5]They were given instructions not to kill them, but to torture them for five months, and their torture was like the torture inflicted when a scorpion stings someone. [6]In those days people will look for death, and won't find it. They will long to die, and death will run away from them.

[7]In appearance, the locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. They had what seemed to be crowns of gold on their heads, and their faces were like human faces. [8]They had hair like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. [9]They had breastplates like iron breastplates, and the sound of their wings was like the noise of many horse-drawn chariots charging into battle. [10]They have tails like scorpions' tails, and stings as well, and their tails have the power to harm people for five months. [11]They have as their king the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and whose name in Greek is Apollyon.

[12]The first Woe has come and gone. The next two Woes are on the way after this.

The fiery riders

[13]Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet. I heard a lone voice from the four horns of the golden altar in front of God, [14]addressing the sixth angel, who had the trumpet.

'Release the four angels,' said the voice, 'the ones who are tied up by the Great River, the Euphrates.' [15]So the four angels were released. They had been prepared for this hour, day, month and year, so that they would kill a third of the human race. [16]The number of the troops and horsemen was two hundred million. (I heard the number.) [17]As I looked, this is how the horses and their riders appeared. They had breastplates made of fire, sapphire and sulphur. Their heads were like lions' heads, and fire, smoke and brimstone came out of their mouths. [18]One-third of the human race was killed by these three plagues, by the fire, smoke and sulphur that came out of their mouths. [19]The power of the horses, you see, is in their mouths and their tails, since their tails are like serpents with heads. That is how they do their damage.

[20]All the other people, the ones who had not been killed in these plagues, did not repent of the things they had made. They did not stop worshipping demons – idols made of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood, which cannot see, hear or walk. [21]Nor did they repent of their murders, or their magic, or their fornication, or their stealing.

A little scroll

10 Then I saw another strong angel coming down from heaven, dressed in a cloud. Over his head was a rainbow; his face was like the sun, and his feet were like fiery pillars. [2]He was holding a small scroll, open, in his hand. Placing his right foot on the sea, and his left on the land, [3]he shouted in a loud voice like a lion roaring. When he shouted, the seven thunders answered with their own voices. [4]When the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven. 'Seal up what the seven thunders said,' instructed the voice. 'Don't write it down.'

[5]Then the angel whom I had seen standing on the sea and the land raised his right hand towards heaven [6]and swore an oath by the One who lives for ever and ever, who made heaven and what it contains, the earth and what it contains, and the sea and what it contains. This was the oath: that there would be no more time, [7]but that God's mystery would be completed in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, who was going to blow his trumpet. That is what he had announced to his servants the prophets.

[8]The voice I had heard from heaven spoke to me again. 'Go,' it said, 'and take the open scroll from the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land.' [9]So I went up to the angel.

'Give me the little scroll,' I said.

'Take it,' he said to me, 'and eat it. It will be bitter in your stomach, but sweet as honey in your mouth.' [10]So I took the little scroll from the angel's hand, and I ate it. It tasted like sweet honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach felt bitter. [11]'You must prophesy again', he said to me, 'about many peoples, nations, languages and kingdoms.'

Two witnesses

11 Then a measuring rod like a staff was given to me. ‘Get up,’ said a voice, ‘and measure God’s temple, and the altar, and
those who are worshipping in it. [2]But leave out the outer court of the temple. Don’t measure it. It is given to the nations, and
they will trample the holy city for forty-two months. [3]I will give my two witnesses the task of prophesying, clothed in sackcloth,
for those one thousand two hundred and sixty days. [4]These two are the two olive trees, the two lampstands, which stand before the
Lord of the earth. [5]If anyone wants to harm them, fire comes out of their mouths and devours their enemies. So if anyone wants to
harm them, that is how such a person must be killed. [6]These two have authority to shut up the sky, so that it will not rain during
the days of their prophecy. They have authority over the waters, to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with any plague, as
often as they see fit. [7]When they have completed their testimony, the monster that comes up from the Abyss will make war on
them, and will defeat and kill them. [8]Their bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which is spiritually called Sodom and
Egypt, where their Lord was crucified. [9]Their bodies will be seen by the peoples, tribes, languages and nations for three and a half
days. They will not allow their bodies to be buried in a tomb. [10]The inhabitants of the earth will celebrate over them, and make
merry, and send presents to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who live on earth.’
[11]After the three and a half days the spirit of life from God came in to them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell
on all who saw them. [12]Then they heard a loud voice from heaven. ‘Come up here!’ it said. And they went up to heaven on a
cloud, with their enemies looking on. [13]At that moment there was a huge earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell, and seven
thousand of the people were killed by the earthquake. The rest were very much afraid, and glorified the God of heaven.
[14]The second Woe has passed. The third Woe is coming very soon.

The song of triumph

[15]The seventh angel blew his trumpet, and loud voices were heard from heaven. ‘Now the kingdom of the world has passed to our
Lord and his Messiah,’ said the voices, ‘and he will reign for ever and ever.’ [16]The twenty-four elders sitting on their thrones in
God’s presence fell on their faces and worshipped God.
[17]This is what they said:

‘Almighty Lord God, we give you our thanks,

Who Is and Who Was,
because you have taken your power, your great power,
and begun to reign.
[18]The nations were raging; your anger came down
and with it the time for judging the dead
to give the reward to your servants the prophets,
the holy ones, too, and the small and the great –
those who fear your name.

It is time to destroy the destroyers of earth.’

[19]God’s temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant appeared inside his temple. There were flashes of lightning,
rumblings, thunderclaps, an earthquake, and heavy hail.

The woman and the dragon

12 Then a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve
stars on her head. [2]She was expecting a child, and she cried out in pain, in the agony of giving birth. [3]Then another sign
appeared in heaven: a great fiery-red dragon with seven heads and ten horns. On its heads were seven coronets, [4]and its tail swept
a third of the stars out of heaven and threw them down to the earth. The dragon stood opposite the woman who was about to give
birth, so that he could devour her child when it was born. [5]She gave birth to a male child, who is going to rule all the nations with
a rod of iron. And the child was snatched away to God and to his throne. [6]The woman, meanwhile, fled into the desert, where a
place has been prepared for her by God, so that she could be looked after there for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

The dragon is angry

[7]Then war broke out in heaven, with Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fighting
back. [8]But they could not win, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. [9]So the great dragon was thrown down to
the earth – the ancient serpent who is called the devil and the satan, who deceives the whole world. His angels were thrown down
with him. [10]Then I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, ‘Now at last has come salvation and power: the kingdom of our God and
the authority of his Messiah! The accuser of our family has been thrown down, the one who accuses them before God day and
night. [11]They conquered him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony, because they did not love their lives
unto death. [12]So rejoice, you heavens and all who live there! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to
you in great anger, knowing that he only has a short time.’
[13]When the dragon saw that he had been cast down to the earth, he set off in pursuit of the woman who had borne the baby boy.
[14]The woman, however, was given a pair of wings from a great eagle, so that she could fly away from the presence of the serpent

into the desert, to the place where she is looked after for a time, two times and half a time. [15]The serpent, for its part, spat out of its mouth a jet of water like a river after the woman, to carry her off with the force of the water. [16]But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing up the river which the dragon had spat out of his mouth. [17]Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to wage war against the rest of her children, those who keep God's commands and the testimony of Jesus. [18]And he stood on the sand beside the sea.

A first monster

13 Then I saw a monster coming up out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads. Each of the ten horns was wearing a coronet, and blasphemous names were written on the heads. [2]The monster I saw was like a leopard, with bear's feet and a lion's mouth. And the dragon gave the monster its power and its throne and great authority. [3]One of the heads appeared to have been slaughtered and killed, but its fatal wound had been healed. The whole earth was awed and astonished by the monster, [4]and worshipped the dragon because it had given the monster its authority. They worshipped the monster too. 'Who is like the monster?' they were saying. 'Who can fight against it?' [5]And the monster was given a mouth that speaks great, blasphemous words, and was given authority for forty-two months. [6]It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, to curse his name and his dwelling place – that is, those who dwell in heaven. [7]It was granted the right to make war against God's holy people and to defeat them, and it was given authority over every tribe and people and language and nation. [8]So everyone who lived on earth worshipped it – everyone, that is, whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life belonging to the lamb who was slaughtered.

[9]If anyone has ears, let them hear!

[10]If anyone is to be taken captive, into captivity they will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword they will be killed. This is a summons for God's holy people to be patient and have faith.

A second monster

[11]Then I saw another monster coming up from the earth. It had two horns like those of a lamb, and it spoke like a dragon. [12]It acts in the presence of the first monster and with its full authority, and it makes the earth and those who live on it worship the first monster, whose fatal wound had been healed. [13]It performs great signs, so that it even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of people, [14]and it deceives the people who live on earth by the signs which it has been allowed to perform in front of the monster, instructing the earth's inhabitants to make an image of the monster who had the sword-wound but was alive. [15]It was allowed to give breath to the monster's image, so that the monster's image could speak, and it could kill anyone who didn't worship the monster's image. [16]It makes everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slaves, receive a sign from it, marked on their right hands and on their foreheads, [17]so that nobody can buy or sell unless they have the mark of the name of the monster or the number of its name.

[18]This calls for wisdom. Anyone with a good head on their shoulders should work out the monster's number, because it's the number of a human being. Its number is Six Hundred and Sixty-Six.

The lamb's elite warriors

14 As I watched, there was the lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him were a hundred and forty-four thousand who had his name, and the name of his father, written on their foreheads. [2]I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters, and like the sound of mighty thunder, and the voice I heard was like harpists playing on their harps. [3]And they are singing a new song before the throne, and before the four creatures and the elders. Nobody can learn that song except for the hundred and forty-four thousand who have been redeemed from the earth. [4]These are the ones who have never polluted themselves with women; they are celibate. They follow the lamb wherever he goes. They have been redeemed from the human race as first fruits for God and the lamb, [5]and no lie has been found in their mouths. They are without blemish.

A call for endurance

[6]Then I saw another angel flying in mid-heaven, carrying an eternal gospel to announce to those who live on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. [7]He spoke with a loud voice, and this is what he said: 'Fear God! Give him glory! The time has come for his judgment! Worship the one who made heaven and earth and the sea and the springs of water!'

[8]He was followed by another angel, and this is what he said: 'Babylon the great has fallen! She has fallen! She is the one who made all the nations drink the wine of the anger that comes upon her fornication.'

[9]They were followed by a third angel, who also spoke in a loud voice: 'If anyone worships the monster and its image, or receives its mark on their forehead or their hand, [10]that person will drink the wine of God's anger, poured neat into the cup of his anger, and they will be tortured in fire and sulphur before the holy angels and before the lamb. [11]The smoke of their torture goes up for ever and ever. Those who worship the monster and its image, and those who receive the mark of its name, will have no respite, day or night.'

[12]This demands patience from God's holy people, who keep God's commands and the faith of Jesus.

[13]Then I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Write this: God's blessing on the dead who from this time onward die in the Lord.'

'Yes,' says the spirit, 'so that they may rest from their works, for the deeds they have done follow after them.'

Reaping the harvest

[14]Then I looked, and there was a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud one like a son of man. He had a gold crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand. [15]And another angel came out of the temple, shouting in a loud voice to the one who was sitting on the cloud, 'It's harvest time! Put in your sickle and reap: the harvest of the earth is ripe!' [16]So the one sitting on the cloud applied his sickle to the earth, and reaped the harvest of the earth.

[17]Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven. He, too, had a sharp sickle. [18]Yet another angel came from the altar; he had authority over fire, and he spoke with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle. 'Go to work with your sharp sickle,' he said, 'and gather the clusters of fruit from the vine of the earth; the grapes are there in ripe bunches!' [19]So the angel went to work with his sickle on the earth, and gathered the fruit from the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of God's anger. [20]The winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for about two hundred miles.

Preparing the final plagues

15 Then I saw another sign – a great, amazing sight in heaven: seven angels who were bringing the seven last plagues. With them God's anger is completed. [2]And I saw what looked like a sea of glass, mixed with fire. There, by that glassy sea, stood the people who had won the victory over the monster and over its image, and over the number of its name. They were holding harps of God, [3]and they were singing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the lamb. This is how it went:

Great and amazing are your works,

O Lord God, the Almighty one.
Just and true are your ways,
O King of the nations.
[4]Who will not fear you, Lord,
and glorify your name?
For you alone are holy.
For all nations shall come
and worship before you,

because your judgments have been revealed.

[5]After this I looked, and the temple of the 'tabernacle of witness' was opened in heaven. [6]The seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple, clothed in clean, shining linen, wearing golden belts across their chests. [7]Then one of the four living creatures gave the seven angels seven golden bowls filled with the anger of the God who lives for ever and ever. [8]The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and his power. Nobody was able to go into the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels had been completed.

The first four plagues

16 Then I heard a loud voice coming from the temple, addressing the seven angels. 'Off you go,' said the voice, 'and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of God's anger.' [2]So the first one went off and poured out his bowl on the earth, and foul, painful sores came on the people who had the mark of the monster, and those who worshipped its image. [3]The second one poured his bowl on the sea, and it turned into blood like that from a corpse. Every living thing in the sea died. [4]The third one poured his bowl on the rivers and the springs of water, and they turned into blood. [5]Then I heard the angel of the waters saying,

'You are the one Who Is and Who Was,

you are the holy one, and you are just!
you have passed the righteous sentence:
[6]they spilt the blood of saints and prophets
and you have given them blood to drink.

They deserve it.'

[7]And I heard the altar respond, 'Yes, Lord God Almighty, your judgments are true and just.'

[8]Then the fourth angel poured his bowl upon the sun, and it was allowed to burn people with its fire. [9]People were burned up by its great heat, and they cursed the name of the God who had authority over these plagues. They did not repent or give him glory.

The last three plagues

[10]Then the fifth angel poured his bowl upon the throne of the monster. Its kingdom was plunged into darkness, and people chewed their tongues because of the pain [11]and cursed the God of heaven because of their agonies and their terrible sores. They did not repent of what they had been doing.

[12]Then the sixth angel poured his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up in order to prepare the way for

the kings from the rising sun. [13]Then I saw three unclean spirits coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the monster, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. They were like frogs. [14]These are the spirits of demons, who perform signs and go off to the kings of the whole earth, to gather them together for war on the great day of Almighty God. [15](Look – I am coming like a thief! God's blessing on the one who stays awake, and on those who keep their robes about them, so as not to go around naked and have their shame exposed!) [16]And they gathered the kings together at the place which in Hebrew is called Mount Megiddo.

[17]Then the seventh angel poured his bowl on the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne. 'It is done!' said the voice. [18]And there were lightnings and rumblings, and thunderclaps and a great earthquake, such as there had never been before, no, not such a great earthquake since the time that humans came on the earth. [19]The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. Then Babylon the Great was recalled in the presence of God, so that he could give her the cup of the wine of his anger. [20]Every island fled away, and the mountains disappeared. [21]Enormous hailstones, each weighing a hundred pounds, fell from the sky on people. They cursed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was terrible.

Babylon the Great

17 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came over and spoke to me. 'Come with me,' he said, 'and I will show you the judgment of the great whore who sits on many waters. [2]She is the one with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication; she is the one whose fornication has been the wine that has made all the earth-dwellers drunk.'

[3]So he took me away, in the spirit, to the desert. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet monster. It was full of blasphemous names, and had seven heads and ten horns. [4]The woman was wearing purple and scarlet, and was decked out with gold, precious stones and pearls. In her hand she was holding a golden goblet, full of abominations and the impurities of her fornications. [5]On her forehead was written a name: 'Mystery! Babylon the Great, Mother of Whores and of Earth's Abominations!' [6]I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of God's holy people, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. When I saw her, I was very greatly astonished.

[7]'Why are you so astonished?' asked the angel. 'I will explain to you the secret of the woman, and of the monster that is carrying her, the one which has the seven heads and the ten horns. [8]The monster you saw was, and is not, and is due to come up from the Abyss and go to destruction. All the inhabitants of the earth will be amazed – all, that is, whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world – when they see the monster that was and is not and is to come.

The monster and the whore

[9]'This is a moment for a wise and discerning mind. The seven heads are seven hills, on which the woman sits. And there are seven kings; [10]five have fallen, one is still there, and the other has not yet arrived, and when he does come he is destined to remain for only a short time. [11]And the monster, which was and is not, he is the eighth king. He is also one of the seven, and he goes to destruction. [12]The ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received their kingdom, but will receive their authority as kings with the monster for a single hour. [13]All of these are of one mind: they give their power and authority to the monster. [14]They will make war with the lamb, and the lamb will conquer them, because he is Lord of lords and King of kings. Those with him are called and chosen and faithful.

[15]'As for the waters you saw,' he continued, 'where the whore was sitting, these are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. [16]The ten horns you saw, and the monster, will hate the whore and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and then burn her in the fire. [17]God has put it into their hearts to do his will and, with a single purpose, to give their kingdom to the monster, until God's words are completed. [18]The woman which you saw is the great city that has royal dominion over the kings of the earth.'

Babylon's plagues

18 After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven with great authority; the earth was flooded with the light of his glory. [2]He shouted out in a strong voice, and this is what he said: 'Babylon the great has fallen! She has fallen! She has become a place for demons to live, a refuge for every unclean spirit, a refuge for every unclean bird, a refuge for every unclean, hateful monster. [3]All the nations drank from the wine of the wrath of her fornication; the kings of the earth committed fornication with her, and the traders of the earth became rich from the power of her luxury.'

[4]Then I heard another voice from heaven, and this is what it said: 'Come out of her, my people, so that you don't become embroiled in her sins, and so that you don't receive any of her plagues. [5]Her sins are piled up to the sky, and God has remembered her wickedness. [6]Pay her back as she has paid others; give her double again for all her deeds. Mix her a double dose in her own cup – the cup in which she mixed her poisons. [7]She made herself glorious and lived in luxury; balance that by giving her torture and sorrow! She said in her heart, "I'm the queen! I'm on the throne! I'm not a widow! I'm never going to be a mourner!" [8]Therefore her plagues will come in a single day, death, mourning and famine, and she will be burned with fire, because God the Lord, who judges her, is strong.'

Babylon's judgment

[9]The kings of the earth who committed fornication with her and shared her luxury will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke from her fire. [10]They will stand far off, fearful of her tortures. 'Alas, alas,' they will say, 'the great city! Babylon the

powerful city! Your judgment has come in a single hour.' [11]The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, because nobody will buy their cargo any more, [12]their cargo of gold and silver, of precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, all the sweet-smelling wood, carved ivory, vessels of expensive wood, brass, iron, marble, [13]cinnamon, oriental spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, olive oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle, sheep, horses, chariots and bodies . . . yes, human lives.

[14]All the fruit for which you longed has gone from you; all your luxuries and sparkling objects have been destroyed; you won't find them any more. [15]The merchants who sold these things, and who made themselves rich from her, will stand a long way off for fear of her tortures. They will weep and mourn, [16]and say, 'Alas, alas! The great city! It was clothed in fine linen, purple and scarlet, decked out in gold, precious stones and pearls – [17]but in a single hour such great wealth has been destroyed!'

All the master mariners, all those who ply their ships to and fro, all sailors, and all who do business on the sea, stood a long way off [18]and shouted out when they saw the smoke of her fire. 'Who is like the great city?' they said. [19]They threw dust on their heads and shouted out, weeping and mourning. 'Alas, alas,' they said, 'the great city! Everyone who had ships on the sea could get rich from her wealth, but in a single hour she has become a desert.'

[20]Celebrate over her, heaven, and you holy ones, apostles and prophets, because God has passed against her the sentence she passed against you.

[21]Then a strong angel picked up a rock like a huge millstone and hurled it into the sea, with these words: 'Babylon the great city will be thrown down like that with a splash, and will never be seen again! [22]Never again will people hear the sound of harps, musicians, flute players and trumpeters in you. Never again will there be any skilled workmen plying their trade in you. Never again will people hear the sound of the mill in you. [23]Never again will anyone see the light of a lamp in you. Never again will anyone hear the voice of bridegroom and bride in you. Your merchants were the mighty ones of the earth; all the nations were deceived by your magic.'

[24]In her has been found the blood of prophets and God's holy ones, and all those who have been slaughtered on the earth.

God's victory

19 After this I heard something like a loud voice coming from a huge crowd in heaven. 'Alleluia!' they were saying. 'Salvation and glory and power belong to our God! [2]His judgments are true and just! He has judged the great whore who corrupted the earth with her fornication, and he has avenged the blood of his servants for which she was responsible.' [3]Once more they said, 'Alleluia! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever.'

[4]Then the twenty-four elders and the four creatures fell down and worshipped God who is seated on the throne. 'Amen!' they said. 'Alleluia!' [5]And a voice came from the throne: 'Give praise to our God, all you his servants, and you who fear him, both small and great.' [6]Then I heard something like the sound of a great crowd, like the sound of many waters, and like the sound of strong thunder, saying, 'Alleluia! The Lord our God, the Almighty, has become king! [7]Let us celebrate and rejoice and give him the glory, because the marriage of the lamb has come, and his bride has prepared herself. [8]She has been given shining, pure linen to wear.' (The linen is the righteous deeds of God's holy people.)

[9]'Write this,' he said to me. 'God's blessing on those who are called to the marriage supper of the lamb.' And he added, 'These words are the true words of God.' [10]I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, 'Look! Don't do that! I am a fellow-servant with you, and with your brothers and sisters who hold on to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God!' (The testimony of Jesus, you see, is the spirit of prophecy.)

The monster defeated

[11]Then I saw heaven opened, and there was a white horse. The one who was sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and he judges and makes war justly. [12]His eyes are like a flaming fire, and there are many coronets on his head. He has a name written there which nobody knows except himself. [13]He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and he is called by the name 'God's Word'. [14]The armies of heaven follow him on white horses, all wearing shining, pure linen. [15]A sharp two-edged sword is coming out of his mouth, so that with it he can strike down the nations. He will rule them with a rod of iron, and he will tread the winepress of the wine of the anger of the wrath of Almighty God. [16]On his robe, and on his thigh, is written a name: King of kings, and Lord of lords.

[17]Then I saw a single angel standing in the sun, and shouting in a loud voice, calling to all the birds that fly in mid-heaven: 'Come here! Gather round! This is God's great feast! [18]Come and eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of generals, the flesh of the strong, the flesh of horses and their riders, the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great!' [19]And I saw the monster and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered for war with the one who sits on the horse and with his army. [20]And the monster was captured, and with it the false prophet who had performed the signs in its presence, with which it had deceived those who received the monster's mark and those who worshipped its image. The two of them were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with sulphur. [21]All the rest were killed by the sword which came out of the mouth of the one who was sitting on the horse. All the birds feasted on their flesh.

Reigning for a thousand years

20 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven. In his hand he held the key to the Abyss, and a large chain. [2]He grabbed hold of the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is the devil and the satan. He tied him up for a thousand years, [3]threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, so that he wouldn't be able to deceive the nations any more, until the thousand years were complete. After that he must be let out for a short time.

[4]Then I saw thrones, with people sitting on them, who were given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had had their heads cut off because they had borne witness to Jesus, and because of the word of God; and also those who had not worshipped the monster or its image, and had not received the mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life, and reigned with the Messiah for a thousand years. [5]The rest of the dead did not come back to life until the thousand years were complete. This is the first resurrection. [6]Blessed and holy is the one who has a share in the first resurrection! The second death has no power over them. They will be priests to God and the Messiah, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

Final judgment

[7]When the thousand years are complete, the satan will be released from his prison. [8]Out he will come to deceive the nations at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog. He will summon them for battle, a throng like the sand of the sea in number. [9]They came up over the full width of the earth, and closed in on the place where God's holy people are encamped, and the beloved city. Then fire came down from heaven and burnt them up. [10]And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur where the monster and the false prophet had already been thrown. They will be tortured day and night for ever and ever.
[11]Then I saw a large white throne, and the one who was sitting on it. Earth and heaven fled away from his presence, and there was no room left for them. [12]Then I saw the dead, great and small, standing in front of the throne. Books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged on the basis of what was written in the books, in accordance with what they had done. [13]The sea gave back the dead that were in it; Death and Hades gave back the dead that were in them; and each was judged in accordance with what they had done. [14]Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. [15]And if anyone was not found written in the book of life, they were thrown into the lake of fire.

New heaven, new earth

21 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. [2]And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven, from God, prepared like a bride dressed up for her husband. [3]I heard a loud voice from the throne, and this is what it said: 'Look! God has come to dwell with humans! He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. [4]He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, or mourning or weeping or pain any more, since the first things have passed away.'
[5]The one who sat on the throne said, 'Look, I am making all things new.' And he said, 'Write, because these words are faithful and true.'

New Jerusalem

[6]Then he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will freely give water to the thirsty, water from the spring of the water of life. [7]The one who conquers will inherit these things. I will be his God and he shall be my son. [8]But as for cowards, faithless people, the unclean, murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, idolaters and all liars – their destiny will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulphur, which is the second death.'
[9]Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came over and spoke to me. 'Come with me,' he said, 'and I will show you the bride, the wife of the lamb.' [10]Then he took me in the spirit up a great high mountain, and he showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. [11]It has the glory of God; it is radiant, like the radiance of a rare and precious jewel, like a jasper stone, crystal-clear. [12]It has a great high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names inscribed on the gates, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. [13]There are three gates coming in from the east, three gates from the north, three gates from the south and three gates from the west. [14]And the wall of the city has twelve foundation-stones, and on them are written the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the lamb.
[15]The one who was talking with me had a golden measuring-rod, so that he could measure the city, its gates, and its wall. [16]The city stands foursquare, with the same length and breadth. He measured the city with his rod: it was twelve thousand stadia (that is, fifteen hundred miles), with the length, the breadth and the height being equal. [17]Then he measured its wall, and it was one hundred and forty-four cubits in terms of human measurement (which was what the angel was using). [18]The material of which the wall is built is jasper, and the city itself is pure gold, like pure glass. [19]The foundations of the city wall are decorated with every kind of precious stone: the first foundation is jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, [20]the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. [21]The twelve gates are twelve pearls, with each gate consisting of a single pearl. The street of the city is pure gold, clear as glass.

God and the lamb are there

[22]I saw no temple in the city, because the Lord God the Almighty is its temple, together with the lamb. [23]And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the lamb. [24]The nations will walk in its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. [25]Its gates will never be shut by day, for there will be no night there. [26]They will bring the glory and the honour of the nations into it. [27]Nothing that has not been made holy will ever come into it, nor will anyone who practises abomination or who tells lies, but only those who are written in the lamb's book of life.

22 Then he showed me the river of the water of life. It was sparkling like crystal, and flowing from the throne of God and of the
[2]through the middle of the street of the city. On either bank of the river was growing the tree of life. It produces twelve kinds
of fruit, bearing this fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. [3]Nothing accursed is there
any more. Rather, the throne of God and of the lamb are in the city, and his servants will worship him; [4]they will see his face, and
his name will be on their foreheads. [5]There will be no more night, and they will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun,
because the Lord God will shine on them; and they will reign for ever and ever.

[6]'These words', he said to me, 'are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place. [7]Look, I am coming soon. God's blessing on the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.'

'I am coming soon!'

[8]I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard them and saw them, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed them to me. [9]'Look! Don't do that!' he said to me. 'I am a fellow-servant with you, and with the other members of your prophetic family, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!

[10]'Don't seal up the words of the prophecy of this book,' he added. 'The time is near, you see. [11]Let the unjust go on being unjust, and the filthy go on being filthy – and let the just go on doing justice, and let the holy still be holy.

[12]'Look! I am coming soon. I will bring my reward with me, and I will pay everyone back according to what they have done. [13]I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.'

[14]God's blessing on those who wash their clothes, so that they may have the right to eat from the tree of life and may enter the city by its gates. [15]But the dogs, the sorcerers, the fornicators, the murderers, the idolaters, and everyone who loves to invent lies – they will all be outside.

[16]'I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am David's root and offspring; I am the bright morning star.'

[17]The spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let anyone who hears say, 'Come!' Let the thirsty come; let anyone who wants the water of life take it freely.

[18]I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to that person the plagues that are written in this book. [19]And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away that person's share in the tree of life, and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

[20]The one who gives this testimony says, 'Yes, I am coming soon!'

Amen! Come, Lord Jesus.

[21]The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all.

A New Testament glossary

accuser, the,
See satan, the.

age to come
See present age.

apostle, disciple, the Twelve
'Apostle' means 'one who is sent'. It could be used of an ambassador or official delegate. In the New Testament it is sometimes used specifically of Jesus' inner circle of twelve, but Paul sees not only himself but several others outside the Twelve as 'apostles', the criterion being whether the person had personally seen the risen Jesus. Jesus' own choice of twelve close associates symbolized his plan to renew God's people, Israel (who traditionally thought of themselves as having twelve tribes); after the death of Judas Iscariot (Matthew 27.5; Acts 1.18), Matthias was chosen by lot to take his place, preserving the symbolic meaning. During Jesus' lifetime they, and many other followers, were seen as his 'disciples', which means 'pupils' or 'apprentices'.

baptism
Literally, 'plunging' people into water. From within a wider Jewish tradition of ritual washings and bathings, John the Baptist undertook a vocation of baptizing people in the Jordan, not as one ritual among others but as a unique moment of repentance, preparing them for the coming of the kingdom of God. Jesus himself was baptized by John, identifying himself with this renewal movement and developing it in his own way. His followers in turn baptized others. After his resurrection, and the sending of the holy spirit, baptism became the normal sign and means of entry into the community of Jesus' people. As early as Paul, it was aligned both with the exodus from Egypt (1 Corinthians 10.2) and with Jesus' death and resurrection (Romans 6.2–11).

Christ
See Messiah.

circumcision
The cutting off of the foreskin. Male circumcision was a major mark of identity for Jews, following its initial commandment to Abraham (Genesis 17), reinforced by Joshua (Joshua 5.2–9). Other peoples, for example the Egyptians, also circumcised male children. A line of thought from Deuteronomy (e.g. 30.6), through Jeremiah (e.g. 31.33), to the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament (e.g. Romans 2.29) speaks of 'circumcision of the heart' as God's real desire, by which one may become inwardly what the male Jew is outwardly, that is, marked out as part of God's people. At periods of Jewish assimilation into the surrounding culture, some Jews tried to remove the marks of circumcision (e.g. 1 Maccabees 1.11–15).

covenant
At the heart of Jewish belief is the conviction that the one God, YHWH, who had made the whole world, had called Abraham and his family to belong to him in a special way. The promises God made to Abraham and his family, and the requirements that were laid on them as a result, came to be seen in terms either of the agreement that a king would make with a subject people, or of the marriage bond between husband and wife. One regular way of describing this relationship was 'covenant', which can thus include both promise and law. The covenant was renewed at Mount Sinai with the giving of the Torah; in Deuteronomy before the entry to the promised land; and, in a more focused way, with David (e.g. Psalm 89). Jeremiah 31 promised that, after the punishment of exile, God would make a 'new covenant' with his people, forgiving them and binding them to him more intimately. Jesus believed that this was coming true through his kingdom-proclamation and his death and resurrection. The early Christians developed these ideas in various ways, believing that in Jesus the promises had at last been fulfilled.

demons
See satan, the.

devil
See satan, the.

disciple
See apostle.

exile
Deuteronomy (27—30) warned that if Israel disobeyed YHWH, he would send his people into exile, but that if they then repented he would bring them back. When the Babylonians sacked Jerusalem and took the people into exile, prophets such as Jeremiah interpreted this as the fulfilment of this prophecy, and made further promises about how long exile would last (seventy years, according to Jeremiah 25.12; 29.10). Sure enough, exiles began to return in the late sixth century BC (Ezra 1.1). However, the post-exilic period was largely a disappointment, since the people were still enslaved to foreigners (Nehemiah 9.36); and, at the height of persecution by the Syrians, Daniel 9.2, 24 spoke of the 'real' exile lasting not for seventy years but for seventy *weeks* of years, that is, 490 years. Longing for the real 'return from exile', when the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and so on, would be fulfilled, and redemption from pagan oppression accomplished, continued to characterize many Jewish movements, and was a major theme in Jesus' proclamation and his summons to repentance.

faith

Faith in the New Testament covers a wide area of human trust and trustworthiness, merging into love at one end of the scale and loyalty at the other. Within Jewish and Christian thinking, faith in God also includes *belief*, accepting certain things as true about God, and what he has done in the world (e.g. bringing Israel out of Egypt; raising Jesus from the dead). For Jesus, 'faith' often seems to mean 'recognizing that God is decisively at work to bring the kingdom through Jesus'. For Paul, 'faith' is both the specific belief that Jesus is Lord and that God raised him from the dead (Romans 10.9) and the response of grateful human love to sovereign divine love (Galatians 2.20). This faith is, for Paul, the solitary badge of membership in God's people in Christ, marking them out in a way that Torah, and the works it prescribes, can never do.

fellowship
The word we often translate 'fellowship' can mean a business partnership (in the ancient world, businesses were often run by families, so there's a sense of family loyalty as well), or it can mean a sense of mutual belonging and sharing in some other corporate enterprise. Within early Christianity, 'fellowship' acquired the sense not just of belonging to one another as Christians, but of a shared belonging to Jesus Christ, and a participation in his life through the spirit, expressed in such actions as the 'breaking of bread' and the sharing of property with those in need.

forgiveness
Jesus made forgiveness central to his message and ministry, not least because he was claiming to be launching God's long-awaited 'new covenant' (Jeremiah 31.31–34) in which sins would at last be forgiven (Matthew 26.28). Forgiveness doesn't mean God, or someone else, saying, of some particular fault or sin, 'It didn't really matter' or 'I didn't really mind'. The point of forgiveness is that it *did* matter, God (and/or other people) really *did* mind, but they are not going to hold it against the offender. It isn't, in other words, the same thing as 'tolerance': to forgive is not to tolerate sin, but to see clearly that it was wrong and then to treat the offender as though it hadn't happened. The early Christian answer to the obvious question 'How could a holy and righteous God do that?' is 'Through the death of Jesus'. What's more, Jesus commanded his followers to extend the same forgiveness to one another (Matthew 6.12). Not to do so is to shut up the same door through which forgiveness is received for oneself (Matthew 18.21–35).

Gehenna, hell
Gehenna is, literally, the valley of Hinnom, on the south-west slopes of Jerusalem. From ancient times it was used as a garbage dump, smouldering with a continual fire. Already by the time of Jesus some Jews used it as an image for the place of punishment after death. Jesus' own usage blends the two meanings in his warnings both to Jerusalem itself (unless it repents, the whole city will become a smouldering heap of garbage) and to people in general (to beware of God's final judgment).

Gentiles
The Jews divided the world into Jews and non-Jews. The Hebrew word for non-Jews, *goyim*, carries overtones both of family identity (i.e. not of Jewish ancestry) and of worship (i.e. of idols, not of the one true God YHWH). Though many Jews established good relations with Gentiles, not least in the Jewish diaspora (the dispersion of Jews away from Palestine), officially there were taboos against closer contact such as intermarriage. In the New Testament the Greek word *ethne*, 'nations', carries the same meanings as *goyim*. Part of Paul's overmastering agenda was to insist that Gentiles who believed in Jesus had full rights in the Christian community alongside believing Jews, without having to become circumcised.

good news, gospel, message, word
The idea of 'good news', for which an older English word is 'gospel', had two principal meanings for first-century Jews. First, with roots in Isaiah, it meant the news of YHWH's long-awaited victory over evil and rescue of his people. Second, it was used in the Roman world of the accession, or birthday, of the emperor. Since for Jesus and Paul the announcement of God's inbreaking kingdom was both the fulfilment of prophecy and a challenge to the world's present rulers, 'gospel' became an important shorthand for both the message of Jesus himself and the apostolic message about him. Paul saw this message as itself the vehicle of God's saving power (Romans 1.16; 1 Thessalonians 2.13).

gospel
See good news.

heaven
Heaven is God's dimension of the created order (Genesis 1.1; Psalm 115.16; Matthew 6.9), whereas 'earth' is the world of space, time and matter that we know. 'Heaven' thus sometimes stands, reverentially, for 'God' (as in Matthew's regular 'kingdom of heaven'). Normally hidden from human sight, heaven is occasionally revealed or unveiled so that people can see God's dimension of ordinary life (e.g. 2 Kings 6.17; Revelation 1, 4—5). Heaven in the New Testament is thus not usually seen as the place where God's people go after death; at the end, the new Jerusalem descends *from* heaven *to* earth, joining the two dimensions for ever. 'Entering the kingdom of heaven' does not mean 'going to heaven after death', but belonging in the present to the people who steer their earthly course by the standards and purposes of heaven (cf. the Lord's Prayer: 'as in heaven, so on earth', Matthew 6.10), and who are assured of membership in the age to come.

hell
See Gehenna.

high priest
See priests.

holy spirit
In Genesis 1.2, the spirit is God's presence and power *within* creation, without God being identified with creation. The same spirit entered people, notably the prophets, enabling them to speak and act for God. At his baptism by John, Jesus was specially

equipped with the spirit, resulting in his remarkable public career (Acts 10.38). After his resurrection, his followers were themselves filled (Acts 2) by the same spirit, now identified as Jesus' own spirit; the creator God was acting afresh, remaking the world and them too. The spirit enabled them to live out a holiness which the Torah could not, producing 'fruit' in their lives, giving them 'gifts' with which to serve God, the world and the church, and assuring them of future resurrection (Romans 8; Galatians 4—5; 1 Corinthians 12—14). From very early in Christianity (e.g. Galatians 4.1–7), the spirit became part of the new revolutionary definition of God himself: 'the one who sends the son and the spirit of the son'.

justification
God's declaration, from his position as judge of all the world, that someone is in the right, despite universal sin. This declaration will be made on the last day on the basis of an entire life (Romans 2.1–16), but is brought forward into the present on the basis of Jesus' achievement, because sin has been dealt with through his cross (Romans 3.21—4.25); the means of this present justification is simply faith. This means, particularly, that Jews and Gentiles alike are full members of the family promised by God to Abraham (Galatians 3; Romans 4).

kingdom of God, kingdom of heaven
Best understood as the king*ship*, or sovereign and saving rule, of Israel's God YHWH as celebrated in several psalms (e.g. 99.1) and prophecies (e.g. Daniel 6.26f.). Because YHWH was the creator God, when he finally became King in the way he intended this would involve setting the world to right, and particularly rescuing Israel from its enemies. 'Kingdom of God' and various equivalents (e.g. 'No king but God!') became a revolutionary slogan around the time of Jesus. Jesus' own announcement of God's kingdom redefined these expectations around his own very different plan and vocation. His invitation to people to 'enter' the kingdom was a way of summoning them to allegiance to himself and his programme, seen as the start of God's long-awaited saving reign. For Jesus, the kingdom was coming not in a single move, but in stages, of which his own public career was one, his death and resurrection another, and a still future consummation another. Note that 'kingdom of heaven' is Matthew's preferred form for the same phrase, following a regular Jewish practice of saying 'heaven' rather than 'God'. It does not refer to a place ('heaven'), but to the fact of God's becoming King in and through Jesus and his achievement. Paul speaks of Jesus as Messiah, already in possession of his kingdom, waiting to hand it over finally to the father (1 Corinthians 15.23–28; cf. Ephesians 5.5).

last days
Ancient Jews thought of world history as divided into two periods: 'the present age' and 'the age to come'. The present age was a time when evil was still at large in its many forms; the age to come would usher in God's final reign of justice, peace, joy and love. Ancient prophets had spoken of the transition from the one age to the other in terms of the 'last days', meaning either the final moments of the 'present age' or the eventual dawning of the 'age to come'. When Peter quotes Joel in Acts 2.17, he perhaps means both: the two ages have overlapped, so that Christians live in the 'last days', the time between God's kingdom being launched in and through Jesus and it being completed at Jesus' return. The New Testament gives no encouragement to the idea that we can calculate a precise timetable for the latter event, or that the period of history immediately before Jesus' return will be significantly different (e.g. more violent) than any other (see Matthew 24.36–39).

law
See Torah.

life, soul, spirit
Ancient people held many different views about what made human beings the special creatures they are. Some, including many Jews, believed that to be complete, humans needed bodies as well as inner selves. Others, including many influenced by the philosophy of Plato (fourth century BC), believed that the important part of a human was the 'soul' (Gk. *psyche*), which at death would be happily freed from its bodily prison. Confusingly for us, the same word psyche is often used in the New Testament within a Jewish framework where it clearly means 'life' or 'true self', without implying a body–soul dualism that devalues the body. Human inwardness of experience and understanding can also be referred to as 'spirit'. See also holy spirit; resurrection.

message
See good news.

Messiah, messianic, Christ
The Hebrew word means literally 'anointed one', hence in theory either a prophet, priest or king. In Greek this translates as *Christos*; 'Christ' in early Christianity was a title, and only gradually became an alternative proper name for Jesus. In practice, 'Messiah' is mostly restricted to the notion, which took various forms in ancient Judaism, of the coming king who would be David's true heir, through whom YHWH would bring judgment to the world, and in particular would rescue Israel from pagan enemies. There was no single template of expectations. Scriptural stories and promises contributed to different ideas and movements, often focused on (a) decisive military defeat of Israel's enemies and (b) rebuilding or cleansing the Temple. The Dead Sea Scrolls speak of two 'Messiahs', one a priest and the other a king. The universal early Christian belief that Jesus was Messiah is only explicable, granted his crucifixion by the Romans (which would have been seen as a clear sign that he was not the Messiah), by their belief that God had raised him from the dead, so vindicating the implicit messianic claims of his earlier ministry.

miracles
Like some of the old prophets, notably Elijah and Elisha, Jesus performed many deeds of remarkable power, particularly healings. The gospels refer to these as 'deeds of power', 'signs', 'marvels' or 'paradoxes'. Our word 'miracle' tends to imply that God, normally 'outside' the closed system of the world, sometimes 'intervenes'; miracles have then frequently been denied by sceptics as a matter of principle. However, in the Bible, God is always present, however strangely, and 'deeds of power' are seen as *special* acts of a *present* God rather than *intrusive* acts of an *absent* one. Jesus' own 'mighty works' are seen particularly, following prophecy, as evidence of his messiahship.

parables
From the Old Testament onwards, prophets and other teachers used various storytelling devices as vehicles for their challenge to Israel (e.g. 2 Samuel 12.1–7). Sometimes they appeared as visions with interpretations (e.g. Daniel 7). Similar techniques were used by the rabbis. Jesus made his own creative adaptation of these traditions, in order to break open the world-view of his contemporaries and to invite them to share his vision of God's kingdom instead. His stories portrayed this as something that was *happening*, not just a timeless truth, and enabled his hearers to step inside the story and make it their own. As with some Old Testament visions, some of Jesus' parables have their own interpretations (e.g. the sower, Mark 4); others are thinly disguised retellings of the prophetic story of Israel (e.g. the wicked tenants, Mark 12).

Pharisees, rabbis
The Pharisees were an unofficial but powerful Jewish pressure group through most of the first centuries BC and AD. Largely lay-led, though including some of the priests, their aim was to purify Israel through intensified observance of the Jewish law (Torah), developing their own traditions about the precise meaning and application of scripture, their own patterns of prayer and other devotion, and their own calculations of the national hope. Though not all legal experts were Pharisees, most Pharisees were legal experts.

They effected a democratization of Israel's life, since for them the study and practice of Torah was equivalent to worshipping in the Temple – though they were adamant in pressing their own rules for the Temple liturgy on an unwilling (and often Sadducean) priesthood. This enabled them to survive AD 70 and, merging into the early rabbinic movement, to develop new ways forward. Politically, they stood up for ancestral traditions, and were at the forefront of various movements of revolt against both pagan overlordship and compromised Jewish leaders. By Jesus' day there were two distinct schools, the stricter one of Shammai, more inclined towards armed revolt, and the more lenient one of Hillel, more ready to live and let live.

Jesus' debates with the Pharisees are at least as much a matter of agenda and policy (Jesus strongly opposed their separatist nationalism) as about details of theology and piety. Saul of Tarsus was a fervent right-wing Pharisee, presumably a Shammaite, until his conversion.

After the disastrous war of AD 66–70, these schools of Hillel and Shammai continued bitter debate on appropriate policy. Following the further disaster of AD 135 (the failed bar-Kochba revolt against Rome) their traditions were carried on by the rabbis, who, though looking to the earlier Pharisees for inspiration, developed a Torah-piety in which personal holiness and purity took the place of political agendas.

present age, age to come, eternal life
By the time of Jesus many Jewish thinkers divided history into two periods: 'the present age' and 'the age to come' – the latter being the time when YHWH would at last act decisively to judge evil, to rescue Israel, and to create a new world of justice and peace. The early Christians believed that, though the full blessings of the coming age lay still in the future, it had already begun with Jesus, particularly with his death and resurrection, and that by faith and baptism they were able to enter it already. 'Eternal life' does not mean simply 'existence continuing without end', but 'the life of the age to come'.

priests, high priest
Aaron, the older brother of Moses, was appointed Israel's first high priest (Exodus 28—29), and in theory his descendants were Israel's priests thereafter. Other members of his tribe (Levi) were 'Levites', performing other liturgical duties but not sacrificing. Priests lived among the people all around the country, having a local teaching role (Leviticus 10.11; Malachi 2.7), and going to Jerusalem by rotation to perform the Temple liturgy (e.g. Luke 1.8–9).

David appointed Zadok (whose Aaronic ancestry is sometimes questioned) as high priest, and his family remained thereafter the senior priests in Jerusalem, probably the ancestors of the Sadducees. One explanation of the origin of the Qumran Essenes is that they were a dissident group who believed themselves to be the rightful chief priests.

rabbis
See Pharisees.

redemption
Literally, 'redemption' means 'buying back', and was often used in the ancient world of slaves buying their freedom, or having it bought for them. The great 'redemption' in the Bible, which coloured the way the word was heard ever afterwards, was when God 'bought' his people Israel from slavery in Egypt to give them freedom in the promised land. When, later, the Jews were exiled in Babylon (and even after they returned to their land), they described themselves as undergoing a new slavery and hence being in need of a new redemption. Jesus, and the early Christians, interpreted this continuing slavery in its most radical terms, as slavery to sin and death, and understood 'redemption' likewise in terms of the rescue from this multiple and tyrannous slavery, which God provided through the death of Jesus (Romans 3.24).

repentance
Literally, this means 'turning back'. It is widely used in Old Testament and subsequent Jewish literature to indicate both a personal turning away from sin and Israel's corporate turning away from idolatry and back to YHWH. Through both meanings, it is linked to the idea of 'return from exile'; if Israel is to 'return' in all senses, it must 'return' to YHWH. This is at the heart of the summons of both John the Baptist and Jesus. In Paul's writings it is mostly used for Gentiles turning away from idols to serve the true God; also for sinning Christians who need to return to Jesus.

resurrection
In most biblical thought, human bodies matter and are not merely disposable prisons for the soul. When ancient Israelites wrestled with the goodness and justice of YHWH, the creator, they ultimately came to insist that he must raise the dead (Isaiah 26.19; Daniel 12.2–3) – a suggestion firmly resisted by classical pagan thought. The longed-for return from exile was also spoken of in terms of YHWH raising dry bones to new life (Ezekiel 37.1–14). These ideas were developed in the second-Temple period, not least at times of martyrdom (e.g. 2 Maccabees 7). Resurrection was not just 'life after death', but a newly embodied life *after* 'life after death';

those at present dead were either ‘asleep’ or seen as ‘souls’, ‘angels’ or ‘spirits’, awaiting new embodiment.

sacrifice
Like all ancient peoples, the Israelites offered animal and vegetable sacrifices to their God. Unlike others, they possessed a highly detailed written code (mostly in Leviticus) for what to offer and how to offer it; this in turn was developed in the Mishnah (c. AD 200). The Old Testament specifies that sacrifices can only be offered in the Jerusalem Temple; after this was destroyed in AD 70, sacrifices ceased, and Judaism developed further the idea, already present in some teachings, of prayer, fasting and almsgiving as alternative forms of sacrifice. The early Christians used the language of sacrifice in connection with such things as holiness, evangelism and the Eucharist.

Sadducees
By Jesus’ day, the Sadducees were the aristocracy of Judaism, possibly tracing their origins to the family of Zadok, David’s high priest. Based in Jerusalem, and including most of the leading priestly families, they had their own traditions and attempted to resist the pressure of the Pharisees to conform to theirs. They claimed to rely only on the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament), and denied any doctrine of a future life, particularly of the resurrection and other ideas associated with it, presumably because of the encouragement such beliefs gave to revolutionary movements. No writings from the Sadducees have survived, unless the apocryphal book of Ben Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) comes from them. The Sadducees themselves did not survive the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in AD 70.

salvation
Salvation means ‘rescue’, and the meanings of the word have depended on what people thought needed rescuing, and from what. Thus, where people have imagined that the human plight was best seen in terms of an immortal soul being trapped in a mortal and corrupt body, ‘salvation’ was seen in terms of the rescue of this soul from such a prison. But for most Jews, and all early Christians, it was death itself, the ending of God-given bodily life, that was the real enemy, so that ‘salvation’ was bound to mean being rescued from death itself – in other words, the resurrection of the body for those who had died, and the transformation of the body for those still alive at the Lord’s return (e.g. 1 Corinthians 15.50–57). For Paul and others, this ‘salvation’ was extended to the whole of creation (Romans 8.18–25). But if ‘salvation’ refers to this ultimate rescue of God’s created order, and our created bodies, from all that distorts, defaces and destroys them (i.e. sin, sickness, corruption and death itself), we should expect to find, and do in fact find, that often in the New Testament ‘salvation’ (and phrases like ‘being saved’) refers, not simply to people coming to faith and so being assured of eternal life, but to bodily healing and to rescue from awful plights (e.g. Acts 16.30–31; 27.44). Jesus’ resurrection remains the foundation for a biblical view of salvation for the whole person and the whole creation, a salvation which, though to be completed in the future, has already begun with the mission and achievement of Jesus.

satan, the, ‘the accuser’, demons, devil
The Bible is never very precise about the identity of the figure known as ‘the satan’. The Hebrew word means ‘the accuser’, and at times the satan seems to be a member of YHWH’s heavenly council, with special responsibility as director of prosecutions (1 Chronicles 21.1; Job 1—2; Zechariah 3.1f.). However, it becomes identified variously with the serpent of the garden of Eden (Genesis 3.1–15) and with the rebellious daystar cast out of heaven (Isaiah 14.12–15), and was seen by many Jews as the quasi-personal source of evil standing behind both human wickedness and large-scale injustice, sometimes operating through semi-independent ‘demons’. By Jesus’ time, various words were used to denote this figure, including Beelzebul/b (lit. ‘Lord of the flies’) and simply ‘the evil one’; Jesus warned his followers against the deceits this figure could perpetrate. His opponents accused him of being in league with the satan, but the early Christians believed that Jesus in fact defeated it in his own struggles with temptation (Matthew 4; Luke 4), his exorcism of demons, and his death (1 Corinthians 2.8; Colossians 2.15). Final victory over this ultimate enemy is thus assured (Revelation 20), though the struggle can still be fierce for Christians (Ephesians 6.10–20).

scribes
In a world where many could not write, or not very well, a trained class of writers (‘scribes’) performed the important function of drawing up contracts for business, marriage, and so on. Many scribes would thus be legal experts, and quite possibly Pharisees, though being a scribe was compatible with various political and religious standpoints. The work of Christian scribes was of initial importance in copying early Christian writings, particularly the stories about Jesus.

son of God
Originally a title for Israel (Exodus 4.22) and the Davidic king (Psalm 2.7); also used of ancient angelic figures (Genesis 6.2). By the New Testament period it was already used as a messianic title, for example, in the Dead Sea Scrolls. There, and when used of Jesus in the gospels (e.g. Matthew 16.16), it means, or reinforces, ‘Messiah’, without the later significance of ‘divine’. However, already in Paul the transition to the fuller meaning (one who was already equal with God and was sent by him to become human and to become Messiah) is apparent, without loss of the meaning ‘Messiah’ itself (e.g. Galatians 4.4).

son of man
In Hebrew or Aramaic, this simply means ‘mortal’, or ‘human being’; in later Judaism, it is sometimes used to mean ‘I’ or ‘someone like me’. In the New Testament the phrase is frequently linked to Daniel 7.13, where ‘one like a son of man’ is brought on the clouds of heaven to the ‘Ancient of Days’, being vindicated after a period of suffering, and is given kingly power. Though Daniel 7 itself interprets this as code for ‘the people of the saints of the Most High’, by the first century some Jews understood it as a messianic promise. Jesus developed this in his own way in certain key sayings which are best understood as promises that God would vindicate him, and judge those who had opposed him, after his own suffering (e.g. Mark 14.62). Jesus was thus able to use the phrase as a cryptic self-designation, hinting at his coming suffering, his vindication and his God-given authority.

soul
See life.

spirit
See life, holy spirit.

Temple
The Temple in Jerusalem was planned by David (c. 1000 BC) and built by his son Solomon as the central sanctuary for all Israel. After reforms under Hezekiah and Josiah in the seventh century BC, it was destroyed by Babylon in 587 BC. Rebuilding by the returned exiles began in 538 BC, and was completed in 516 BC, initiating the 'second-Temple period'. Judas Maccabaeus cleansed it in 164 BC after its desecration by Antiochus Epiphanes (167 BC). Herod the Great began to rebuild and beautify it in 19 BC; the work was completed in AD 63. The Temple was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70. Many Jews believed it should and would be rebuilt; some still do. The Temple was not only the place of sacrifice; it was believed to be the unique dwelling of YHWH on earth, the place where heaven and earth met.

Torah, Jewish law
'Torah', narrowly conceived, consists of the first five books of the Old Testament, the 'five books of Moses' or 'Pentateuch'. (These contain much law, but also much narrative.) It can also be used for the whole Old Testament scriptures, though strictly these are the 'law, prophets and writings'. In a broader sense, it refers to the whole developing corpus of Jewish legal tradition, written and oral; the oral Torah was initially codified in the Mishnah around AD 200, with wider developments found in the two Talmuds, of Babylon and Jerusalem, codified around AD 400. Many Jews in the time of Jesus and Paul regarded the Torah as being so strongly God-given as to be almost itself, in some sense, divine; some (e.g. Ben Sirach 24) identified it with the figure of 'Wisdom'. Doing what Torah said was not seen as a means of earning God's favour, but rather of expressing gratitude, and as a key badge of Jewish identity.

Word
The Prologue to John's gospel (1.1–18) uses Word (Gk. *logos*) in a special sense, based on the ancient Israelite view of God's Word in creation and new creation. Here the Word is Jesus, the personal presence of the God who remains other than the world. He is the one through whom creation came into being; he is the one, now, through whom it will be healed and restored.

word
See good news.

YHWH
The ancient Israelite name for God, from at least the time of the exodus (Exodus 6.2f.). It may originally have been pronounced 'Yahweh', but by the time of Jesus it was considered too holy to speak out loud, except for the high priest once a year in the holy of holies in the Temple. Instead, when reading scripture, pious Jews would say *Adonai*, 'Lord', marking this usage by adding the vowels of *Adonai* to the consonants of YHWH, eventually producing the hybrid 'Jehovah'. The word YHWH is formed from the verb 'to be', combining 'I am who I am', 'I will be who I will be' and perhaps 'I am because I am', emphasizing YHWH's sovereign creative power.

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